



BUYER'S GUIDE:

Choosing the Right Wander Management System for Your Community



For long-term care and senior living communities, the health and safety of residents is paramount. Unfortunately, many residents in these communities suffer from Alzheimer's, dementia or other conditions that leave them susceptible to elopement.

A wander management system is an excellent way to reduce liability, improve quality of care, and increase overall security and safety of residents. But not all wander management systems are created equal. This guide will review some of the most important features to look for in a wander management system as you evaluate which one is the best fit for your community.

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What to Look for in a Wander Management System



SCALABILITY

Look for a vendor that offers options to grow as your needs expand. This may mean multiple product options, or simply just a customizable, modular solution that you can grow into.

Smaller communities, for example, may be looking for a simple, user-installed system—but may grow into a more sophisticated solution. Larger communities may need to start with more capabilities but are limited by budget. Find a vendor that can scale and add capabilities as you need. A “one-size-fits-all” solution may fit your needs today, but think about if it will meet your needs in three or five years.



INTEGRATION OPTIONS

Integration with your community’s existing systems is essential for an effective wander management system. Most vendors will offer some integrations, but examine closely to see if the solution has all the integration options you need. Consider your:

- Nurse call system
- Electronic access control (EAC)
- CCTV/camera system
- Pagers, beepers or any other mobile devices carried by caregivers
- iOS or Android devices
- Any other internal systems that will enable your wander management system to work seamlessly within your facility

As you evaluate options, opt for a solution that has custom configuration options, so you can ensure it meets your needs today and in the future. Installing a new system at your facility should simplify your process, not add complexity.



TAG ATTRIBUTES

Fundamental to a wander management system are the tags residents wear, to enable alerts when needed. Look for the following when it comes to tags:

- **Where should tags be located?** Some systems require wrist placement, some require ankle placement, some allow either. Ask, it's important to address this detail upfront.
- **How long do tags last? Warranty Date vs Shelf Life?** Some vendors provide tags that last only a set period of time via a stamped expiration date, while others promote tags that may be used until there is a low battery indication—which can provide years of useful shelf life. Most tags are disposable once the battery runs out. But not every tag on the market is promoted in this manner. Discuss with the service provider you are working with to understand the methodology for the specific product you are researching & determine what makes the most sense & offers the best value for your community.
- **Can you turn tags on and off if needed?** For tags that function until the battery expires, the ability to turn it off when not in-use can have a dramatic impact on your operational budget expenses over the life of the system.
- **Is there a light or other indicator that the tag is functioning properly?** Having the ability to see if a tag is working instantly or not can be a time saving feature that benefits your caregivers on a daily basis.
- **How durable is the tag? Is the tag rated as water-resistant & shock-resistant?**
- **What is the durability of the banding material & how is it removed?**
- **When an alarm occurs, are caregivers simply notified which door is being breached, or does the notification identify the door along with either a tag number/resident name?**





ALARM ACCURACY & RELIABILITY

There are several important considerations when it comes to the system alarm(s). First, ask about interference. You don't want tags that will catch interference from other devices like cell phones or floor buffers, triggering false alarms. Additionally, if you have multiple floors, or doors close together, ensure that the alarm can distinguish the correct location.

Another consideration is the types of alarms. Many vendors offer just one or two alarm types. This isn't ideal, because non-wander alerts (low battery, tamper alert, etc.) can be confused for a wander or loiter alarm. Differentiating these different alarms is crucial for ensuring proper response and avoiding false alarms.



HARDWARE & SOFTWARE

Ask potential vendors about the hardware and/or software associated with their wander management solution. Is there an option for a comprehensive system without the need for a computer? Conversely, is there an integrated software platform as a potential upgrade?

Discuss how the components of the system will work within your facility. Where will there be remotes, LCD screens, alarms, etc.? What does it look like to manage the system day-to-day? Is there reporting easily available so you can see recent alarms, with a date/time stamp?



TECHNICAL SUPPORT

With a vital system like wander management, quality technical support is a must. Ask what the implementation and training process is. Ensure you have local service and support if you need it. Most importantly, make sure you have 24/7/365 technical support available if needed.





What to Ask a Vendor When Evaluating a Wander Management System

When purchasing a wander management system for your facility, consider the following list of questions to ask each vendor you are evaluating.

1. Do you offer just one wander management solution, or multiple options based on budget and needs?
2. What customization options does your system offer?
3. What integration options does your system offer?
4. What is the shelf life of your tags?
5. Can the tags be turned on and off?
6. How do you know a particular tag is working when it is on a resident?
7. Do your tags identify specific residents?
8. Is your system shielded from RF interference from things like cell phones or floor buffers? How is this accomplished?
9. How precise is your alarm capability? Can it distinguish between multiple floors, or two doors that are close together?
10. Does your system have more than one type of alarm, and how do staff differentiate between these alarms?
11. Can your system lock doors and stop elevators if needed?
12. When a wander alarm is set off, who is notified, how and where? Do we have configuration options?
13. When a wander alarm is set off, can we tell which resident it is?
14. What reporting options do we have with your system?
15. What is the training and implementation process?
16. What technical support is available?

Vendor Comparison

This section compares the main vendors in this industry, for the main features discussed above.

	ResidentGuard (Accutech)	Roam Alert (Stanley Healthcare)	Door GUARDIAN (Secure Care)	Code Alert (RF Technologies)	Wanderguard (Stanley Healthcare)
Scalable product offering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Minimal interference (data filtering)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Ability to turn tags on/off	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Ability to eliminate cross-talk (stack zones on top of each other)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Optional photos of resident at door or nurses station	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Visual indication tag is working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
No predetermined tag shelf life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Tag test station (battery percentage remaining)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Outdoor configuration options (gate or patio)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Software reporting capabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Multiple alarm types	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Custom configuration options	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Custom integration options	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Resident identification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Free 24/7/365 technical support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Free during warranty period, then \$150/hr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>