

# MEDICAL ALARM & HELP ALERT



## DECISION GUIDE

**ESSENTIAL GUIDE IN CHOOSING  
THE BEST HELP ALERT FOR YOU  
OR YOUR LOVED ONES!**

**Sean James Holohan, BS**

*Forward By T. Clayton Franks, BS*

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**SEAN JAMES HOLOHAN, BS**

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# Forward



Over the past 30 years the medical alarm industry has been used by millions of seniors and has saved hundreds of thousands of lives. It has enabled independent seniors to remain living safely and securely at home for many extra years.

Early medical alarm systems were “hardwired” into the home phone line. Because they were an in-home sale, installation was required to be made by licensed alarm company technicians. Unfortunately, some early medical alarm companies engaged in unethical, questionable sales techniques when in-home salespeople would use high pressure, strong arm sales techniques. Too often, this resulted in seniors (or their families) paying \$2,000 to

\$5,000 or more for a medical alarm system. Not to mention the ongoing contract for professional monitoring which often was a binding, multi-year contract.

As technology has changed, the sales strategies of medical alarm companies have adapted. They use less door- to-door sales and more remote television and telephone sales. Telemarketers have used robocalls to contact millions of seniors offering a “free”

medical alarm system. A request for a “free brochure” from a television ad, may result in dozens of high-pressure follow-up sales calls.

In 2015, The FTC has imposed a \$3.4 million judgment against "Instant Response Systems" for calling seniors and "bullying and tricking them" into paying for medical alert devices they never ordered. [According to the FTC complaint](#), sales reps for the company used high-pressure sales tactics, including claiming the customers had previously ordered from them and owed hundreds of dollars. Instant Response would send fake invoices and medical alert pendants without seniors' permission, then threaten them with legal action if they did not pay up, the FTC alleged.

In another case, The [FTC sued LifeWatch Inc](#) for “deceptive robocalls to trick older consumers throughout the United States and Canada into signing up for medical alert systems.” According to the FTC, LifeWatch worked with Worldwide Info Services, a robocall provider that was sued by the FTC. After Worldwide Info Services got busted, Life- Watch switched to a new robocall provider but continued with a similar scheme.

Today, largely in part to the influences of social media, the medical alarm industry has made huge strides in legitimacy. Unscrupulous medical alarm companies are being documented

*Sean James Holohan, BS*

on a variety of online review platforms. Additionally, with the changing technologies now becoming widely available, customers have more choices than ever before.

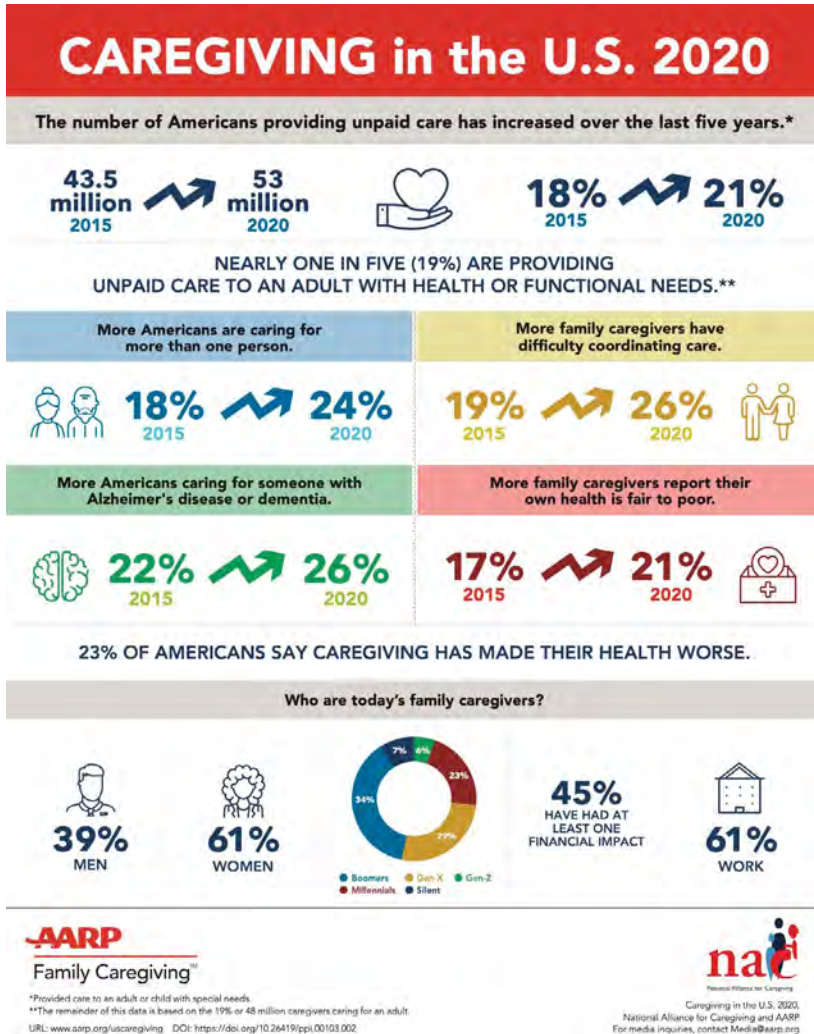
Choosing a help alert or medical alarm is an important decision for any family. I applaud Sean Holohan for his dedication to inform all seniors and their families/caregivers of all the amazing new advancements now available to them. I hope this Help Alert Decision Guide helps you or, your loved one, choose the right medical alert system(s) for your situation. A medical alarm helped my mother to live many extra years living safely and independently and you. I hope it will do the same for you or your loved ones.

Be safe,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas Frank". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "F".

CEO, Homestead Telehealth





We know you have options when it comes to choosing a medical alarm or help alert company. The truth is every customer's personal, family, and medical situation is unique.

There is an abundance of options out there. These options can be confusing and overwhelming. What makes product A any

different than product B? What is fall detection? Do I need a mobile or cellular device?

The answers to your questions will help you find the BEST medical alarm or help alert solution for your own situation.

And as America's retirement population continues to grow, their family members and loved ones are increasingly their primary, unpaid caregivers, according to a nationwide [study by the National Alliance for Caregiving and the AARP](#).

The resulting report found that as of 2020, over 53 million Americans are providing unpaid care to their senior loved ones.

Of those 53 million, 61% are doing so while juggling their own careers.<sup>1</sup>

So, with our Help Alert Decision Guide, the goal is to present honest and fact-based information that will help every consumer make an informed decision. Here are some questions, tips, and topics to help you find the device that's best for you and your family.

# A Brief History Of Help Alerts



**Y**ou've seen the commercial for decades. A woman lying on the floor of her home yelling, "Help, I've fallen and I can't get up!®" Many first-time help alert buyers think of that commercial from decades ago and assume that's what they're shopping for.

But the truth is, the help alert industry has advanced leaps and bounds over the decades. The devices started out years ago as a base console connected to a phone line with a pendant that had a range of about 200-600 feet. Wearers were protected when they were in their house but were unprotected when they were outside it. And when the SOS button was pressed, the wearer only had the option to call a monitoring center who could automatically dispatch paramedics.

Nowadays, seniors are healthier and more independent than they've ever been. And the industry needed to adapt to reflect that change. While you can still find landline-based devices that will only work within the home, the technology has expanded to offer mobile pendants that will work nationwide, anywhere cell reception is available. And on top of that, wearers now have

more options of who to call once they press their SOS button. Would you prefer to call 911 directly? Or would you feel more comfortable calling your own network of friends, family, caregivers, doctors, or anyone else you would feel more comfortable speaking to during an emergency? And of course, the most popular feature that has been developed — fall detection. The best aspect of help alert devices these days is that they can be fully customized to the preferences of a wearer - from where you use it and to whom you call.



# The Case for Purchasing A Help Alert For Your Loved One



So when, you may ask, is it time for me to start considering a help alert device for my loved one? There is no concrete answer. But here is some context that might help you evaluate your own loved one's needs: The next aging generation — Baby Boomers — is the largest population of retirees this country has ever seen.<sup>3</sup> And the American healthcare system might not be ready for them. Americans are living longer now than they ever had in history. And Baby Boomers are the second largest generation in American history — only behind Millennials<sup>3</sup>.

As a result of this massive population of aging and retiring Americans, home health agencies, hospitals, and private caregivers are seeing an explosion in demand. As a result, long-term healthcare and home health costs are going up to meet the increased demand on its systems and staff.

But for many retirees, home healthcare is too expensive. That is why we're seeing record numbers of Americans providing unpaid care to their loved ones. But that is a heavy demand. And

as Baby Boomers continue to retire, they are electing to continue living independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

Even so, for some of those retirees living independently at home, daily care may not be as simple as having a family member come by the house to check in every once in a while. Many of these retirees live with chronic and other long-term conditions. Unless that family member is a trained medical professional, care may mean repeated, costly ambulance and hospital visits.

Here is where help alert devices come in.

Imagine if your loved one could still live independently at home while also being able to speak with their nurse, doctor, or other professional caregiver at the press of a button. For those family members who are their loved one's primary caregiver: Imagine if you were not only a button press away, but you could also stay informed on every aspect of your loved one, from their temperature, oxygen levels, exact location, and daily activity, all without stepping foot in their home? Help alert devices can do all of that — and more. They are like good insurance: You never want to have to use them, but they'll always be there for you when you do.

So where do you start?

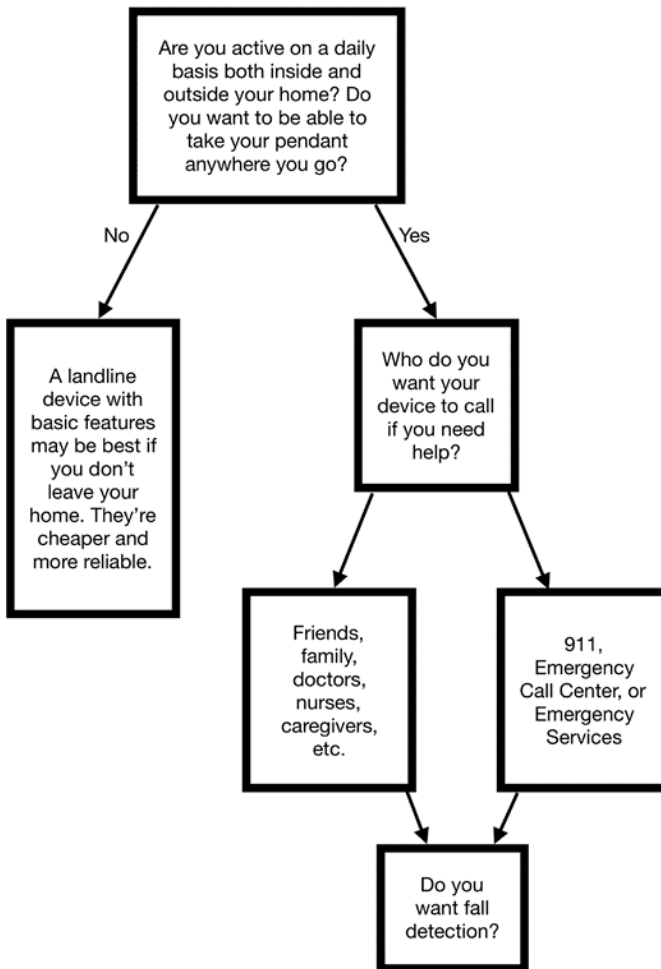
# 1. Assess Your Unique Situation



1. Does the wearer leave home for routine errands? (**See Mobile Devices**)
2. Is the wearer homebound? (**See Landline Devices**)
3. Does the wearer have a history of falling?
4. Does the wearer have chronic medical conditions (**COPD, heart disease, stroke**)?
5. Does the wearer have a local network of spouse, friends, family, neighbors, and caregivers who can respond to a help alert call or text message?

Here is a basic flow chart that breaks down the basics between mobile and landline-based devices:

## Do You Need a Landline or Mobile Help Alert Device?



As you can see, the options are clear when it comes to choosing the right device for you. But here are some more questions to ask any prospective provider that could help nail down the right device for you.



## 2. Landline-Based Devices



Landline-based devices have been the industry standard for decades. And before the boom of cellular technology, they were the only option for retirees. These help alerts generally consist of an AC-powered base console that connects directly to a landline jack and a wireless pendant worn by the user. When the wearer presses the SOS button, the pendant communicates to the base console to call out through the landline.



For wearers who are homebound or spend most of their days in their home, a landline-based help alert has its benefits. Because the device requires an existing phone line, the SOS buttons are

smaller and lighter weight because they do not have to house a SIM card or other such hardware. Most landline-based SOS buttons feature replaceable batteries, which often last years before needing service. And finally, because the device works off an existing phone line, there is no cellular service needed, making the monthly cost of the help alert much cheaper. Some newer landline-based pendants even feature fall detection.

Be aware, though, that landline-based devices require installation of the base console, and wearers have to be careful to stay within the range of the console. Because the pendants communicate with the console by radio wave, the wearer has to be within several hundred feet of the console to call out. Venturing too far away from the base will disconnect the pendant and leave the wearer unable to call out.

## **TO SUMMARIZE:**

### **Benefits of Landline-Based Systems**

1. More reliable reception and connectivity.
2. Cheaper equipment and monthly costs.
3. Device can last years without charging or replacing the battery.

## **Limitations of Landline-Based Systems**

1. Pendant only works within a set range of the base console.
2. Requires installation and an existing phone line.
3. Requires a base console, which must stay in one room.

### 3. Mobile Devices



**F**or those who are still very active and leave the house on a daily basis, a mobile help alert pendant or wearable may be the way to go. These devices work with the cellular networks and can be taken anywhere and used anytime, so long as there is cellular reception. There is no need for a base console, and the wearer can call for help anywhere, anytime nationwide.



Mobile help alert devices essentially act like a simplified cell phone and are assigned their own phone number. There is no need for a landline, base console, or existing phone line, so all the

technology is completely self-contained within a pendant that can be worn by the user. And unlike landline-based devices, cellular help alerts can be pre-programmed, so there is no installation required by the wearer. Just take the pendant out of its box and turn it on.

Mobile help alert devices are the modern version of landline-based devices, so they are packed with new and innovative features like fall detection, real-time GPS, call-in and chat, and much more. Some also have Bluetooth® capabilities, which allows them to pair with various bio- sensors, charging bases, or smart speakers.

But with all that innovation, there are a few drawbacks. Most importantly, cellular reception is not uniform across the country. Be aware that these devices only work properly when they can detect sufficient cell reception. Just because the device works in the wearer's home doesn't necessarily mean it will work at a friend's home across town. These devices are generally more expensive, given the advanced features and cost of operating on a cellular network. Lastly, always ensure that a prospective mobile help alert pendant runs on at least 4G technology. All 3G cellular networks are scheduled to sunset soon, leaving all devices on those networks inoperable.

## **TO SUMMARIZE:**

### **Benefits of Mobile (Cellular) Systems**

1. Can be used anywhere cellular reception is available.
2. Highly customizable and remote programmable.
3. No installation is required.

### **Limitations of Mobile (Cellular) Systems**

1. Generally, more expensive than landline-based devices.
2. Battery needs to be charged routinely.
3. Will not call out or send alerts without sufficient cellular reception.

## **4. Do You Need Professional 24/7 Monitoring Service?**



**O**n both landline-based and mobile help alert devices, customers usually have the option to call out to a professional monitoring center, rather than to family and friends. When the SOS button is pressed and the device connects to the monitoring center, the dispatcher will have access to the wearer's medical history and can send local emergency services out to the wearer, if necessary. Some wearers prefer to call out to these centers, while some prefer to contact friends or family first. The choice really comes down to personal preference.

The monitoring center comes with its pros and cons. The great part about monitoring centers is that they have all a wearer's medical history on file. So, the minute a wearer calls out to the monitoring center, a representative will already know important information like address, preferred hospital, emergency contacts, medications, and more. They can then use that pertinent information to contact local emergency personnel. These representatives are also highly trained and have extremely strict protocol and experience when speaking

with a wearer during a potentially life-threatening situation. Best of all, while your friends and family take days off, monitoring centers have representatives available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

On the other hand, these professionals are taught to send for help first and ask questions later. So, if a representative is speaking with a wearer whom he or she believes to need assistance, they'll dispatch emergency services immediately — even if the wearer turns out to be just fine. This also applies to false alarms. If a wearer accidentally presses his or her SOS button and is not responsive when the monitoring center answers, an ambulance will be called. It is much harder to cancel false alarms with a monitoring center than with friends and family.

## **TO SUMMARIZE:**

### **Benefits of Professional Monitoring**

1. Monitoring centers are open 24/7, 365 days a year.
2. Calls are answered by trained professionals.
3. Dispatcher has access to a wearer's medical history, preferred hospital, etc.



## **Limitations of Professional Monitoring**

1. Some wearers prefer to speak to a family member or other familiar voice.
2. Dispatchers will automatically send an ambulance if they cannot confirm the wellness or status of a wearer.
3. Some call centers have slow answering times.

## 5. Do You Need Fall Detection?



**H**ere's a chilling fact: After a fall or other emergency, 90% of people who get help within one hour will continue living independently, but after 12 hours without help only 10% of people will continue to live at home.<sup>2</sup>

Fall detection is a highly sought-after feature for this very reason. Since its development, wearers have been afforded an extra layer of protection by having their falls detected, followed by the device sending alerts out to contacts.

But be aware that this feature could have a downside. If you fall, it will be detected. Is that OK with you? Who will your device contact if you fall? False alarms may happen, too. Some devices offer the option to cancel a false alarm. Others do not.

**“After a fall or other emergency, 90% of people who get help within one hour will continue independent living, but after 12 hours without help only 10% of people will continue to live at home.”<sup>2</sup>**

Adjustable sensitivity helps prevent false alarms as well as customizes the fall detection to the wearer's daily activities. For

example, if a wearer is still active and is inadvertently triggering the fall detection throughout his or her daily activities, the sensitivity can be decreased. Conversely, if a wearer is at high risk of falls, the sensitivity can be heightened to record all sudden changes in velocity.

## **TO SUMMARIZE:**

### **Benefits of Fall Detection**

1. Automatically sends out an alert when a fall occurs.
2. Alert is sent hands-free, even if the wearer is incapacitated.
3. Perfect for seniors who live alone.

### **Limitations of Fall Detection**

1. Can trigger false alarms.
2. Some devices are unable to cancel false alarms.
3. Not 100% accurate — 911 should always be called after a fall, if possible

## 6. Call-In & Chat Function

**S**ome mobile help alert pendants now allow authorized contact numbers to call into a loved-one's pendant. Because mobile pendants are now equipped with a SIM card, they are also assigned their own phone number that authorized contacts can call directly.

This is sometimes referred to as the “wellness check from anywhere” feature because of the ability for contacts to call into a wearer's device at any time. This is an important feature for a few reasons. For one, wearers almost always have their help alert pendants on them, unlike a cell phone, so contacts know they can reach the wearer anytime and get an answer.

And because most devices answer hands-free, the wearer does not have to press a button to begin speaking. It just happens automatically.

The other reason this is such a crucial feature — and one you should ask prospective providers about — is that in the event you have not heard from your loved one in a while, you can call into their device. When the call connects, the wearer will either answer and be fine, or they will be unresponsive, which would be a red flag that someone needs to check on them further.

If your prospective device does have direct call-in features, check with the manufacturer to see if the device also offers spam call blocking.

While being able to call into a device is great, that will open the wearer of the device to receiving calls from anyone — especially spam phone calls. To prevent this, some companies use a spam block feature wherein only contacts programmed into the device can call it. This way, random spam numbers won't be able to call the wearer. The last thing they will want are unsolicited phone calls waking them up in the middle of the night.

## 7. Who Do You Want To Call?



**Y**ears ago with older technology, a press of your SOS button would only call out to 911. Some devices may have also offered the option of a call center who could then dispatch emergency services. But here is something to consider: what if you need to call out of your device for non-emergency purposes?

Say, if you needed help taking a medication or performing a task around the house. Or what if you were not feeling well, but not so bad that you needed an ambulance speeding down your street. With 911, there is no non-emergency option. They either send emergency services or they do not.



Call centers offer a better solution, but the representatives answering the phones do not know you personally, and the only assistance they can offer is to also dispatch emergency services. Additionally, seniors feel much more comfortable talking to someone they know during a stressful situation.

Many devices now offer the ability for wearers to program and choose the phone numbers their device calls out to. So, instead of calling 911, wearers can press their SOS button and immediately be connected to a friend or neighbor, their family, or even their doctor or nurse. And the best part is that none of these options result in unnecessary ambulance visits.

So now imagine that same scenario: you need help with questions about your medication. Calling 911 will do you no good. But, at the press of a button, you are connected to your usual nurse or caregiver. Now they can give you advice or walk you through the process over the phone.

Maybe you need help changing the batteries on a smoke detector, but do not have any family in town. Instead of calling the police, you contact your primary caregiver, who can send a handyman over without worrying the neighbors with a police visit. These are small differences but pay a huge dividend in the comfort of the lives of those who choose to age independently in their own homes.

## 8. Do You Need Remote Biosensors?



**F**or many new help alert devices on the market, calling out for help is the least of its innovative capabilities. Biosensors are fast becoming a hot feature in the help alert market — and for good reason. Imagine a pendant that not only calls out for help, but also sends notifications when a wearer’s temperature rises, their blood oxygen level drops, their blood sugar rises or drops, and so much more.

These features are game changers. With the number of retirees quickly growing across the country, regular face- to-face visits to doctors, nurses, or caregivers may be less frequent. Biosensors act as the bridge between wearers and their caregivers when they cannot meet face to face by monitoring and transmitting vitals automatically to caregivers.

These sensors can either be built into a help alert pendant — such as heartbeat or temperature sensors or placed throughout a residence and synched to the pendant via a wireless connection like Bluetooth®. From there, these sensors record vitals and can send out information to loved ones in the form of



text alerts or phone calls or to medical professionals via computer software.

Do be aware, however, that this advanced equipment comes with a much higher learning curve. Wearers and their caregivers will need to learn how to operate these sensors and, in some cases, the software that ingests the information. Although these biosensors are revolutionary, they require more investment to implement and operate both in time and money.

## 9. Does The Company Have After-Hours Representatives?



**E**mergencies don't just happen Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. They happen when you least expect them. That is why it's crucial to make sure a prospective company has representatives available 24/7, not just when it's convenient to them. Some agencies offer stellar care during business hours, but no one to take emergency calls after hours. Always make sure there are after hours help available. A help alert device is useless if it can only be used Monday-Friday.

In addition to confirming whether a prospective company offers monitoring services, here are some other questions to ask: how many monitoring centers does the company utilize? What is the average response time for incoming medical alarm calls? How many subscribers does the center have? How often does the center dispatch emergency medical services?

These questions will give prospective subscribers a better look at the capabilities and resources of the monitoring center.

## 10. Don't Accept Used or Refurbished Equipment



**W**hen shopping around for your help alert device, be absolutely sure that your prospective company doesn't re-sell used or refurbished devices. Some companies require wearers who end their services to send back the device. The company will then turn around and re-sell that device to a new customer.

This is unsanitary, as well as dangerous. Selling a device that has years of wear on it may leave you vulnerable. You should always receive your device brand new. Inspect it when you receive it, and if you have any doubt, contact your company, or go elsewhere.

## 11. Beware of Long-Term Contracts and Hidden Fees



**A**ny reputable company should have their prices out front for everyone to see. Make sure to always ask about any additional fees, deposits, or contracts you may incur throughout your service. The industry has since moved away from years-long contracts. Life and circumstances change fast. If a company wants you to sign a long-term contract before purchase - do not.

There are many more reputable companies that understand the practice to be obsolete. Also be aware of activation fees, disconnect fees, or minimum monthly requirements. If it seems suspect, it probably is.

Most companies do have a Service Agreement which limits their liability. **ASK FOR A COPY AND BE SURE TO READ IT** before you accept it!

Additionally, some companies will make canceling your service outright difficult. Whether it be charging customers early termination fees for canceling before the end of a contract, or by enforcing strict timeframes during which a customer must

cancel before being automatically charged again. Be mindful of these hidden fees when shopping around.

## 12. Don't Be Scared or Intimidated Into A Decision



**R**emember that commercial we talked about? Its main goal was to scare or guilt potential customers into buying their product. The number one priority of any help alert company should be to do everything they can to protect you and your family. Meeting sales quotas and locking you into contracts should not be.

First, pay attention to how the representatives sell their services to you on the phone. Some companies guilt you into buying their products by presenting scary statistics and asking you if you could ever forgive yourself if something happened to your loved one. That is unprofessional, and it's none of their business. No company should ever harass, guilt, pressure, or scare a potential customer into buying a device.

If you feel un- comfortable at all during the sales process, hang up. There are many other reputable companies out there whose priority is to protect you, not sell to you.

## 13. Will Your Device Be Reimbursed By Insurance, Medicare, Or, Home Health?



**M**ore than ever, insurance companies, home health agencies, and government institutions like Medic-aid are utilizing Telehealth to service their clients. Tele-health allows these agencies to stay connected with their clients more easily — without ever meeting face to face. In addition, some insurance agencies have begun paying for their clients' help alert devices because they have been proven to keep patients healthier and out of the doctor's office or hospital. Think of it like a nurse call button for your home. Some home health agencies are even offering free help alert devices when you sign up for their services. This would be an important question to ask of your insurance or healthcare provider.



For a total list of Telehealth services covered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): [https://  
www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/  
Telehealth/Telehealth-Codes](https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/Telehealth/Telehealth-Codes)



## 14. Do You Want GPS Functionality With Your Device?



**N**owadays, most mobile help alert pendants, which run on cellular data, also include real-time GPS tracking software. This is a distinct benefit of mobile help alert pendants over landline-based devices. The beauty of the software is that not only will the mobile pendant track the location of a wearer, but authorized contacts can also request the real-time location of the wearer at any time.

This is an attractive feature for wearers who live alone or who have memory loss and want to provide further peace of mind to their friends and family. At any time, those caregivers can ensure their loved one is safe without having to speak with them directly.



Even for those wearers who are still highly active, the GPS function can come in handy. Say a wearer is out and about running errands and they experience car trouble. They can rest easy knowing their caregivers, friends, and family can immediately request their location with the ease of a text message or app. Or, as many of us know, we do not always carry our cell phones everywhere we go.

But imagine a caregiver's worry when they call a wearer's cell and do not get an answer. They can immediately request the loved one's GPS via their help alert to find their whereabouts and ensure they are OK.

Wearers with memory loss and dementia also benefit from GPS using wander alerts — or geofencing. With this feature, caregivers can keep loved ones with memory decline safe when they're on their own and receive alerts when they venture too far away from a designated location.

Wander alerts utilize a help alert's GPS to pinpoint a specific "home" location — whether that be a house, nursing home, etc. Caregivers can then set a geo- graphical boundary around that point and be alerted any time a wearer goes outside of that boundary. This is obviously a crucial feature for wearers with memory loss. Even when caregivers are not present, they can still ensure the safety of a wearer, should they wander.

## 15. Voice Assistants



**T**he concept of a voice assistant has been around for a while. Whether it be Amazon's Alexa or the Google Home. But now, voice assistants are being implemented into some mobile help alert pendants and consoles. This new development is a revolutionary bit of technology because it provides the wearer even more peace of mind.

Imagine being in an emergency and you go to press your SOS button. You press it, but you hear nothing. "Did it work? Do I need to press it again? Will I cancel the alert if I press it again?"

With voice assistants, the device keeps the wearer fully informed throughout the emergency process by announcing when the device has been activated and that an alert has been sent. It also comes in handy by announcing when the battery is low, when a fall has been detected, or that there is an incoming call.

## 16. Text Message Alerts and Notifications



One of the most convenient features that mobile help alert pendants boast are text message alerts and notifications.

Because these mobile devices are assigned their own phone number, they can send text alerts out to all authorized contacts.

And in addition to the standard SOS alert text message, these devices keep caregivers informed by sending out low battery alerts, wander alerts, inactivity alerts, and much more.

Do keep in mind that landlines cannot accept text messages, so only those contacts with a cell phone will be able to receive such alerts.

A screenshot of a text message alert displayed on a light blue background. The text is in a black, sans-serif font and provides status information for a device named 'AUNT SALLY'.

AUNT SALLY  
Help Me!  
Date:16/08/16  
Time:01:24:27  
Speed:2Km/h  
Altitude:27.3m  
Bat:86%  
[maps.google.com/  
maps?q=33.247185,-117  
.320984](https://maps.google.com/maps?q=33.247185,-117.320984)

## 17. Wearables: The Future of The Help Alert Industry



Of course, the choice of which company or service to utilize will come down to the personal preference of each customer. Some will not like the feel of a lanyard and will instead opt to carry a pendant in a belt clip or wrist band. Others may have no interest in a pendant at all. But the future of the help alert industry is bright. And unlike a decade ago, there are several alternatives to pendants altogether. Pendants, as well as their many alternatives, fall under a broader category known as wearables.

Smartwatches are the newest trend in the emerging wearables market. As smartwatches from companies like Apple and Samsung have become increasingly commonplace, the idea to add a simple SOS button or biosensor technology was not far behind. Most watches from Apple and Samsung already offer the ability to track metrics like heart rate, steps, sleep, etc., so marketing those very features to seniors was a no-brainer. The industry is now seeing smartwatches being marketed even more narrowly at seniors with the emergence of fall detection on some

Apple and Samsung watch models. In addition to fall detection, features like tracking oxygen levels, temperature, and blood sugar are emerging. Help alert companies are seeing the popularity of smartwatches, and they are looking to capitalize by taking that model and adding a simple SOS button that can easily call out to friends, families, or other caregivers. For those wearers who like to be more discreet in the use of their help alert technology, wearing a watch outfitted with enhanced safety measures is becoming more attractive.

Aside from smartwatches, there are other alternatives to carrying a pendant. An innovative “smart cane” has emerged as a convenient option for seniors — especially for those who already require use of a walking stick or cane. They are no different in appearance than that of a standard cane but are in addition outfitted with mobile SIM cards and an easy-to-use SOS button that calls out to anyone, anytime.

Finally, for a customer who might be interested in a help alert pendant but is concerned with the size of the device, the industry has seen a rise in smaller “micro” pendants. These pendants have the same feature set and abilities as a standard sized pendant but with the added benefit of being discreet and easier to carry. Whereas a standard pendant would be too big to place in a wrist strap or conceal under clothing, the micro pendants are small and light enough to go anywhere on a person.

## **18. Top Ten Important Questions to Ask Any Medical Alarm Or Help Alert Company**



1. How long have you been in business?
2. How many monitoring centers do you have?
3. What is the average monitoring center call response time?
4. Can authorized contacts call into the device?
5. Are there any additional fees?
6. Does fall detection come standard with the device?
7. How are the devices programmed? Is there any installation required?
8. How will my device be serviced? Will a tech come to my home or can it be done remotely?
9. Do your mobile devices run on 3G or 4G?
10. Are your devices HIPAA compliant?

## About The Author



**S**ean Holohan is a Director and General Manager of SafeGuardian, LLC, - a leader and innovator in help alert technology. He has experienced years of outfitting seniors and home health agencies with these life-saving products. His expertise in the emerging help alert and wearable industry, while constantly researching and evaluating the latest technologies to emerge in the market, makes him a desired and respected resource for seniors – and their loved ones.

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## End Notes



<sup>1</sup>Caregiving in the U.S. 2020

<https://www.caregiving.org/caregiving-in-the-us-2020/>

<sup>2</sup>Persons Found in Their Homes Helpless or Dead

[https://www.nejm.](https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM199606273342606)

[org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM199606273342606](https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM199606273342606)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/12/by-2030-all-baby-boomers-will-be-age-65-or-older.html>