

# Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

## Dementia Patient Found In Freezer At Assisted Living Facility: An Isolated Event Or Real Cause For Concern?

*Posted by **Jonathan Rosenfeld** on January 14, 2011*

The California Department of Social Services is busy conducting an investigation into the circumstances behind how a 94-year-old with dementia managed to lock herself in a walk-in freezer at Silverado Senior Living.

The October 28<sup>th</sup> incident apparently resulted when staff were in the process of repairing a lock on a kitchen door that enabled the woman to access the freezer unit in the kitchen.

Fortunately, the woman was located in the freezer after the facility initiated a facility-wide search when she was discovered missing.

This incident comes months after an employee at the assisted living facility was sentenced to life in prison following a conviction for torturing patients at the facility during his employment there.

### Isolated Events Or A Facility Teetering On Danger?

Everyone can have a bad day—a slip up now and again. However, we frequently see a disproportionate number of incidents at facilities with real underlying problems related to poorly trained or dissatisfied staff.

In the case of facilities caring for patients with Alzheimer's and dementia patients, even minor errors can have especially devastating results for the

Jonathan Rosenfeld represents victims of nursing home abuse and neglect throughout the country. For more information please visit Nursing Homes Abuse Blog ([www.nursinghomesabuseblog.com](http://www.nursinghomesabuseblog.com)), Bed Sore FAQ ([www.bedsorefaq.com](http://www.bedsorefaq.com)) or call Jonathan directly at (888) 424-5757.

patients, as they frequently remain unable to appreciate the danger the defective condition poses to them.

Additionally, many dementia patients remain very mobile and physically healthy despite their mental decline. For this reason, forgetting to close a door or leaving dangerous materials accessible can have devastating consequences for the patient.

Facilities caring for dementia and Alzheimer's patients should implement safeguards to protect their patients from the potential types of self-inflicted harm. The following safeguards can be crucial to protecting this fragile population:

- Keeping doors and windows secured
- Install alarms on doors
- Use locks on rooms containing potentially dangerous materials such as chemicals, sharp objects, open flames and other devices
- Routinely conduct inspections of the facility to ensure potential hazards are safeguarded
- Regularly assess patients to see who may be prone to wander or may be unable to appreciate harm

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