



Checklist For Home Care Services

Searching for a home caregiver can be overwhelming. We often forget to ask some important questions when interviewing the company or actual caregiver. Here is a guide for you to use throughout the process that should help make things easier.

Things to think about first:

Do you want private pay or something Medicare may cover? Make sure you look for facilities that match your needs.

Do you want medical home care or non-medical home care? Some places have nurses that do medical care at home and others handle non-medical care such as errands, light cleaning, meal prep etc.

Cheapest is not always best. Interview a few different people or places. Always make sure it “feels” right too.

Difference between Independent Caregivers and Agencies

Agency: These places usually come at a higher cost but you get prescreened applicants who have already had background checks. Since the caregiver works for the agency they take care of billing and tax issues. They may also be bonded for issues such as theft. If a caregiver quits or is not working out, an agency can usually find a replacement quickly and may also provide coverage if a caregiver calls in sick.

Independent Caregivers: These people usually come at lower cost, but require more legwork on your part. You have to deal with taxes requirements and background checks. You also have to do your own identity verification. If a caregiver gets sick or does not show up you have to find your own replacement.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU CALL OR INTERVIEW HOME HEALTH CARE AGENCIES

- Always find out about the company first. How long have they been in business? Are they with the Better Business Bureau? Check any references.

- What kind of services do they provide? Make sure they have in writing what services they provide.

- What are the schedule requirements? Are there a minimum number of hours that caregivers must work? How much is it? Daily? Weekly? Does the rate change for more or less hours? Is it more on holidays or weekends? Are there some holidays that caregivers do not work?

- How are payments handled? Do you pay each time? Do you have to put a credit card on file? Cash?

- What is the cancellation policy?

- Is a deposit required ahead of time? Make sure you know refund policy and get everything in writing.

- How do you find your caregivers? When you find caregivers what is the hiring and training procedure?
- What happens if you don't like the caregiver assigned to you? Can you request a change? How is that done? Can you interview the caregiver they choose first? Is there a fee for that?
- What happens if your caregiver quits or does not show up? There should be a prearranged plan for replacing caregivers on short notice.
- Does the company send out a caregiver for you to interview or someone who assesses your loved one and then decides who they think is the best fit? Is there a cost for the assessment done at your home?
- Do you do background checks? How often? What would make the agency NOT hire someone after a background check? What things still allow you to hire someone?

- Does the employee work for the agency you are calling about? This is important because then the agency is responsible for bonds, taxes and insurance. YOU DO NOT WANT A COMPANY THAT CLAIMS THEIR CAREGIVERS ARE INDEPENDENT CAREGIVERS. This is important when it comes to taxes and labor laws. You could be responsible for these if you do. Your homeowners insurance would not cover work related injuries etc.
- Call the Better Business Bureau and ask about any complaints made against the company. Calling is better than the website.
- How much skill and experience do the caregivers they hire have? Does the company have a training procedure when they hire new people? What is it?
- Are fingerprints done with background check? Are they legally able to work in the USA? How do they confirm this?
- Do the background checks include driving history? This is important if they will be running errands with your loved one.

- Ask to see copies of the licenses and bonding certificates for the company. If they won't show you the documents that is a negative sign. Keep copies provided to you.

- Do you hire smokers? Can I get someone who does not smoke?

Make sure to find out about recording devices in your home and the laws about recording care in your home. All state are different. These days many people have different types of devices in their homes that can record.

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