

Questions for Private Home Care Agencies

When looking for a home care provider, be sure to ask the following questions of every agency you call. Comparing answers will clarify important differences, helping you determine which company is most likely to meet your needs and relieve your worries.

1. Who provides the in-home care? What are their qualifications?
How can you be confident that the agency will always send you a great person? What if you're uncomfortable with the person who arrives at your door, even though he or she is qualified to provide the services you requested?
2. Does the agency have a minimum-shift requirement?
What if you want fewer hours on a particular day? Will you still be billed for the minimum shift? If you decide to reduce your hours below the minimum when you or your loved one is feeling stronger, will the agency continue serving you or will you be referred to another provider?
3. What is the agency's response time?
Can the agency respond quickly to urgent requests for service? Can services be initiated 24 hours a day 7 days a week? Can the agency accommodate last-minute changes?
4. What do the hourly rates cover? What is the total customer cost per hour?
Is there an agency fee? Is a deposit required? Does the agency pay mandatory payroll taxes for its direct-care staff or will that be your responsibility?
5. Will you be able to use your long-term care insurance policy to pay for services?
Does the agency meet your carrier's requirements? Can the agency provide the necessary documentation?
6. Does the agency provide any services in addition to personal care, homemaking, and companionship?
Can the agency provide skilled nursing services? Does the agency supply and install adaptive equipment or provide other home modification services that may be needed?

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