

Home Helpers®

Questions you should ask

A Guide to Help You Choose
the Best Home Care Provider



Choosing an in-home care agency for your loved one is no easy task. There are so many providers out there that it is difficult to distinguish the good, the bad and the ugly. How can you determine which agency to choose?

Here are a few questions we suggest you ask a potential home care provider before you make up your mind. Hopefully, the answers will help you get through this difficult step of choosing an agency you can trust.

1. Do you have screened W2 employees or do you use 1099 subcontractors?

Many of the companies offering in-home care are Registries. These will only list available caregivers, but do not offer any guarantees about them.

They do not pay employment benefits, insurance or unemployment. They also don't deduct taxes from payroll, do not pay Social Security, and do not issue tax return forms.

Therefore, if you are choosing a Registry, you will be responsible for issuing a tax return and all documentation related to employment, including

Social Security. Worse still, you can be responsible for their taxes if they do not file.

For this reason, you may want to choose an agency that has screened, W2 employees. They will take care of all labor issues and taxes.

Although many Registries offer caregiving services at a lower cost, be careful. In reality, the difference corresponds to the costs that you will have to bear, added to the headache of dealing with all the paperwork and exposure.

2. How can I trust your caregivers?

Having confidence that a caregiver has been properly screened is essential when leaving them in the care of your loved one.

When selecting an in-home care agency, be sure that they conduct a thorough background check on their employees. A federal background check for any criminal offenses in all 50 states is an important measure. Don't accept agencies which check only the state's driving license record.

Ask if the agency conducts drug testing among their employees as an additional step.

You should also inquire about hiring practices. Does the agency conduct interviews before hiring? Do the caregivers have certification (CNA/PCA) and experience? Do they check references? Do they provide orientation? Is there an employee manual listing protocols and procedures?

Each step throughout the hiring process is a guarantee that the best caregivers are selected. Finally, make sure you choose an agency with insured and bonded caregivers, as well as workers compensation insurance as extra safety layers.



3. How can I know if my loved one will have the right caregiver for his or her needs?

Before you trust an agency, make sure they conduct an in-home evaluation to assess all of your loved one's needs and preferences.

The agency's care specialist should ask as many questions as necessary to have a complete

understanding of the client's needs, personality traits, allergies, prescription medications, daily routine, and personal preferences. The answers will enable them to assign a compatible, qualified caregiver match to suit the needs of your loved one.



4. Are the caregivers supervised? Do they count on after-hours support?

Every caregiver/client relationship should be supervised closely to determine if the client receives adequate treatment and compassionate care. With supervision, it is possible to make ongoing recommendations to improve or adjust the quality of care and compatibility of the caregivers.

That is essential because the client's needs also change over time and the agency should be able to

observe and make immediate corrections when and where necessary.

Support during the night and on weekends is also crucial. Avoid agencies that will have your call answered by someone in a call-center. A quality in-home care agency should have a dedicated person 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, available to speak with the client or family, should the need arise.

5. Are the caregivers trained? How much training have they received?

Caregivers should have extensive training, including infection control, compassionate caregiving, HIPAA and legal and ethical procedures. They should have a sound understanding of behavioral management

when providing care to individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia. On-going training opportunities should be made available to the caregivers employed at the agency.

6. What instructions will the caregiver be given regarding my loved one care needs?

In addition to conducting a thorough in-home consultation with the client and their responsible party, the home care agency must design a detailed and individualized care plan. A copy of the established care plan should be available at the client's home, to

guide the caregiver's daily schedule and ensure that all of the agreed-upon care needs are met.

You should never trust an agency which will send a caregiver to your home without conducting an in-presence assessment first.

7. Do you have references?

Client recognition is a key indicator of a job well done. Conduct extensive online research to find out what customers are saying about each provider. The agency with more 5-star ratings and reviews is probably your best choice.

Besides that, ask if the agency received the Best of Home Care – Provider of Choice Award, which is the benchmark of quality care in the United States. The award is given by Home Care Pulse, which is an independent company specializing in the evaluation

of in-home care agencies. Every month they call clients of each of the agencies that they survey and ask questions to assess the compassion, training and work ethics of the caregivers and office staff. The highest ranking agencies earn the prestigious award. Additional references could come from the Better Business Bureau (BBB) and the Home Care Standards Bureau, which establish a minimum threshold that an agency must have. Those who exceed these standards receive an "A+" certification.



We hope this guide will help you choose the best option for care in your town. At Home Helpers, we strive to offer the best care available, and that is why we have become the most trusted agency in our region.

We are ready to answer your questions:

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