



Here are 8 crucial questions to ask potential In-home Care Agencies that can quickly separate the good ones from the bad:

1. What is your company's history? How long have you been in business?

Find out about the ownership and structure of the company. Are they run by a national organization, or small and local? Check that they are insured and find out if they belong to any professional organizations. Membership in outside organizations usually means that the company abides by some standards of practice, giving you some peace of mind at the level of care you or your loved one will receive. Also find out how long the company is in business. This isn't necessarily an indication of the quality of care that will be provided, but it can point to the stability and longevity of the company.

2. Are your Caregivers employees or contractors? How do you choose who works for you?

If the Caregivers are contractors, you may have different liabilities and tax reporting requirements than if all that was handled by the company. Finding out your obligations is important to keeping in compliance with any laws or regulations. Inquire about the interview process and how Caregivers' reported credentials are evaluated prior to hiring. You want a company that does rigorous background checks, including checking driving records, the Federal Criminal Database, and the National Sex Offender registry.

3. Do you work with doctors and other providers to develop a plan of care?

For situations where more than routine assistance with activities of daily living is provided, it's important to find out if your In-Home Care Agency will seek input from and comply with a doctor's orders. This is especially necessary for those with disabilities, who require special diets, or who have chronic conditions that involve specialized care.

4. What happens if my regular caregiver is unavailable one day? Do you have back-up caregivers?

Even the most reliable and dedicated of caregiver gets ill or needs a vacation. Smaller companies may have more difficulty providing last-minute replacement care, but if they have a plan in place for sending in back-ups, find out what it is. Larger companies may have a larger pool of workers from which to draw. Good agencies match every client with a compatible caregiver. If that caregiver becomes unavailable, they should have backup systems in place to ensure that the client's care continues and that their needs are always met.



5. How do you evaluate the care that your employees provide?

Continued evaluation and management of home Caregivers is important to help maintain a high standard of care. Ask about oversight for Caregivers in the field, and how often they receive site visits or performance reviews. A good agency is proactive in their partnerships with their clients and they should regularly monitor the caregivers' performance. They should also monitor the client's satisfaction on a regular basis.

6. How do you handle care needs outside of business hours?

Situations that require care don't always happen within the regular workday. What happens if you or your loved one needs care in the middle of the night? Who can you contact? Find out if the company has an after-hours emergency number, and if your regular In-Home Care Agency will be the one responding. Obviously, if it's a real emergency, dialing 911 first is top priority, but if there's an issue that a In-Home Care Agency can handle you need to know who to contact.

7. Can you provide references from current or former clients?

Finding out what current and former clients say about the service you might be receiving is the best way to get a sense of the real care provided. Reputable companies will be more than happy to give you references. Call each and talk with them about all the day-to-day questions you want answered. Also check local social media and review websites to see if there are any negative reviews. A few outlier bad experiences isn't anything to worry too much about as long as everything else about your chosen company seems on the up-and-up.

8. Does the agency provide ongoing training?

It's important to know that ongoing training is an important value in any company. Standards and practices change frequently – check to see what sorts of ongoing training or testing is provided for Caregivers. A good agency requires their caregivers to continue education throughout the year and we offer trainings, webinars, and hands-on seminars on a monthly basis.