



Choosing the Right Home Care Agency: Essential Questions to Ask

Finding the right home care agency for yourself or a loved one is crucial. Here are a few key questions to ask a potential home care agency:

Licensing and Caregivers:

- Licensing:** Is your agency licensed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission as a Personal Assistance Services (PAS) provider?
- Caregiver Status:** Are your caregivers W-2 employees with insurance, bonding and worker's comp, or 1099 independent contractors?
- Screening Process:** Describe your caregiver screening process. What type of reference and background checks do you conduct?
- Caregiver Experience:** Do you require professional caregiving experience, or do you accept experience solely with family and friends?
- Reference Checks:** Do you obtain written or oral references for your caregivers?
- Background Checks:** Are national background checks conducted, or are they limited to Texas?

Service and Communication:

- Cancellation Policy:** What is the notice period required to cancel service or make schedule changes without penalty?
- Caregiver Replacement:** Can I request a replacement caregiver if I'm not satisfied with the initial assignment?
- Clock-In System:** Do you utilize a paper-based or an online/electronic system for caregiver clock-in?
- After-Hours Communication:** How do you handle urgent issues arising after business hours?
- Family Portal:** Do you offer a family portal for viewing care notes, schedules, and making changes?

Rates and Billing:

- Rates:** Do your rates differ for weekends, nights, or holidays? When does "night" service begin?
- Long-Term Care Insurance:** Do you assist with filing long-term care insurance claims and paperwork?
- Payment Methods:** What payment methods do you accept, and how often do you bill?

Starting Service:

- Assessment:** Do you perform an in-person assessment? How long is this process? Is it no-charge?
- Timeline:** After the assessment, when can service begin?

By asking these comprehensive questions, you can gain valuable insights into the home care agency's practices and ensure they align with your specific needs and preferences.