



Caring compassionately for aging and disabled people since 1985

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10 IMPORTANT STEPS WHEN CHOOSING A HOME SERVICES AGENCY

1. Consider and compare at least 3 agencies.
2. Ask each agency if it is a licensed State of Illinois Home Service Agency. As of September 2008 any agency providing Home Services is required to apply for and obtain licensure through the state.
3. Ask how long the agency has been in business and if they are part of a franchise. Be cautious. Some agencies that are part of a franchise will state that they have been in business for several years but in reality they are talking about the home company, not the local franchise. It is best to choose an agency that has been in business for at least 5 years.
4. Ask the agency if it **directly employs** its workers or are they just independent contractors. **BEWARE!** If an agency does not directly employ their workers, there is no workers compensation on these workers. **YOU**, the homeowner, are assuming substantial risk if the independent contractor is injured while working on your property. **Always require the agency to produce a current certificate of worker compensation insurance** with a phone number to call & confirm that the policy is in good standing.
5. Ask about the hiring process. Look for rigorous standards by which people are hired.
6. Ask about the protocol for supervising employees in your or your loved one's home. Who manages the case? How frequently do they visit?
7. **Require and check references on the agency.** Require past & current client references. Look for client references that span a few years. By doing this you can determine if the agency has a favorable & consistent history of service in the community.
8. If at all possible, make a personal visit to the agency's offices. You may be surprised that some agencies don't have an office. When visiting the office look at how organized the office is. Does it appear to be a vital place of business.

9. Does the agency do a complete assessment in the home before starting services? Does the agency have a quality assurance or quality improvement plan?
10. Consider how professionally the agency dealt with you. Be sure the paperwork is well organized and thoroughly explained to you before services are started.