

# Caregivers are not all the same:

## Facts you should know.

Professional caregivers generally can be grouped into three different categories: agency employees, independent contractors with a registry, and independent caregivers. As there may be different business models for each caregiver category in the marketplace, the following information is intended as a general summary of typical differences between these categories. This is not intended as an exhaustive description of every home care model. To confirm whether the descriptions below apply to the caregiver you are considering, please consult with the caregiver and/or the referring agency or registry.



### Agency Employees

- Most agencies hire caregivers who are screened, trained, bonded and insured.
- An agency is typically responsible for scheduling, handling any performance issues, and paying applicable payroll-related taxes.
- Most agencies handle all risk as the employer by obtaining workers' compensation, liability and bond insurance.
- An agency typically provides additional support between the caregiver, client and the client's family. Agencies are also generally able to provide replacement caregivers should the assigned caregiver become unavailable.



### Independent Contractors with a Registry

- A registry usually recruits, screens and refers a caregiver to the client.
- The client may become the "employer" and may then be responsible for hiring, scheduling, handling any performance issues and paying/reporting applicable taxes (depending on the registry's model).
- The client may assume risk if the independent contractor is not covered by workers' compensation, liability and bond insurance.
- While the registry caregiver may have had a criminal background check and reference checks, it is possible that he/she is not receiving support, training and continuing education. A replacement caregiver may also be unavailable should the caregiver become unavailable (depending on the registry's model).



### Independent Caregivers

- Otherwise referred to as "the gray market," independent caregivers are usually responsible for marketing themselves and finding their own clients.
- They may undergo a criminal background check and reference checks on a case-by-case basis.
- The client may become the "employer" and may then be responsible for hiring, scheduling, handling any performance issues and paying/reporting applicable taxes.
- The independent caregiver may not receive support, training and continuing education. A replacement caregiver may also be unavailable should the independent caregiver become unavailable.\*
- The client may assume risk as the independent caregiver may not be covered by workers' compensation, liability and bond insurance.

*\*Adapted from Stages of Senior Care - Your Step-by-Step Guide to Making the Best Decisions, by Paul and Lori Hogan.*



HomeInstead.com/575  
716.630.0657

## Following, from the Home Instead network, are the questions to ask a non-medical home care service provider:

Is the individual an agency employee (recommended arrangement), an independent contractor with a registry (make sure you understand the implications), or are they working on their own/independent (be wary)?

Questions	Answers
Has the caregiver been trained? Does the caregiver receive ongoing training?	
By whom?	
Does this training include special dementia or Alzheimer's training?	
If the caregiver is agency provided, does the agency train all of its caregivers?	
Has the caregiver undergone criminal background and drug screening checks, and have personal references been secured?	
Is the caregiver bonded and insured? This means the agency, registry or independent contractor has insurance to cover any claims for which the caregiver is responsible, so the homeowner is not liable should something happen.	
Is the caregiver covered under a workers' compensation insurance policy?	
Can you check references of the agency, registry or independent contractor?	
Does the agency, registry or independent caregiver offer back-up/replacement caregivers?	
How much input will you have in selecting the caregivers?	
What restrictions (if any) apply to the services provided? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hours of service?</li> <li>• Lifting restrictions?</li> <li>• Who pays the caregiver and pays/reports any applicable taxes?</li> </ul>	
How much flexibility will you have in setting a schedule for services? Who is responsible for scheduling the caregiver/back-up caregiver?	
How much notice does the agency, registry or independent contractor need to begin or cancel service? What is the cost of service including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum hours of service per visit / week / month?</li> <li>• Special overnight rates?</li> </ul>	
What is the agency's, registry's or independent contractor's communication plan to keep families informed?	
Is a service deposit required? If so, how much?	
Are personal care services -- like assistance with bathing, dressing and using the bath- room -- provided?	
Does the agency or registry maintain a quality assurance or supervisory program?	