

When hiring a caregiver to come into your home, or the home of a loved one, caution and care must be used. The client is likely to become dependent to some degree on the caregiver and the caregiver may be spending time alone in your home without an outside observer.

There are three ways to hire a caregiver:

## Hire a caregiver yourself

Be careful, some criminals have taken ads in local papers offering home care services at reduced rates

- Check references
- Do a criminal check
- See if the worker is trained/certified to perform the level of care required
- Realize you will have to pay a reasonable rate for good care
- Ask for a drug and alcohol test
- For safety reasons someone other than the client should monitor the caregiver's performance
- You are the employer and responsible for supervising the worker. You are also responsible for taxes, workman's compensation, and insurance in case the caregiver is injured on your property
- If the caregiver does not show up or doesn't work out you will have to start over again

## Use an agency to assist you to hire the caregiver

- The agency will charge a fee to help you hire the caregiver
- The agency will do all the advertising and will check references but you will be making the final selection
- You will still be the employer and responsible for supervision, taxes, etc.
- If the caregiver fails to show up or doesn't work out you will have to start over again

## Hire a home care agency to provide the service

- This may cost more
- The agency is the employer and takes care of hiring, references etc.
- The agency is liable for what the caregiver does during the course of employment
- The agency is responsible for finding a replacement if the caregiver doesn't work out
- The agency has liability insurance and covers taxes, etc.



### Questions to Ask

- Will they do an assessment to determine what level of care is needed and can they provide that level of care?
- Is there 24-hour coverage?
- Is there a plan for backup if the worker doesn't arrive on time?
- What background checks are done?

- Is the agency bonded and insured?
- How long has the agency existed?
- How and to what degree has the worker been trained?
- Will the agency provide a replacement if you are not happy with the caregiver?
- What are the costs per hour?
- Are there a minimum number of hours?
- Are there different rates for evenings and weekends?
- Is the agency Medicare certified or certified for government funding?
- How will the worker be supervised?
- How and who do you contact with complaints and how will they be resolved?
- Does the caregiver have references, and have you checked them?

Call the Area Agency on Aging 24-hour Senior HELP LINE at 602-264-4357 or visit their website at [www.aaaphx.org](http://www.aaaphx.org) for more information on home care and a free in-home assessment of your situation.

### Do's and Don'ts

**Do** pay a reasonable fee for services.

If you need help with bills or finances **do** have someone other than the caregiver provide that service.

**Do** develop a friendly professional relationship with your caregiver.



**Do** consider reasonable gratuities for services well provided or for extras.

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**Don't** promise to make up for underpayment by including the caregiver in your will.

**Don't** pay minimum wage and expect quality skilled service.

**Don't** give the caregiver or agency more than agreed upon.

**Don't** give the caregiver access to your finances, checkbook, bank account or credit/debit card.

**Don't** lend the caregiver or their family money, cars, or personal possessions, or offer to "help them out". Don't fall for "sob" stories from the caregiver about how they need money or assistance.

**Don't** allow the caregiver's family or friends into your home.

**Don't** violate the policies of agencies that prohibit or limit gift giving.

### Warning Signs of Potential Problems

- Does the caregiver isolate the client from family and friends?
- Does the caregiver do all the talking? Do they make decisions for the client?

- Has the caregiver invited friends or family into the home or to use the client's car?
  - Has the client's personality changed since the caregiver was hired? Do they appear afraid?
  - Are there checks missing, or made out to cash or to the caregiver for more than the agreed upon amount? (look for missing checks in the back of the checkbook or in unused checkbooks)
  - Has the caregiver asked for payments in advance or asked for a blank check for payment?
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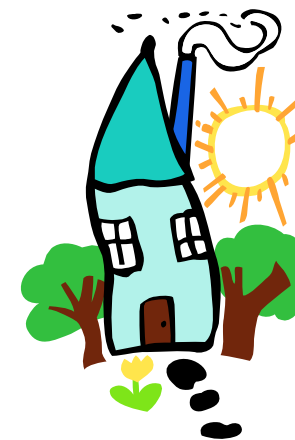
In Arizona it is illegal for a caregiver to threaten, intimidate, or financially exploit a vulnerable adult. Report this abuse or exploitation to:

**Mesa Police Department**  
Emergency: 9-1-1  
Non-emergency: 480-644-2211



*or*  
**Adult Protective Services Adult Abuse Reporting Line (24 hour Statewide):**  
1-877-767-2385

# SAFETY TIPS FOR SELECTING A CAREGIVER



This information is provided by the Mesa Police Department SAFE Senior Program in cooperation with Department of Economic Security Adult Protective Services, Area Agency on Aging, Region One and SAFEE of Pima County.