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10 Steps to Follow in the Search for Home Care Services

1. **Consider at least three agencies.** Compare and contrast to make the right choice for you.
2. **Ask how long the agency has been in business.** Be warned that certain agencies will say they have been in business for several years, when in reality, they may be part of a home care franchise, and the corporation may have been in business that long-not the franchisee. If the agency is part of a franchise, ask how long that specific operation has been serving your community. **It is best to select an agency that has been in business in your community for at least 5 years.**
3. **Ask each agency for its state license or registration number.**
4. **Call Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services and inquire as to if the agencies you are considering have any infractions or registered complaints against them.** These can be of concern to you. The Texas Dept of Aging & Disability Services phone number is 800-228-1570.
5. **Ask the agency if it directly hires employees, or utilizes independent contractors.** If an agency does not directly employ their staff, this means workers compensation insurance does not exist, and you are assuming substantial and/or devastating risk if the independent contractor injures themselves while on your property. **Always require the agency to produce current certificate of workers compensation insurance with a phone number for you to call and confirm the policy.**
6. **Require and check references!** Ask for past and current client references, and look for references that span a several year time period. By doing so, you can determine if an agency has a favorable and consistent history of service to the community. **Call at least two current and two past client references.**
7. **Make a personal visit to the agency's offices, if at all possible.** You will be surprised what you can learn in the office itself, if one exists. Examine how well the office is organized, and determine if it appears to be a vital place of business.
8. **Ask about the agency's procedure for interviewing and hiring.** Look for rigorous protocols and standards by which people are employed. Determine how thorough the procedures are.
9. **Ask about the agency's protocol for supervising employees while in your home or the home of a loved one.** Who manages the case? How frequently do supervisors visit? Is there a registered nurse on staff for employees to contact for assistance in the case of a medical question?
10. **Consider how professional the agency dealt with you.** Did they ask you a series of questions regarding your specific needs before quoting you a price for services? If an agency quotes a price before understanding your specific needs, be cautious. Consider if their paperwork was well organized and thoroughly explained to you, and the cost of their services was provided to you in writing before services were initiated.