

SINCE YOU CARE

A Series of Guides from MetLife® in Cooperation with the National Alliance for Caregiving

Hiring An Independent Caregiver

About the Subject

As people age—or due to a life-changing event such as a stroke—the ability to live independently may change. Over 44 million Americans spend time caring for family members or friends who can no longer live on their own without assistance.¹ Often a family member or friend steps in to help the person with the activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing, everyday chores, or preparing meals.

Over time, the need for assistance often increases, which in turn increases the time commitment from family and friends. Individuals often desire to remain in their own home, even though they need more help to stay there. It is frequently at this point that caregivers must begin to look at sources beyond the family to assist with care.



Caregivers face many challenges as they search for information and make decisions about how best to provide care to their loved ones. To help meet their needs,

MetLife offers SinceYouCare® — a series of guides which provide practical suggestions and useful tools on a variety of specific care-related products.

The home care industry is growing in response to the increased need for help in the home.

Caregivers can be hired from an agency or they can be hired as private or independent caregivers. When you hire a private or independent caregiver, that individual becomes your employee and you become the employer.

Frequently, families may utilize a privately hired individual for these reasons:

- They can hire whom they choose based on their best judgment.
- They have more control and choice in the care plan, which may provide more flexibility for the family.
- The cost is typically lower than that of an agency.
- There may be more flexibility in terms of the caregiving schedule.

Things You Need to Know

If you decide to hire an independent caregiver you should be prepared to:

- Locate potential caregivers
- Screen applications
- Conduct interviews
- Run background checks

- Administer payroll, including social security and other taxes

Locating a Caregiver

One of the first resources to access is the ElderCare Locator.

The number is located in *Resources to Get You Started*.

The ElderCare Locator is a free public service from the U.S.

Administration on Aging that will help you to locate your local Area Agency on Aging.

The local agency may have a list of caregivers in your area that are available.

Your primary care physician may have recommendations for caregivers or be able to suggest a local social worker to assist you. If the person in need is presently in a hospital or nursing home/rehabilitation facility, ask the facility's discharge planner or social worker for recommendations.

Check with your local senior center or senior clubs as they may have a list of individual caregivers.

Speak to the director of your church, synagogue or religious or spiritual affiliation; they may be able to help in your search for a caregiver.

Friends, neighbors and perhaps other family members may have recommendations or sources that they have used and found helpful for such care.

You can check the local paper in the classified section and look for individuals who offer home care services. You can also place your own ad in the paper, listing your requirements for a caregiver. Make your ad as specific as possible. Be sure to include the information about general responsibilities, hours of employment, smoking policy, driving, and language requirements. Include your phone number and the hours you're available to receive calls (see attached sample ad copy).

The Interview

Once you have candidates for the position, you will need to conduct interviews. You can narrow the field by first conducting a telephone interview. During the conversation confirm:

- Number of days per week and hours per day you will expect them to work
- Caregiving duties and expectations
- Salary and benefits
- Language requirements



- Valid driver's license
- Smoking policy

After successfully screening applicants over the phone, you will want to meet them for a more in-depth interview.

Each caregiving situation is unique, so questions should reflect your personal situation and position requirements. It is helpful if you have another person with you during this stage of the interview process, so you can compare notes once the meeting is complete. Examples

of some questions you may want to ask are:

- What is your prior work experience? Have you worked with people with similar impairments?
- What are your qualifications?
- Do you have a résumé with a detailed work history?
- Do you have references from past positions? Can they be contacted?
- Are you bonded?
- Do you have any health restrictions that would limit

your ability to do the job?

- Do you own a car and have a valid driver's license? (This is important if you expect the caregiver to provide transportation for doctor's visits, etc.).
- Are you able to prepare basic meals?
- Can you commit to the days and hours required?
- Will you submit to a background check and drug test?

When you complete the interviews, make it clear that

employment is dependent on passing a thorough background check. Confirm a telephone number and address where the candidates can be reached for follow up. Let them know you will call them as soon as the interviews have been completed.

Background Check

It is always necessary to conduct a background check to verify past employment, criminal violations, driving infractions and that they are licensed if they say they are.

Call the past employers that the candidates listed as references.

Ask:

- How long was the person employed?
- Why were their services terminated?
- Were they dependable?
- Would you rehire them?

If you have Internet access, you may be able to locate a company that will perform a background check on-line for you for a minimal fee. Examples of such companies are:

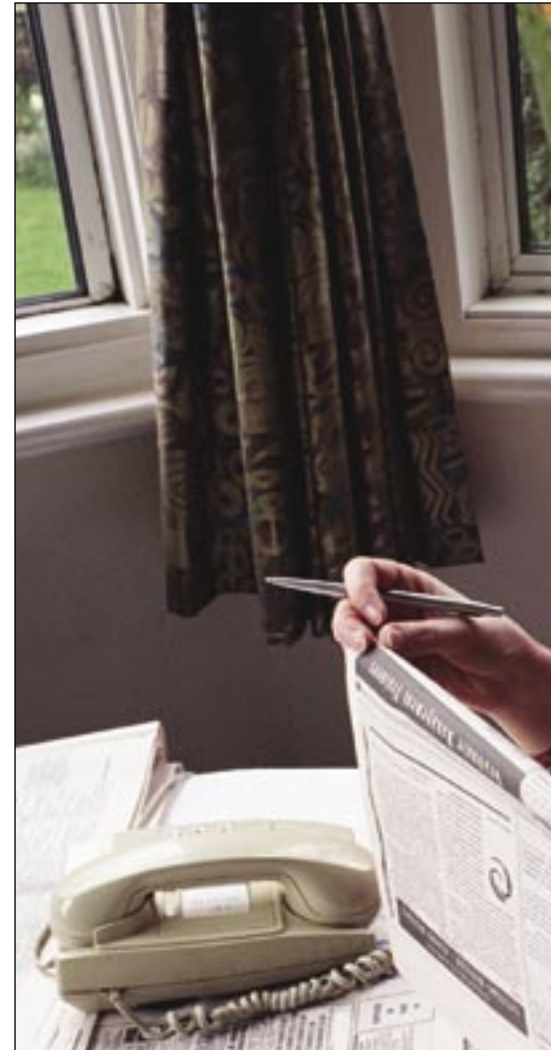
- www.knowx.com
- www.informus.com
- www.crimcheckinc.com
- www.docusearch.com

Additional information beyond the basic search is sometimes offered at an additional cost.

Your local yellow pages may offer names of companies that perform background checks. These may be found under “Investigators” or “Detective Agencies.”

Ask the local police department if they can perform a criminal background check. If they do not, they may be able to refer you to an agency or person that does background checks.

If the candidate states they are a certified nurse’s aide (CNA), confirm in which state they hold the certificate. Obtain the certificate number and Social Security number of the candidate and call the state’s Board of Nursing to confirm certification. If the person is a home health aide (HHA), four states, as of January 2002, have HHA registries—California, Indiana, Minnesota, and New Jersey. Again, you will need the certificate number and Social Security number to confirm certification. *Note: You will need a signed release from potential employees stating that they agree to a background check. There should also be a place for their Social Security number on the release.



Hiring a Caregiver

Once you have reviewed all of the interview material, completed background checks and contacted references, you can make your decision. Call the person as soon as possible to confirm the job position. You should make an appointment to meet with him or her to review the job responsibilities and sign a written contract (see attached sample of contract). Prepare two copies of the contract so you each retain a signed origi-



nal. In this written contract be sure to clearly explain the following items:

- Starting date of position
- The hours and days of employment
- Time off/vacation policy
- Pay scale, benefits and pay periods
- The person responsible for supervision and job performance monitoring

Helpful Hints

Here are some items that should be reviewed with caregivers when they begin their employment:

- In a notebook placed next to the phone, list the name of current doctors, pharmacies, local hospital, your cell phone and work numbers, and the names, addresses and phone numbers of a neighbor or friend.
- In the notebook, include a local street map and write

down the phone number, street address and directions to your home.

- Note the location of your home's water shut off, breaker boxes, smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in the notebook and acquaint the caregiver with their locations.

Some items to remember as an employer are:

- Protect all valuables by moving them to less conspicuous places or placing them in a safe. Make an inventory list with pictures and dates for future reference.
- Be sure that payroll records, which include social security and other taxes, are kept current and accurate.
- Be prepared to make unannounced and unexpected visits to the home when the caregiver is there. Watch for any signs of abuse or neglect and take action immediately.

All the checklists, interviews, and résumés cannot ensure safe, quality care. Personal references from other caregivers and your own instincts are ultimately the best indicators of the appropriate person to care for a family member or friend. You may have to hire several caregivers before you find the perfect fit.

Resources to Get You Started

Books and Publications

A/PACT: Aging Parents and Children Together.

This is a series of articles on such topics as older adults and fraud, making a home safer, caregiver tips, legal issues etc. The series can be ordered from:

The Consumer Response Center, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, D.C., 20580 202-382-4357, TDD 202-326-2502 or on the Internet at www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/services/apact.

How to Care for Aging Parents

A compassionate, single-volume reference to the many topics associated with caring for aging parents, covering practical matters including emotional, financial and legal issues. Morris, V. (1996). New York, NY: Workman Publishing Company, \$15.95 ISBN: 1563954353

Resources for Caregivers

This guide was prepared by the National Alliance for Caregiving and the MetLife Mature Market Institute to assist individuals and

families who have either assumed the role of caregiver or anticipate future caregiving responsibilities. Single copies are available free from:

MetLife Mature Market Institute
57 Greens Farms Road
Westport, CT 06880
You may also call 203-221-6580 or e-mail, MatureMarketInstitute@metlife.com

The Comfort of Home: An Illustrated Step-by-Step Guide for Caregivers

A guide that starts with the basics and contains information that caregivers can use at all stages of caregiving. Meyer, M.M. (1998). Portland, OR: Caretrust Publications, \$23.00 ISBN: 0966476700

When Someone You Love Needs Nursing Home, Assisted Living, or In-Home Care

A comprehensive book, written by psychologists, that covers essential material in easy-to-understand language. Included is a comprehensive resource section, checklists and worksheets. Bornstein, R. and Languirand, M. (2002). New York, NY: Newmarket Press, \$16.95 ISBN: 1557045348

Internet Sites

AARP

AARP is a nonprofit organization that offers educational programs, services and support for adults 50 and older. The AARP Web site contains an extensive caregiver section that provides information on caregiver support, long-term care, home care and housing. Publications are available online and can also be mailed free upon request. Write AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, call 888-687-2277 TTY: 877-434-7598, or access their Web site at www.aarp.org.

National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC)

Established in 1996, the National Alliance for Caregiving is a nonprofit coalition of national organizations that focuses on issues of family caregiving. The Alliance was created to conduct research, do policy analysis, develop national programs and increase public awareness of family caregiving issues. The Web site has a clearinghouse with over 1,000 consumer materials, books and videos.

National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC)

4720 Montgomery Lane, Fifth Floor, Bethesda, MD 20814

www.caregiving.org

Administration on Aging

This site is maintained by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and provides resources, news and developments and information for older adults.

www.aoa.gov

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A)

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging is the umbrella organization for the 655 Area Agencies on Aging throughout the United States which provide information and services, and coordinate and administer programs for older adults. The federally-funded *Eldercare*

Locator, established by the U.S. Administration on Aging in 1991, and administered by N4A, provides callers with information about local services by zip code. Call 800-677-1116, 9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. ET, or go to www.n4a.org.

Useful Tools

Enclosed are four tools to assist you with hiring a caregiver. They are:

- Sample Ad
- US Department of Justice Employment Eligibility Verification, Form I-9 (Rev. 11-21-91)N
- Form W-4
- Sample Caregiver Contract

Endnote

¹ *Caregiving in the U.S.*, National Alliance For Caregiving and AARP, Funded by the MetLife Foundation, April 2004.



About the Authors of Since You Care®

Since You Care guides are prepared by the MetLife Mature Market Institute in cooperation with the National Alliance for Caregiving and MetLife's Nurse Care Managers.

MetLife Mature Market InstituteSM is the company's information and policy resource center on issues related to aging, retirement, long-term care and the mature market.

MetLife Nurse Care Managers are available to MetLife's long-term care customers and their caregivers, on a daily basis, to help identify and resolve caregiving questions and concerns through counseling and referral.

National Alliance for Caregiving is a non-profit coalition of 38 national organizations that focuses on issues of family caregiving.

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This information is general in nature. It is not a substitute for obtaining guidance from a healthcare, financial or other professional.

Sample Newspaper Ads

★ Help Wanted ★

Companion Wanted: I am seeking an experienced, compassionate and dependable companion for my (person) in (location) for (days/hours/times per week). A valid driver's license and a car are essential. Please provide a résumé that outlines previous experience with older adults, qualifications and three references, which will be checked. Salary and benefits commensurate with expertise. Please call (phone number) at (fill in times).

★ Help Wanted ★

Aide Wanted: I am seeking an experienced, licensed and compassionate personal care aide for my (person) in (location) for (days/hours/times per week). A valid driver's license and a car are essential. Please provide a résumé that outlines previous training and experience, qualifications and three references, which will be checked. Salary and benefits commensurate with expertise. Please call (phone number) at (fill in times).

Caregiver Agreement*

_____ and _____ agree to the following
(Name of Caregiver) (Name of Employer)

on _____, 20__ . Employment as a caregiver to _____
(date) (name of care recipient)

will commence on _____, 20__ .
(date)

Care will be provided at (address) _____

Care will be provided on (list days) _____

Care will commence on days specified at _____ (circle one) am/pm
and will end at _____ (circle one) am/pm on those days.

The employer will pay the caregiver the sum of \$ _____
(circle one) per hour/week/bi-weekly/monthly.

Payment for services rendered will take place on _____ (time and day).

Responsibilities to the care recipient are as follows (list responsibilities): _____

Other: (Such as vacation, holidays, special considerations) _____

***Please consult with your attorney to determine if there are any other agreement provisions which are appropriate for your situation.**

_____, 20__ .
(Signature of Caregiver) (date)

_____, 20__ .
(Signature of Employer) (date)