

A Consumer's Guide To Homemaker Companion Agencies



**By the Connecticut Department of
Consumer Protection**

Homemaker companions can be hired through a homemaker companion agency or a homemaker companion registry.

- Agencies place **their** employees in homes.
- Registries match homemaker companions, who are at least partly compensated by the consumer or who are independent contractors, with those who need services.

If you need household help for yourself or a family member and are considering a homemaker companion, there are a few things to consider:

- Interview more than one agency before signing a contract — it's important to trust that the agency will provide oversight of their employees and will follow Connecticut's rules and regulations.
- If considering a registry rather than an agency, you or your loved one may be responsible for filing paperwork with the IRS and could also be responsible for paying employment taxes.
- Make sure to enter into a contract or service agreement that includes the full scope of services you need.

What a homemaker companion can assist in:

- Laundry, housekeeping, cooking, shopping, errands, personal hygiene, rides to appointments and other nonmedical services.

What they can't do:

- Companions may **NOT** provide **ANY** medical services such as take blood pressure, administer medications, or provide physical therapy.

A HCA must:

- Obtain and maintain a Homemaker Companion Agency (HCA) registration with the CT Department of Consumer Protection
- Provide you with a written contract or service plan within seven days of providing services
- Not provide a higher-skilled individual at a higher price than needed
- Conduct a comprehensive background check of a prospective employee
- Conduct in-person or video conference interviews with all prospective employees
- Provide business records to DCP for inspection upon request
- Train staff as mandated reporters — they are to report any safety or health issues immediately
- Hold a \$10,000 surety bond or insurance policy
- Maintain notes with each client's file that include observations, problems, complaints, plans of action, telephone contacts, reports of in-home visits by supervisors, and the findings of all investigations

A registry must:

- Provide written notice specifying the legal obligations of such registry
- Advise you that you may be responsible for paying employment taxes, workers compensation and overtime for the homemaker or companion
- Advise you to consult a tax professional if you are uncertain of your responsibility for payment of taxes

Written contracts and service plans shall provide:

- A list of services to be provided, along with the terms and costs
- A definition of the employee, provider, and client employment relationship
- Safeguards for securing personal client information
- A list of job categories such as “live-in” or “daily call,” and job duties
- Notice that you can cancel a contract or service plan at any time if it does not state a specific duration
- The HCA’s policy for acceptance of tips and gifts
- An explanation of how to file a complaint with the agency
- An explanation that you have a right to request changes to, or review the contract or service plan
- An explanation that their services may not be covered by insurance
- Notification in writing that a background check was performed

Be sure to ask questions and make sure you understand everything you are signing.

Resources

- Complaints can be filed with DCP by emailing dcp.complaints@ct.gov.
- Verify an Agency or Registry registration at <https://www.elicense.ct.gov/>
- If you suspect or believe that an elderly person is a victim of abuse, neglect (including self-neglect) exploitation or abandonment call 911.
- If there is not immediate danger call an emergency contact at the Protective Service Intake Lines:
 - **During Business Hours (Toll Free):**
 - In-State: 1-888-385-4225
 - Out of State: 1-800-203-1234
 - **After Hour Emergencies (Toll Free):**
 - In-State: 2-1-1
 - Out of State: 1-800-203-1234

Contact the Department of Consumer Protection

**Main Line
(860) 713-6100**

**Consumer Complaint Center
(860) 713-6300**

**Toll Free:
(800) 842-2649**

dcp.complaints@ct.gov

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