

Section 2

Supervising Your Worker

Managing Your Own Care

Once you have your home care worker in place, the next step is to be very clear about your needs and preferences. This involves good communication and taking an active role in your own care. This way you and your home care worker can develop a strong working relationship where both your needs are met.



Actively managing your own care demonstrates that you are in charge. You direct your employees and are clear about how you expect care and services to be done. Some differences between being dependent on your home care worker and actively managing your own care are indicated below.

When **dependent** on a home care worker:

- Your home care worker performs tasks in a certain way with little or no input from you.
- You are the one who is told when and how to do things, such as when to get up, when to take medications, or when to shower.
- You make few decisions on your own and have little control over your own life.

When **actively managing** your care:

- Your home care worker performs tasks according to directions from you.
- You decide when to get up, when to go to bed or when to shower, and take responsibility for the administration of your own medications.
- You control your own life through decisions you make.

Actively managing your own care allows you more flexibility on how and when care and tasks are completed.

Training Requirements

All home care workers are required to take several courses in order to continue getting paid, and in some cases, keep their job. Below is a list of the types of training required in order to become and remain a home care worker in Washington State:

- All home care workers are required to complete **Caregiver Orientation**.
- All individuals are required to complete **Safety Training for Home Care Workers**.
- Nearly all home care workers must complete a course called, **Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving**.
- All home care workers (except parent providers) are required to complete **continuing education** annually.

Training as described above is typically conducted in a classroom setting and is the responsibility of your home care worker to schedule and complete in a timely fashion.

Training, Specific to Your Needs

You are, however, responsible for much of the **hands-on** training of your home care worker. In order to meet your specific needs, you will help your worker understand how you want tasks to be completed.

This means you will sometimes show an employee, but many times it means you will be giving verbal direction. There are times you will be correcting your worker to ensure tasks are completed in the way that you prefer.

Timesheets

Each month, you will be signing your name to each employee's timesheet. You should compare the scheduled hours you asked the home care worker to work with what they wrote on their timesheet. If there is a discrepancy, you will need to point it out to the home care worker and make corrections as necessary.



When you sign the timesheet, you are confirming that the home care worker worked the hours listed. Your worker will be paid based on the number of hours recorded. The information on the timesheet must be accurate in order for your worker to be correctly paid for services provided.

Your case manager may ask to see completed timesheets. The home care worker keeps one signed copy; you keep another signed copy. Copies of timesheets should be kept for two years.

**RESOURCE
SECTION**

Sample Time Sheet

Payments and Benefits for Home Care Workers

Payment is made to your worker through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Social Service Payment System (SSPS). Payment is once per month. DSHS pays Social Security and unemployment taxes. Contact your case manager if you have questions regarding payment and invoicing.

SEIU Healthcare 775NW is the representative bargaining unit for home care workers serving DSHS clients.

Planning Ahead: Worker Emergencies, Vacations or Illnesses



There will be times when your home care worker will need to change plans, sometimes at the last minute.

Additionally, your home care worker may be a student, have a family or have other jobs. Negotiating emergencies, vacation and what to do if your home care worker is sick can be challenging.

It is suggested that you keep a list of back-up workers in the event your home care worker can't make it to work. Be

clear with your worker that you need adequate notice when he/she will be unavailable. When you offer the job, ask if he/she knows of times that they will be unavailable, no matter how far in the future. This shows that you are willing to accommodate his/her needs if possible.

Replacement Workers

Home care workers are required to give at least two week's notice prior to any vacation. Some consumers ask their home care worker to help locate a replacement in emergencies or event of illness. Be sure that replacement workers are also in contact with your case manager before they start working for you.

Whatever your preference in regard to emergencies, vacations and illnesses, be very clear about what you expect from your home care worker.

Contact the Home Care Referral Registry to
find workers available in your area.

Call 1-800-970-5456

Planning Ahead: Your Emergency Action Plan

Preparation is the best tool you can have for unexpected emergencies. Help your home care worker to be well prepared to quickly and efficiently respond to a health related emergency. If an emergency does occur, they may be the only person in the home to provide assistance. Talk about what to do and who to contact and when to contact them. Use the topics below and the Emergency Contact List in the Resource Section to guide your discussion.

Calling for Help

Your worker needs to know:

- **When** to call for help
- **Who** to call for help
- **What** to tell emergency responders

Your worker is trained to call for help in any situation he/she thinks might be an emergency. For example, if you:

- Have serious trouble breathing.
- Pass out and cannot be easily awakened.
- Have fallen and cannot get up on your own.
- Accidentally take a poison.
- Have any serious change in your health.

Examples of Safety Emergencies

- Fires that cannot be put out quickly and easily.
- Any threat that puts you or your worker in danger.

If you experience abuse, neglect or exploitation
call 1-866-END-HARM
(1-866-363-4276). If it's
an emergency and you
are in immediate danger,
call the police.



**RESOURCE
SECTION**

Emergency Contact List

Workplace Safety

All home care workers in Washington State are covered by workers compensation. Workers compensation is a program that pays for medical expenses and lost wages for workers who have been injured on the job.

Safety Training for home care workers is a big part of the workers compensation program. All home care workers have to attend a safety training class. In this class, they learn how to protect themselves from injuries and illnesses. They learn to lift people and objects safely, what to do in the event of an emergency, how to reduce the risk of tripping or falling, and other topics.



You, as a consumer, play an important role in keeping your worker safe. Your home is also a workplace and you are considered the direct manager of your home care worker(s). This means that you should take measures to help keep your worker(s) safe. If your employee becomes injured, this will ultimately affect your own quality of life as you may need to find a replacement.

Loose carpets, clutter and rickety stairs all are examples of potential safety hazards that could cause injury to your employees.

You may want to complete a Hazard Assessment and take measures to reduce accidents and injuries in your home.



Evaluations



Evaluations provide a time for you and your home care worker to review goals, tasks and performance. Evaluations can serve as a means of providing constructive feedback and encourages open discussion.

Evaluation Styles:

You can use this time to be positive and provide encouragement. However, if there are issues you need to address with the home care worker, this is the time to correct an issue before it becomes a habit (constructive feedback). Be sure to document issues and discussions in the event the behavior continues and you need to take further action.

Be specific in pointing out any problem areas and be prepared to work with your employee in solving the problems. Develop your own evaluation process – use your job description to help you define areas for improvement for your worker.

Do not wait until the evaluation time to address issues or skills that need immediate attention.



Termination and Resignation

Sometimes the most difficult part of being a consumer is terminating employment of a home care worker. Some employees do well when they start a new job, but as they become comfortable with your relationship they may begin to take advantage of your willingness to be flexible. Other issues can arise, such as safety or honesty that make it imperative that you terminate an employee.

When you must confront an employee, be sure to take appropriate steps to ensure your own safety. If necessary, arrange for someone else to be with you during the discussion. Refer to any documentation you have kept that shows work patterns, past evaluations, or records of attendance or punctuality.

You, as the consumer, have the right to terminate an employee at any time. You should always be comfortable with your employee and satisfied with his/her work. Otherwise, you should replace him/her if the issue in question hasn't improved after counseling.

When addressing your home care worker:

- State your reasons clearly without attacking him/her personally.
- Give a period of notice, usually two weeks. This allows him/her time to find a new job or place to live; it also allows you time to find a different home care worker.
- Be sure to terminate the employment agreement and carefully document reason(s), discussions and outcome.

Tip: When to Make a Decision:

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, things just will not work out. It may be time to re-evaluate your working relationship and decide if it is time to make a change. Contact your Case Manager regarding your plans.

Resignation

If your home care worker resigns they are required by contract to give you a two-week written notice and notify your case manager so that you will have time to find a new worker.

Rights and Responsibilities

Excerpts taken from DSHS form – *My Responsibilities as the Employer of my Individual Providers (IPs)**:

The following are my responsibilities as an employer:

- Supervising the daily work and activities of my Individual Provider (IP).
- Arranging work schedules, locating a back-up IP as needed, and replacing an IP who resigns.
- Contacting my case manager if:
 - I have any concerns about my individual service plan or about the quality of the care that I am receiving from my Individual Provider.
 - I am not receiving the services for which my IP is billing.
 - I am not receiving the services authorized in my service plan.
 - I choose to change or add a provider.

* *Individual Provider* is another term used to describe people who provide in-home services. They are also called personal assistants, aides, caregivers or home care workers.

Your case manager will review your rights and responsibilities with you when you receive services.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Since your home care worker will be assisting you with personal tasks, they will come to know a lot of personal information about you, your family, your home, and how you function.

If your home care worker is learning for the first time how you live, it can be tempting for them to tell their friends, spouse and/or family. This may be from excitement about the job and could even be complimentary of you, but nevertheless, it is a clear violation of your right to privacy. This is serious enough that it could be cause for termination.

Other instances of privacy invasion include times when your home care worker develops a relationship with one or more of your family members and the family member shares information about you without your permission. This is not acceptable. Remember the home care worker works for you and only you.

Of course, privacy and confidentiality works both ways. Since you have a relationship with your home care worker, you will probably learn things about them that are private. You may have multiple workers that never have the opportunity to meet. Although it may be tempting for you to share information about one worker with the others, resist this temptation.

Contact the Home Care Referral Registry
to find workers available in your area.

Call **1-800-970-5456**

Privacy and Confidentiality and Case Managers:

Your home care workers can share information about you or your condition **only with the case manager. In the following instances your home care worker may contact your case manager if they:**

- See that you develop any new problems or have personal care needs that are not being met;
- Have worries or questions about changes in your physical condition including any falls or not eating;
- Have concerns about changes in your mental condition, including talk of suicide or other patterns of serious mental illness or confusion;
- Have suggestions or know of additional resources (for example, durable medical equipment to help with daily living tasks) that would add to your quality of care or independence;
- Have suspicions, questions, or concerns about abuse, neglect, or exploitation;
- Have questions about changes made to the assigned schedule (days and time of work schedule);
- Plan on taking a vacation;
- Change their name, telephone, or address;
- Have questions about the number of hours they are approved to work or which tasks they are authorized to do;
- They are unable or uncomfortable performing the tasks outlined in the service plan;
- They are asked to perform tasks not outlined in the Service Plan or for other people living in the household;
- Decide to stop working for you.

They must also contact the case manager if you enter a hospital or move into a residential setting.

The case manager or social worker relies on both you and your employee to keep them aware of any concerns or changes in your mental or physical health.