

Assisted Living: Consumer Checklist

The following checklist will be useful in evaluating assisted living residences during a visit.

Moving In

What does the moving in/out process entail?

How is the initial needs assessment handled?

Does the residence have an affiliation with a home health agency? With a hospital? With a nursing home?

If you need hospital or nursing home care, will your apartment be held for you?

Is there a charge for your apartment while you're away?

Service Planning

Are residents and families involved in developing the service plan?

Does the residence have specialized services for people with Alzheimer's or other dementias and disabilities?

Does the residence have programs in other specialized areas?

How are medical emergencies handled?

What if a resident's health care needs change? Who makes the decision that a resident's needs have changed to the point where an alternative move is needed?

Does the residence use a pharmacy that provides delivery, consultation and review of medicines?

Services

How does staff supervise and assist a resident in taking medicine?

Do medications have to be purchased at a specific pharmacy?

Does staff assist in making arrangements to have nursing and/or medical care?

Are the services of a physical, occupational, or speech therapist available or arranged?

Are there additional charges for linens and towels, if provided by the residence?

How is personal laundry handled? Is there an additional charge to have it done for you?

Are housekeeping services provided? How frequently?

Social Programs and Activities

What kinds of group and individual recreational activities are offered?

How does the residence get involved with community events?

How are everyday transportation needs handled (medical appointments or errand services)?

Are the resident activity (social) areas appropriate for the prospective resident?

Are there supplies for social activities or hobbies (games, cards, crafts, gardening, etc.)?

Are religious services held on the premises? Does the residence assist in making arrangements for attending nearby services?

Staff

How frequently does staff turnover?

Ask about the residence's practices and philosophy regarding staffing.

Is there a staff training program?

Observe staff and resident interactions. Are they positive?

Is staff courteous to residents? To each other?

Does staff respond quickly to resident requests for assistance?

Is the executive director or appropriate staff person generally available to answer questions or discuss problems?

Does the residence have a volunteer program?

Costs and Financing

What is the monthly or daily cost?

What is included in the basic fee?

What is extra? (Ask for a list of specific services not covered in the basic rate.)

Do you make a deposit on the room? Are there any other payments before you move in?

Is any portion of the deposit returned when you move out?

Can agreements or contracts be modified?

What happens if funds are depleted and full payments can no longer be made?

How much notice is required by either party prior to terminating the lease?

Dietary Services

How many meals are served a day?

At what times are meals served and how long is the dining room open?

Are snacks provided between meals?

What is the food like? How does the menu vary from meal to meal? Does the menu offer enough choices?

Does a dietitian plan or approve menus?

What about special diets?

Are residents involved in menu planning?

When may residents eat in their apartments?

Is there an additional charge for receiving meals in the resident's apartment?

May residents have guests for meals in the dining room?

Is there a private dining room for special events and occasions, if desired?

Living Space and Accommodations

Are the living spaces and common areas attractive, comfortable and clean?

Does the residence have furnished and unfurnished rooms?

May the resident share his/her room with another person?

Are overnight guests allowed?

Is extra storage space available?

Is there easy access for people with disabilities?

Is there a courtyard or patio for residents and visitors?

Is there a place for residents to park their cars? Are there any fees for parking?

Does the residence provide ample security?

Does the residence have an emergency evacuation plan?

Are residents allowed to have pets or pet visits?

Licensure and Certification

Does the residence have a current license/certification from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs? Is it displayed?

Is the residence certified to participate in the Group Adult Foster Care program?

Is the residence a member of a trade or professional association?

Location

Visitors are important! Is the residence convenient for frequent visits of family and friends?

Is the residence near a shopping and entertainment complex?

Can the resident access a medical complex easily?

**Source: *MECF.org (Massachusetts Extended Care Federation) and
MassLongTermCare.org***