Make sure the prospective caregiver has a current home care license for the services you will need and that it is issued by Georgia’s Department of Human Resources, Home Care Services Division. Both individuals and agencies doing any type of home care services, whether skilled nursing or non-medical, must have a license.

* Call the Home Care Services Division between 8am-5pm, Monday thru Friday, at (404) 657-1509 to determine if the applicant or agency has the required license. The state requires licensed parties to have criminal background checks, TB tests, 8 hours of on-going training per year, and they must pass on-site inspections of records of care provided. Licenses are issued on an annual basis for Skilled Nursing, Personal Care, or Companion/Sitter services. The state also handles complaints regarding home care—be sure to ask them about complaints against your applicant or agency.

Check references and conduct a criminal background check. Include a check in the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicles (Driver’s License Bureau) if transportation is a part of the job description.

* You will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) issued by the IRS to do this. This number will also be used to complete the IRS-required tax forms for the payroll taxes you must pay, as you will be taking on the role of employer. Call (800) 829-3676 and ask for Form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number. Agencies are required to conduct criminal background checks and they usually check personal and employment references as well.

Check to see if the individual is certified to do the work you require. Agencies are required by law to maintain certifications of their personnel.

* **Companions/Sitters** – perform no personal care duties (no bathing, dressing, toileting, grooming, feeding or transferring assistance) and need no certification, but do require a state license (see #1).

* **Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA’s) or Personal Care Assistants (PCA’s)** – needed for personal care duties (assistance with the Activities of Daily Living: bathing, dressing, toileting, grooming, feeding or ambulation). Contact Georgia Health Partnership at (404) 982-0411.

* **Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN’s) or Physical and Occupational Therapists** – certified for any nursing skills or therapy. Contact the Georgia Board of Examiners of Licensed Practical Nurses at (478) 207-1620 or (478) 207-1640.

* **Registered Nurses (RN’s)** – certified for skilled nursing procedures, including administering medication. Call the Georgia Board of Examiners of Licensed Practical Nurses at (478) 207-1620 or (478) 207-1640.

Make sure the applicant has a federal tax I.D. number (Social Security Number).

* If the employee is paid more than $1,200 in a calendar year, Social Security taxes and Medicare taxes must be paid by the employer—you have assumed the role of employer is you hire these individuals privately. As the employer, you or the executor of your estate may also be subject to filing Georgia Unemployment Insurance in addition to Federal Unemployment Insurance. A Social Security Number is necessary to complete this application. Agencies include payroll taxes, state and federal unemployment insurance, and filing in their fees.

Find out if the applicant has liability insurance. Agencies generally carry comprehensive liability insurance on their staff to include coverage for bodily injury or property damage caused due to a staff member’s negligence, however only bonding is actually required by the state.

* In other words, if the private caregiver does any damage to your house or possessions, who will pay for the damage?

* If they have an injury while on the job on your property, do they have workman’s compensation insurance or will you have to pay their medical bills from your homeowner’s policy? Are they bonded for theft or dishonesty?

Conduct a personal interview to determine: a) their personality, b) their skills and experience, c) their reliability regarding transportation, and d) their arrangements to guarantee coverage for you in case of personal illness or emergency.