



Assisted Living Checklist

The following guidelines are adapted from Guide to Choosing an Assisted Living Community, produced by the Assisted Living Federation of America (ALFA). Using these guidelines consistently will help you make apples-to-apples comparisons of the assisted living communities you visit.

Appearance and Environment

- Do you like the exterior appearance of the community? Does the location meet your needs?
- Do you like the interior décor?
- Does staff greet you and make you feel welcome?
- Do the executive director and community residents seem to have a respectful, cordial relationship?
- Do residents socialize and appear happy and comfortable?
- Do residents offer positive reports about the community and the staff?
- Do the residents seem like they'd be good neighbors/companions for you or your loved one?
- Are staff members neat, presentable and professional?
- Do the staff members interact with residents and one another respectfully?
- Are the staff members you encounter during your tour friendly to you?
- Are visits welcome any time, even when unannounced?
- Is the community clean and free of odors?
- Is the temperature comfortable?

Design and Layout

- Does the layout of the community seem well designed for your needs?
- Is the floor plan simple and easy to follow?
- Do doorways, halls, and rooms accommodate wheelchairs and walkers?
- If there are multiple floors, are the elevators convenient and in good working order?
- Are there grab rails handy? Are cupboards and shelves easy to reach?
- Is there a comfortable mix of artificial and natural lighting?
- Are there sprinklers, smoke detectors, and clearly marked exits?

Needs Assessments, Residency Agreements

- Is a consumer disclosure form available that clearly discloses the personal care and supportive services offered, fees for those services as well as any other extra expenses, and move-in and move-out provisions?
- Can you review the residency agreement before move-in?
- Is an individualized written care plan created for each resident? If so, how frequently is it reviewed and updated?
- How does the community assess which services residents need? Are those assessments updated on a regular basis? Are residents, residents' family and physicians consulted for those assessments?

Costs, Finances, Policies

- What government, private, or corporate programs are available, if any, to help cover resident costs?
- Are additional services available if a resident's needs change?
- Are different cost tiers offered for different levels or categories of services? If so, what are they?
- Are billing, payment, and credit policies fair and reasonable?
- Does the community accept long-term care insurance?
- Does the community accept Medicaid?
- What are the refund and transfer policies?
- Are residents required to purchase renters' insurance for personal property in their apartments?
- What is the process for resolving residents' complaints?
- Is the resident bill of rights clearly posted or available for review?

Medication & Health Care

- What are the community's policies regarding storage of medication, medication assistance, staff training and supervision, and record keeping?
- Can residents self-administer their own medication?
- Does the community staff coordinate home health-care visits from a nurse, physical therapist, occupational therapist, etc., when necessary?
- Are there clearly stated policies and procedures for responding to a resident's medical emergency?
- Are ancillary services such as hospice or physical therapy available, and how are these services provided? Are there additional charges for these services?

Personal Services & Amenities

- Is a list of care services and associated fees available?
- Is there a nurse on staff?
- Is staff available to provide 24-hour assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) if needed? (ADLs include dressing, eating, mobility, hygiene and grooming, bathing, and toileting.)
- What training does the staff receive?
- Is housekeeping service provided for residents' apartments?
- Can residents arrange for transportation on fairly short notice?
- Are there barber/beautician services offered on-site? If so, when and how often?
- Does the community provide scheduled transportation to doctors' offices, hair appointments, shopping, and other resident activities?

Apartment Features

- Are different apartment sizes and floor plans offered?
- Are there single and double occupancy apartments?
- Do residents have their own lockable doors?
- Is a 24-hour emergency response system accessible from the apartment?
- Are bathrooms private and designed to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers?
- Are residents able to furnish their own apartments? If so, to what extent? What is provided?
- Do all apartments have a telephone, cable or satellite TV, and Internet access? How is billing for those handled?
- Can residents store and cook food in their apartments?
- Is the kitchen provisioned with a refrigerator, sink and stove and/or microwave?
- May residents smoke in their apartments? In public spaces?

Social & Recreational Activities

- Is there a posted daily schedule of activities? Do you observe such events in progress?
- Is there a community library?
- Do residents participate in activities in the neighboring community?
- Does the community have its own pets?

Social & Recreational Activities (continued)

- Are residents' pets allowed in the community? If so, who is responsible for their care?
- Do volunteers, including family members, visit and participate in community activities or programs?
- Does the community create a sense of inclusion by encouraging residents to participate in activities?

Dining Services

- Does the community provide three nutritionally balanced meals a day, seven days a week? Do menus vary from day to day and meal to meal?
- Are snacks available?
- Can residents request special foods? Can the dining service accommodate special dietary needs?
- Are common dining areas available, pleasant and clean?
- May residents eat meals in their apartments if they choose?
- Are there set times for meals, or can residents take meals when they choose?

Additional Questions

- Does the community conduct criminal background checks on employees?
- Does the community train staff on elder abuse and neglect? Is there a policy for reporting suspected abuse?
- Does the community have a special care unit (SCU) wing or floor for residents with cognitive impairments such as Alzheimer's disease? If so, is it secured to prevent wandering?
- Can visiting family members spend the night? If so, is there a charge for this?
- What are the most common reasons why a resident may be asked to move out of the community?
- Is the state inspection report available for review?