



Supervising Your Personal Care Assistant (PCA)



General Tips For Supervising Your PCA

After you have hired a Personal Care Assistant (PCA), it's important to establish a clear understanding between you and your PCA as to exactly what you expect. It's also a good idea to keep a daily journal to refresh your memory of events if needed.

You could:

- ⇒ Let your PCA know your needs upfront and how you would like these things done.
- ⇒ Provide a thorough list of duties / responsibilities, complete with an explanation of your expectations of what it takes to do the task correctly. Review this in person with the PCA.
- ⇒ Discuss your rules and expectations. Don't be shy, be specific. The PCA works for you and should do what you want him or her to do related to your needs.
- ⇒ Establish a performance evaluation and do a review of performance after the first month, third month, sixth month, and 12 months. After that, complete every 6 and 12 months. If duties change, review more frequently.
- ⇒ Rate performance on "needs improvement," "meeting expectations," or "doing more than expectations." [See sample Performance Evaluation below.]
- ⇒ Set goals you would like to have your PCA achieve to improve his / her skills and abilities to meet your needs.
- ⇒ Impose a liberal timeframe for learning the job you've hired the PCA to do. Remember that each PCA learns at a different rate of speed.
- ⇒ Don't rush training and let your PCA know there is no rush. This could be critical to ensuring success with your PCA. Let them know that you don't expect them to understand or memorize all of your needs in the first week or month.
- ⇒ Try to make your PCA feel relaxed and welcome in your home so learning comes easier without any stress. Reassure them that in time they will know the job even better than you.
- ⇒ Decide in the beginning if you will be providing meals, snacks, or drinks for your PCA or if they should bring their own. This is your decision to make. Remember, these meals are not covered by Medicaid.
- ⇒ If your PCA doesn't seem to understand your needs, then explain your needs again to clear up any uncertainty.
- ⇒ Communication is the key to a good relationship. Tell your PCA, "When in doubt, it's always better to ask than guess what to do."

If, after a reasonable amount of time, your PCA doesn't pick up on your needs or the assigned duties, then explain that you may need to look for another individual as this job just might not be for that PCA. Be nice, but be specific in areas in which the PCA does not perform in accordance with your expectations.

The Need To Be On Time Is A Must

Being a PCA involves certain responsibilities and expectations that must be met. A PCA must realize that your life and well-being are in his or her hands, so being punctual is of great importance.

You might:

- Stress the need to be on time. If your PCA is chronically late, state what penalties you might impose (e.g, a verbal warning, loss of hours to another PCA who is timely, getting fired). Set guidelines for firing.
- Stress the need to have plenty of notice if your PCA is sick or has an emergency and that you don't want him or her to wait until the last minute before calling to report an unplanned absence.



- Ask your PCA to call you if he or she is running late and let you know how late (this could be due to oversleeping, traffic congestion, accidents, etc. – this happens in any job).
- What is too late? Most good employees show up at least 5 to 10 minutes before their shift starts to ensure being on time. But anything later than the time scheduled is being late. Some PCAs tend to make a habit of being later and later, especially if you allow this to occur. Don't be afraid to keep notes and point out that you've noticed that the PCA has missed X

minutes of work by arriving late over X period of time.

Understanding Each Of You Has Special Needs

- ⇒ Stress the fact that you wish your PCA to keep your personal matters confidential. If the PCA has any work-related issues with you, this should be discussed with you, and not with another PCA or any other people.
- ⇒ Sit down with your PCA periodically and ask whether he or she has problems or complaints with the work situation.
- ⇒ Understand your PCA's need for time off due to illness, injury or vacation. Ask for plenty of advance notice if possible. (Emergencies do happen though, so be prepared with a back-up.)
- ⇒ Discuss possible schedule changes in order to meet everyone's needs.
- ⇒ Treat your PCA like you would want to be treated.
- ⇒ Say "Thank you" for a job well done at the end of the work shift or at various times throughout the day.
- ⇒ You might treat your PCA to lunch on occasion or with a special gift or card on holiday or birthday occasions if you can afford it.

Terminating Or Firing Your PCA

Sometimes it's necessary to dismiss or fire a PCA for any number of valid reasons. Some valid reasons for firing:

- The two of you are simply incompatible (sometimes personalities just don't mesh).
- Failure to follow your instructions or complete daily tasks.
- **ABUSE, NEGLECT, and EXPLOITATION** should **NEVER** be tolerated. An abusive PCA should be reported immediately to the police and Adult Protective Services at 1-888-832-3858. Examples of Abuse / Neglect / Exploitation:
 - ✓ Inflicting pain physically, verbally, or mentally
 - ✓ Foul or abusive language used against you or others
 - ✓ Stealing or identity theft
 - ✓ Withholding medicine and / or services from you
- Lying, tardiness, laziness, or simply not being motivated to do routine jobs.
- Sleeping on the job. PCAs are not paid to sleep.
- Sassing or talking back to you.
- Never let a PCA intimidate you with threats. Wait until he or she leaves, then fire the PCA by phone. If the PCA needs to return keys or pick up personal items, then arrange this while another person is present.
- Taking too many breaks to talk or text message on cell phones.
- Using work time to play on a computer or watch TV.
- Reckless driving while transporting you for pleasure, meetings, or appointments.
- Not showing up for work or not calling to let you know he or she won't be there (this is cause for immediate termination).

Should you need to fire or terminate your PCA, you should try to give fair notice if possible. If you think the PCA may be angry or unreasonable, ask a trusted friend to be present. If you fear there may be some type of retaliation or confrontation, you can telephone your PCA.

To dismiss your PCA by telephone or in person, you might say:

"I'm sorry, but you just don't seem to understand my needs (or "you've been chronically late," or "it's just not working out between us"). So in all fairness and so not to waste each other's time, I must let you go. I'm giving you notice that I am replacing you. Thank you for your time and good luck."

Firing a person is never easy, and hopefully you'll never have to face this experience. If you are unable to terminate employment of your PCA yourself, ask a trusted friend to handle this for you. Try to avoid a situation where any confrontation may arise. It's better to err on the side of your safety and well-being.

- Don't forget to collect keys or other items that belong to you that your PCA may have or have access to.
- Document any events that may have led to this termination.
- Be sure that nothing belonging to the PCA is left behind, so there is no need for the PCA to return.
- Try to remain as friendly as possible, even though this could be difficult.

More Tips And Suggestions

- Keeping track of cash money, writing checks, using credit cards may be difficult for you to do. If you need help, be certain to ask a PCA you can trust. Otherwise, ask your family or a trusted friend.
- Legal documents and financial records should be kept in a locked strong box or closet if possible.
- If you have multiple PCAs working for you, assign those PCAs you trust with a specific task. For example, one PCA may handle your cash or check writing, while another PCA may assist you with legal documents, etc. By doing this, you know exactly who to turn to if something doesn't balance or isn't quite right.

Daily / Weekly Task List

You can print a daily / weekly Task List or Check List for even the most routine jobs.

Sample Task Checklist – Personalize Your Own

- ✓ Wash hands regularly
- ✓ Cook and prepare breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack(s)
- ✓ Wash dishes
- ✓ Toileting tasks
- ✓ Bathing – ADLs
- ✓ Dressing
- ✓ (Think of something you need)

OR

Sample Chart – Personalize your own

TASK	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Meal prep							
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							
Bathing							
Dressing							
Toileting							
Washing dishes							
Laundry							
Other*							
Refill supplies Notify when low							

*You can add as many tasks as you want.

Signature of PCA _____ Date _____

Customize your own list to satisfy your own individual needs.

You can also develop and print a monthly PCA schedule to show who works and when.

Sample PCA Performance Evaluation

Cindy's Task Chart and Performance Evaluation			
Tasks / Chores	Needs Improvement	Meeting Expectations	Above Expectations
Wash hands regularly	✓		
Cook & prepare meals		✓	
Breakfast		✓	
Lunch		✓	
Dinner			✓
Snack(s)			✓
ADLs, eating, dressing		✓	
Bathing		✓	
Shaving	✓		
Driving	✓ Drives too fast		

Signature of PCA: _____

Date: _____