

The Facility Tour Checklist

25 questions that surface what star ratings can't. Ask them casually, watch how people answer, and write down what you notice, you'll forget by the third tour.

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Facility:

Date/time of tour:

Monthly quote: \$

Tour tip: go at 11:30am. You'll see lunch (eat it), midday staffing (count), and residents at their most active. A second unannounced drop-by on a weekend evening tells you the rest.

Staffing: the strongest quality signal

Staffing predicts quality better than anything else you can observe on a tour.

- 1

How many caregivers are on the floor right now, for how many residents? (Count for yourself too.)

Answer / what I saw:
- 2

What's your staff turnover been like in the past year, and how long has the director been here?

Answer:
- 3

Who is here overnight: how many staff, and is a nurse in the building or on call?

Answer:
- 4

Do the same caregivers work with the same residents consistently, or does assignment rotate?

Answer:
- 5

Watch one staff–resident interaction. Do they know the resident's name? Do they crouch to eye level?

What I saw:

Safety & care

- 6

What happens, step by step, when a resident falls?

Answer:
- 7

How do you handle medications: who administers, and what's the double-check?

Answer:
- 8

What would make you ask a resident to leave (discharge criteria)? What needs can't you handle?

Answer:
- 9

When were you last inspected by the state, and can I see the report? (Hesitation is the answer.)

Answer:
- 10

How do you communicate with family: routine updates, and when something goes wrong?

Answer:

Dignity & daily life

Smell the hallways, look at the bulletin board dates, watch residents' faces. Buildings tell the truth.

11 What does a typical Tuesday look like for a resident like my parent?

Answer:

12 Can residents wake, eat, and bathe on their own schedule, or the facility's?

Answer:

13 Is the activity calendar real? (Pick today's 2pm activity and go look.)

What I saw:

14 How do you handle a resident who declines to participate, bathe, or take meds: what's the approach?

Answer:

15 Do residents look engaged, groomed, and comfortable, or parked in front of a TV?

What I saw:

Food

16 Eat the meal being served today. Would you eat it three times a day?

Verdict:

17 How do you handle dietary restrictions and strong preferences?

Answer:

18 What happens if a resident misses a meal or won't eat: who notices, and when?

Answer:

19 Are snacks and drinks available between meals, without asking?

Answer:

20 Is dining assisted with patience? (Watch whether anyone is being rushed.)

What I saw:

Contracts & costs

Ask these of the business office, not the tour guide, and get every answer in writing.

21 Exactly what is included in the base rate, and what costs extra? (Ask for the full fee schedule.)

Answer:

22 What triggers a rate increase: care level changes, annual raises, or both? What were the last two years' increases?

Answer:

23 What's the deposit, and what's refundable if we leave in the first 90 days?

Answer:

24 What happens if money runs out: do you accept Medicaid after a private-pay period?

Answer:

25 Can I take the contract home before signing anything? (The only acceptable answer is yes.)

Answer:
