



covenant  
care

HELP AT HOME

COVENANT  
CAREGIVERS

# CLIENT HANDBOOK



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HELP AT HOME

HOME HEALTH CARE  
COVENANT CAREGIVERS  
MEMORY CARE  
HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE

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## Office Contact Information

The following staff members will be involved in your care:

Healthcare Service Coordinator(s):

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Administrator:

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Certified Nursing Assistant/Companion:

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Registered Nurse (RN)/Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN):

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To contact any of the above staff members, please call

**1.855.CARE.365**

Covenant Care  
Covenant Caregivers  
Corporate Office  
5041 North 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Pensacola, Florida 32504  
850-433-2155  
LIC # 20476096

## Performance Improvement and Corporate Responsibility

Our goal at Covenant Caregivers is to provide care and support that meets the needs and expectations of our clients and their families. We are always eager to hear your suggestions about improving our services. If you are concerned at any time that your rights are not being respected, please bring this to the attention of the Administrator or Director of Nursing, or any other member of the Covenant Caregivers team. We want you to be satisfied with the services you receive from us. We encourage you to call us at any time with any problem or concern so we can better serve you. Most concerns are followed up the day they are received. Your recommendations will be shared with appropriate Covenant Caregivers staff.

In addition to discussing your needs with the treatment team and/or the Administrator/Director of Nursing, complaints may be shared with:

Senior Director, Organizational Integrity  
Covenant Care  
5041 North 12<sup>th</sup> Ave.                      1-850-433-2155  
Pensacola, Florida 32504                1-850-365-9653

Our Corporate Responsibility Program is designed to detect and prevent violations of organizational or professional standards and federal, state, or local laws and regulations. If you believe that you have observed professional misconduct or a violation of laws or standards, we encourage you to report this information through an anonymous, confidential hotline at 1-866-691-1967. Your concerns will lead to a prompt investigation and follow up report by Covenant's Corporate Responsibility Officer.

## Questions or Concerns

We will make every effort to satisfy your needs. It is the policy of Covenant Caregivers to encourage all clients to express grievances/concerns regarding policies, care, or services and to recommend changes without coercion, discrimination, reprisal, or unreasonable interruption of care or services.

If for any reason you feel that our staff has failed to follow our policies, has in any way denied your rights, or you are not satisfied with our services, please call our Administrator immediately, without fear of discrimination or reprisal. Most problems can be solved at this level. It is our policy to investigate all complaints and recommendations received and notify you of the outcome. Our policy assures client care will be carried out in a manner ensuring the best interest of our clients.

## Client Satisfaction

Our clients and family members are very important to us. Please ask questions if something is unclear regarding our services or the care you received. At regular intervals, Covenant Caregivers sends out a client satisfaction survey. Your answers help us to improve our services and ensure that we meet your needs and expectations. If you receive one, please complete the survey and return it as soon as possible.

## **It is your right to report abuse and make a complaint.**

- **To report suspected Medicaid fraud, please call TOLL FREE 1-866-966-7226**

The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) defines Medicaid fraud as an intentional deception or misrepresentation made by a health care provider with the knowledge that the deception could result in some unauthorized benefit to him/herself or some other person. It includes any act that constitutes fraud under federal or state law related to Medicaid. To report suspected Medicaid Fraud, please call the Attorney General toll-free at 1-866-966-7226, if reported, you may be eligible for a reward. Callers may request to remain anonymous.

## **Important Numbers**

**FOR ALL LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES CALL 911**

- **To report a complaint regarding the services you receive, please call TOLL FREE 1-888-419-3456.**

- **To report abuse, neglect, or exploitation, please call TOLL FREE 1-800-962-2873.**

- **If you suspect a child or an adult has taken medications or any substance that may be harmful, please call poison control TOLL FREE: 1-800-282-3171**

## **Client's Rights**

**The client ("client") has the right to be fully informed, both verbally and in writing, of the following before care is initiated:**

- Right to be informed of the medical plan of treatment
- Right to participate in the development of the medical plan of treatment
- Right to have a copy of the medical plan of treatment, if requested
- Right to be informed of specific service fees to be paid by the client and those charges covered by insurance, third party payment or public benefit programs
- Right to be notified of any changes in service fees paid by the client within 30 days of the effective date of the change

**The client has the right to**

- Receive service without regard to race, creed, gender, age, handicap, sexual orientation, veteran status or lifestyle.
- Receive service without regard to whether or not any advance directive has been executed
- Make informed decisions about care and treatment plans and to receive information in a way that is understandable to the client
- Be advised of the availability and appropriate use of the Florida Covenant Caregivers for Health Care Administration Hotline numbers. To register a complaint about an agency or any health care facility you may call, without charge, 1-888-419-3456; this line is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

- Be referred to another organization of choice if our organization is unable to meet the client's needs or if the client is not satisfied with the care he/she is receiving
- Voice dissatisfaction regarding treatment, care or respect for property that is, or fails to be, furnished by anyone providing services on behalf of Covenant Caregivers, without reprisal for doing so
- Documented response from Covenant Caregivers regarding investigation and resolution of the dissatisfaction
- Have all property treated with respect
- Confidentiality of the personal health information according to the Privacy Act and the Covenant Caregivers's policy for accessing and disclosure of clinical records, if requested

## Notice of Privacy Practices

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.**

We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal, which is why we are committed to maintaining the privacy of your health information. This notice applies to all of the records of your care and it will explain ways in which we may use or disclose information about you. This notice will also describe your rights and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of your health information.

### How We May Use and Disclose Your Health Information

The following categories describe ways Covenant Caregivers may use and disclose health information. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed; however, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

- **Treatment** - We may disclose information about you to doctors, nurses or other personnel who are involved in your care and treatment. For example, when a member of your health care team visits you, information regarding your condition and treatment will be documented. This information will be shared as needed among your health care providers to make decisions about your plan of care.
- **Payment** - We may use your health information so that the treatment service you receive may be reviewed for payment.
- **Health Care Operations** - We may use and disclose your health information in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the care and services that we provide. For example, we may use the information in your record to review the care and results in your case and other cases like it. This information will then be used to improve the quality and success of the healthcare you receive.

- **Marketing** - We occasionally ask clients and families to share their stories for our educational brochures and/or website. For example, we may ask you to tell us about the care you or your family have received.
- **People Involved with Your Care or With Payment for Your Care** - We may make your health information known to a family member, other relative, close friend, or other personal representative that you choose. We may make your health information available to those individuals, insurance companies or institutions providing payment for your care. We may share information with parents or guardians, if allowed by law.
- **Appointment Reminder** - We may use and disclose information to contact you as a reminder of a healthcare appointment.
- **Continuity of Care** - We may use health information to coordinate your care with health professionals other than Covenant Caregivers. We may also disclose information to tell you about health related benefits or social service programs that may be of interest to you.
- **As Required By Law** - We will disclose information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law.
- **Health Oversight Activities** - We may disclose information to a health oversight Covenant Caregivers committee for activities authorized by law such as audits, inspections and licensure.
- **Disaster Preparedness** - We may disclose your health information to emergency management services or any entity assisting in a disaster relief effort so that your family can be notified about your condition and location.
- **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety** - We may use and disclose information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another person.
- **Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors**- We may share your health information to identify a deceased person, determine a cause of death, or to do other coroner or medical examiner duties allowed by law. We also may share information with funeral directors, as allowed by law.
- **Other Covered Entities** - We may use or share your health information to help healthcare providers that relate to healthcare treatment, payment or operations. For example, we may share your health information with a healthcare provider so that the provider can treat you.

- **Business Associates** – We may contract with business associates that will provide service to Covenant Caregivers using your health information. They will only utilize your health information to do the job we have asked them to perform. The business associate must sign a contract to agree to the privacy of your health information.
- **Other Uses of Health Information** - Other uses and disclosures of your health information will be made only with your written authorization or that of your legal representative. You may revoke the authorization at any time, in writing. If you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose information about you for the reason covered by your written revocation.

### **Your Rights Regarding Your Health Information**

Although your health records are the physical property of Covenant Caregivers, you have certain rights with regard to the information we maintain about you. You have the right to:

- Request restrictions on uses and disclosures of your health information for treatment, payment and health care operations. We do not, however, have to agree to the restriction. Restrictions do not apply to disclosures that are made mandatory by health oversight activities or law.
- Receive confidential communications of your health information. For example, you may request that we only contact you by mail or during certain hours of the day.
- Inspect and obtain a copy of your client record on file with Covenant Caregivers.
- Amend your health information if you feel that the information we have is inaccurate or incomplete. We may deny your request to amend information if the information was not created by us or is not a part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy.
- Receive an accounting of disclosures of your health information. This would be a list of disclosures or use of your health information that did not pertain to treatment, payment or health care operations.

Covenant Caregivers is required by law to: make sure that the privacy of your protected health information is maintained, provide you with this notice of our legal and privacy duties, and abide by the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.

Covenant Caregivers reserves the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain.

## Questions Regarding the Privacy of Your Health Information

If you have questions regarding information contained in this notice or if you wish to exercise your rights as listed in this notice, you may contact Stephene Garnett, Administrator of Covenant Caregivers, at 850-433-2155.

## How To File A Complaint

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with Covenant Caregivers or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 61 Forsyth St. SW, Suite, 16T70, Atlanta, GA, 30303, 1-800-368-1019. To file a complaint with Covenant Caregivers, you may contact Covenant Caregivers Department of Organizational Integrity at 1-850-365-9653. *Clients and/or caregivers will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint.*

## Criteria for Admission

Acceptance for provision of services can be made by an individual client's request. Services will be provided based upon the individual's health needs and requests. The service must be the type that we can provide.

If we cannot meet your needs, either directly by our Covenant Caregivers or indirectly through service agreements with other providers, or if your home environment does not support our services, we may not admit or continue to provide services to you.

## Services

Covenant Caregivers can provide a combination of skilled and non-skilled services. Services appropriate to the needs and request of the individual will be planned, coordinated, and made available under the direction of qualified staff.

For clients that are receiving services by a CNA or Companion, please be advised that a Registered Nurse is available to make visits, at your request, for an additional cost. Please contact Covenant Caregivers for additional information.

Every effort will be made to accommodate your individual needs within the parameters set by state rules and regulations for home care and the constraints of your insurance carrier, or other second party pay source. However, it is important to remember that staff may have many clients scheduled during the day and their schedules may be influenced by emergencies with other clients, traffic, and weather. However, we will do everything reasonable to meet the time of arrival and departure for your scheduled care.

Services provided are:

- Personal Care Services (bathing, toileting, feeding, etc.)
- Homemaker Services
- Companion/Escort Services
- Supervision by registered nurse (if requested)

### **Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Responsibilities**

The primary function of the CNA is to provide personal care. A Covenant Caregivers representative will discuss your specific needs with you and develop a personalized assignment plan. At each visit, the aide will complete the assigned activities before leaving you. A nurse is available to make supervisory visits, at your request, for an additional cost.

#### **Personal care services:**

- Assistance with or giving bath
- Dressing
- Hair Care (not cutting)
- Oral hygiene
- Shaving
- Transfers and ambulation

#### **In addition to personal care services, a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) can provide the following services:**

- Meal preparation and cleanup
- Maintaining a clean and safe bedside and bath area
- Exercises when assigned
- Washing dishes associated with preparing meals
- Personal laundry for the client
- Light housekeeping
- Shopping
- General household laundry
- Escort to appointments and events including the transportation associated with the trip

### **Homemaker/Companion Responsibilities**

In general, a Homemaker/Companion can provide all of the services of a CNA except for the personal care services.

Renders home making services to clients in the home setting as follows:

- Maintains the home in an acceptable state of cleanliness and safety depending upon the client's and the caregiver's resources
- Perform the functions generally undertaken by the customary homemaker including such duties as preparation of meals, laundry, shopping, and care of children
- Performs casual, cosmetic assistance, such as brushing the client's hair, assisting with make-up, filing, and polishing nails, but not the clipping of nails
- Stabilize the client when walking, as needed, by holding the client's arm or hand
- Socialization and reading to client
- Offers emotional support

In the event of a medical emergency our staff will contact EMS (911) followed by the primary caregiver as listed on the Client Face Sheet.

## Scheduling

If the services requested are intermittent in nature (i.e. bath visits, errands, escorts, etc.) it is important to know that Covenant Caregivers staff may have several clients in one day. Due to the number of clients and traveling involved, we are unable to promise specific times of day for each visit. The frequency of visits will depend on your needs as determined by you and Covenant Caregivers or the needs identified by your insurance coverage. The length of each "Visit" will be defined in the agreement or depend on the aide's assignment as described in the service agreement. You may request services in increments of hours (shifts) instead of visits.

## Client responsibility

In order to provide the best outcome possible for the client, Covenant Caregivers, client, family and/or Caregiver must work together.

To ensure that the client receives quality care, the responsibilities are:

- Assist in developing and maintaining a safe home environment.
- Inform Covenant Caregivers at least 72 hours in advance when you have a conflict and need to change or cancel your scheduled/ shift or visit.
- Inform Covenant Caregivers if there is a change in physician, insurance or ability to pay for services as indicated at acceptance to Covenant Caregivers.
- Participate in the development and update of your plan of care
- Accept responsibility for the medical consequences of refusing all or part of your care.
- Follow Covenant Caregivers policies, which restrict activities of Covenant Caregivers personnel.
- Sign the note for each Covenant Caregivers health care worker at the end of each visit, sign only one per visit.
- Contact Covenant Caregivers if any other company, agency, or person begins to provide any services to you.
- Request clarifying information concerning anything you do not understand.
- Advise Covenant Caregivers of any problems or dissatisfaction with your care.
- Remain under a doctor's care while receiving Covenant Caregivers services.
- Notify Covenant Caregivers if you have an Advance Directive or if you make any change in your Advance Directive. Provide a copy of the advanced directives to Covenant Caregivers.
- Treat all staff with consideration and respect.

## Charges

- Covenant Caregivers will bill responsible party/client on a monthly basis.
- If requested, Covenant Caregivers may forward invoices to client's insurance company, or other third party, only upon verification of coverage. The Covenant Caregivers's forwarding of invoices does not release responsible party/client from their payment responsibilities for all services rendered, if insurance company denies payment. Responsible party/client is responsible for full payment immediately.
- If Covenant Caregivers receives payment from both responsible party and a third-party payer, Covenant Caregivers will reimburse the responsible party/client. If responsible party/client receives payment from third party payer, responsible party/client must reimburse Covenant Caregivers immediately of such payment.
- Covenant Caregivers makes no representations, and no Covenant Caregivers caregiver is authorized at any time to make any representations, regarding insurance payment for services.
- Equipment & Supplies: To complement your care, there may be equipment needed, such as assistive devices, i.e., walkers, canes, wheelchairs, oxygen, etc., that are not supplied by Covenant Help at Home, but for your convenience, may be ordered for you by Covenant Caregivers personnel. Additional charges or co-payments may be included. You will deal directly with the supplier concerning these charges.
- Any change in the financial responsibility or services fees of your care will be communicated to you verbally and in writing within 30 days of the effective date.
- If you are responsible to pay any part of your bill you will be notified in advance and receive a formal bill from our billing department.
- Covenant Caregivers caregivers are never allowed to accept gratuities.

## Discharge or Transfers

Discharge, transfer or referral from Covenant Caregivers may be the result of several situations, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Treatment goals are achieved.
- Resources inadequate to meet the resources or level of care you require.
- Situations may develop affecting your welfare or the safety of our staff.
- Failure of the client to follow the attending physician's order.
- Non-payment of charges.
- Failure to meet insurance coverage guidelines.

A termination summary will be completed upon termination of services, per state regulations.

## Advance directives

Every adult has the right by law to make certain decisions concerning medical treatment and to have those wishes respected. We encourage you to fill out a paper known as an “Advance Directive,” which says in advance what kind of treatment you want or do not want. If you become too sick to make decisions for yourself, this document will provide your physician and health care team with guidelines for your care. Advance directives also take the stress and responsibility for making difficult decisions off your family. Listed below are several kinds of advance directives, each of which serves a different purpose.

The **Living Will** is a witnessed written document or a witnessed oral statement which contains your instructions concerning life-prolonging procedures or treatments and your wishes for health care. It may be used to make choices about your health care if you are unable to communicate and have a terminal condition, and or if you are in an irreversible coma and are unable to communicate. It is important to be as specific as possible about what you would want in such areas as artificial nutrition and hydration (fluids or I.V.), ventilator support, or intravenous antibiotics. A Covenant representative can talk with you about preparing a living will, which is sometimes drawn up by a lawyer and which must be witnessed by two people.

The **Designation of a Health Care Surrogate or Proxy** allows you to choose someone to make health care decisions for you if you become mentally or physically unable to make decisions for yourself. This person should be a family member or someone you trust, who will respect and follow *your* wishes, even though their own wishes for you might be different. It is also helpful to choose an alternate in case the primary person named as surrogate is unable or unwilling to act on your behalf. The health care surrogate or proxy **can**:

- Consult with your health care team to provide informed consent for treatment.
- Apply for public benefits (Medicare, Medicaid) on your behalf.
- Authorize transfer and admission to a health care facility.
- Have access to medical records and authorize release of records.
- Function on your behalf for as long as you designate.

The surrogate or proxy **cannot**:

- Authorize or approve mercy killing or euthanasia or any deliberate act or omission to end life other than to *permit the natural process of dying*.
- Authorize abortion, sterilization, electroshock therapy, psychosurgery, experimental treatments not approved by the FDA, or voluntary admission to a mental health facility unless the client has ordered it in writing or the surrogate obtains a court’s consent.
- Withhold or withdraw life-prolonging procedures for a pregnant woman prior to viability.

The **Durable Power of Attorney** is a document, usually drawn up by a lawyer, which allows you to appoint an agent to make health care decisions which have not already been covered in the living will. A person, financial institution, or non-profit organization may be designated. The Durable Power of Attorney may also include the authority to make business and financial decisions. It is a more formal document that requires notarization.

The **Do Not Resuscitate Order (“DNRO”)** is a document that instructs medical personnel not to try to restore breathing or heartbeat after they have stopped. DNRO are frequently initiated for people with a terminal illness, with serious or disabling conditions they are not expected to recover from, or who are elderly or frail and would suffer greatly as a result of CPR. “Do Not Resuscitate Orders” can allow a person to die peacefully without further trauma.

The “DNRO” (in Florida) has to be written on a special form which your Covenant representative can provide, and it must be signed by your doctor. In Florida, it should be posted in an obvious place so that if emergency medical personnel are called they will be aware of your wishes. The small portable card which comes with it should be carried by the client when he or she is away from the home.

- Copies of all advance directives should be given to your health care providers and kept in an easy-to-locate place.
- You should also have an open, frank discussion with your surrogates, proxies, and/or family about your wishes.
- You may also revoke your advance directives at any time; verbally, in writing, or by destroying the documents.
- You are not required to have an advance directive in order for Covenant Care to take care of you.

Please let our staff know if you need assistance with any of the above mentioned documents.

## Emergency planning

In the event of a natural or created emergency situation in the area, such as a hurricane, flooding or civil unrest, Covenant Caregivers caregivers may not be available or able to visit clients in their homes. Responsibility for care of the client shall be assumed by the caregiver, local authorities, and the client’s attending physician as appropriate, until it is safe for Covenant Caregivers services to resume. Every attempt will be made to avoid interruption of service and to reinstate service as quickly as possible when it is safe to do so. Florida law requires all counties to voluntarily register and assist people who need help to evacuate to public shelters in an emergency situation.

You will receive information specific to your county. Please assist Covenant Caregivers by preparing the Emergency Planning Form. For clients needing special needs shelter, please assist Covenant Caregivers by registering for the applicable shelter. This information will be shared with the local authorities for your safety.

# Safety

## Good Body Mechanics

It is easy to suffer muscle strain or injury while caring for a client who needs physical assistance or is bed bound. Techniques have been developed in medical settings to use the body to its best advantage. Applying these principles of good “body mechanics” can help the caregiver avoid strain or injury while assisting the client.

Suggestions include:

- Not moving a client alone if it is possible to arrange help
- Asking your nurse or certified nursing assistant to demonstrate how to do common things like helping the client transfer
- Letting the client know what you are about to do before starting
- Keeping your back straight with knees slightly bent, and lifting from your knees and hips
- Standing with your feet about shoulder width apart with your body as close to the client as possible to help you maintain your balance
- Using the muscles of the arms and legs to move the client; avoid using the back muscles as much as possible (encourage the client to help with movement when possible)
- Do not twist at the waist (turn with your entire body)
- When you are rolling a client, always pull him or her towards you
- Pushing, pulling, and sliding the client requires less effort than lifting
- Using a “draw sheet” to move the client if he or she cannot assist you with the move (the CNA can show you how this is done)
- Taking short breaks to rest during the move keeps you from getting as tired

## Preventing A Fall

Falls are the leading cause of injury and premature death among people 65 or older. A large percentage of these occur in the home. Those with a life-limiting illness are particularly liable to fall, even if they are younger. There are many reasons, including:

- Weakness or fatigue due to illness
- Medications that may cause drowsiness or multiple medications that interact in an unpredictable way
- Problems with balance
- Impaired vision or sense of position
- Tingling or numbness in the feet or hands
- Confusion, which may result in forgetting that help is needed to get out of bed or transfer

Hazardous situations in the environment also create risk for falls. These include:

- Throw rugs or slippery floors
- Poor lighting
- Clutter
- Electrical cords or oxygen tubing in walk areas
- Poorly-fitting shoes or shoes with smooth soles, such as slippers

At Covenant Caregivers we have a Fall Prevention Program and will help assess the risk of falling for all of our clients. We may make a variety of suggestions, including:

- Before standing, sit upright and count to 10, then stand slowly
- If the client needs assistance to get up, have a call bell or an attention getting device handy that he or she can use to get help
- Anticipate that a client who has limited ability to move around or is bedbound will need to go to the bathroom, become hungry, thirsty, or lonely; so offer to help with these things on a regular schedule so that the person has less need to get up without assistance

**For clients who can move around more easily, these things may be helpful:**

- Use a cane or a walker and ask for help if you feel unsteady
- Turn on lights and use nightlights in hallways, bathrooms, and bedrooms. (keep a lamp or a flashlight close to your bed so you don't have to get out of bed to turn on the light)
- Install and use grab bars in tub, shower, and toilet areas
- Use nonskid adhesive strips or a mat with suction cups in the shower
- Consider using a shower chair or bench in the shower
- Never leave an unsteady person in the shower or bath area alone
- Consider getting help with bathing
- Never use bubble bath or shower oil that might make the tub slippery
- Use your glasses and keep them handy
- Remove throw rugs or put "non-slip" material under the rugs
- Wear snug-fitting shoes or slippers that have "tread" on the under-soles
- Remove clutter from walkways and stairs
- Clean up spills quickly
- Consider using an emergency notification system if you stay alone

Medications like narcotics, anti-hypertensives, or anticoagulants can increase the risk of falling or the likelihood of an injury. Be sure to discuss possible side effects when starting any new medications.

## **Fire Safety In The Home**

### **Basic Fire Safety**

Protect yourself. Prevention is the best way to keep your home safe from fire.

### **Be Kitchen Wise**

Never leave cooking unattended. Wear clothes with tight-fitting sleeves when you cook. Always set a kitchen timer to remind you to turn off the burners and oven. Keep stove surfaces free of clutter and build-up of grease.

- Have a fire extinguisher near the kitchen, at least 10 feet away from the stove
- NEVER pour water on a grease fire; turn off the stove and cover the fire with a lid or close the oven
- Keep pot handles turned to the back of the stove
- Do not store items on top of the stove
- Do not overload kitchen electrical outlets, and don't use appliances with frayed or cracked wires
- Do not place the stove in front of a window where curtains are hanging
- Keep the exhaust fan and duct clean (wipe up spilled grease immediately)
- Operate the microwave oven only when there is food in it

### **Be Smoker Wary**

Use large, deep, non-tipping ashtrays. Empty ashtrays often. Wet the contents before dumping into the trash. NEVER smoke in bed, while drinking alcohol, or while you are on medicines that can make you drowsy or disorientated. Wear non-flammable pajamas or night clothes.

### **Give Space Heaters Space**

Keep electric portable space heaters at least 3 feet from everything — including you. Just brushing against one could set your clothing on fire.

- Do not leave space heaters operating when you are not in the room
- Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from the wall or anything that might burn
- Do not use extension cords with electrical space heaters (the high amount of current needed could melt the cord and start a fire)
- When lighting a gas heater, strike the match first, then turn on the gas
- Never use a gas range as substitute for a furnace or heater

### **Install Smoke Detectors**

Be sure to have smoke detectors outside all sleeping areas and on every level of your home, including the basement. Test your detector monthly, and change your batteries once each year. If you sleep in a room with the doors closed, install a smoke detector inside the room as well. If you are hearing-impaired, use a tested and approved smoke detector that triggers a strobe light.

- Keep smoke detectors clean and dust free
- If your smoke detector is wired electrically, be sure the light is blinking to indicate the alarm is active

### **Fire Extinguishers**

- Fire extinguishers should be in the kitchen, garage and workshop
- Purchase “ABC” type extinguishers for all types of fires
- Learn how to use the extinguisher before there is an emergency
- Remember to extinguish only small fires; if there is a large fire, get out to safety and call 911 from another location.

### **Fireplaces**

Remember, you are deliberately bringing fire into your home. Respect it.

- Use a fireplace screen to prevent sparks from flying
- Don’t store newspapers, kindling, or matches near the fireplace or have an exposed rug or wooden floor right in front of the fireplace
- Have your chimney inspected by a professional prior to starting a fire at the beginning of the season
- Install a chimney spark-arrester to prevent roof fires

### **Clothes Dryer**

- Never leave home with the clothes dryer running
- Dryers must be vented to the outside, not into a wall or attic
- Clean the lint screen frequently to keep the airway clear
- Never put synthetic fabrics, plastic, rubber, or foam into the dryer because they retain heat

### **Electrical Hazards**

- It is better not to use extension cords (if you must use one, make sure that the cord is not frayed or worn; DO NOT run it under rugs or wrap or twist it around a nail or hook)
- NEVER overload a socket; do not use multiple plug outlets
- DO NOT use light bulb wattage that is too high for a fixture (look at the label inside the fixture to find the recommended wattage)
- Allow air space around TVs, radios, and appliances

### **Thinking Ahead: Your Exit Plan — Be Prepared**

- Prepare a floor plan of your home showing at least two ways out of each room
- Sleep with your bedroom door closed; in the event of fire, it helps hold back heat and smoke (if the door feels hot, do not open it; escape out another door or the window)
- Agree on a place outside where you will meet to get a head count
- Stay together away from the fire; call 911 from another location (make sure no one goes back into the burning building)

### **Infection Control In The Home**

Covenant Caregivers is committed to helping our clients and families maintain a safe environment and prevent the spread of infection by providing information and instruction good hand washing.

**Good hand washing** is one of the most important keys to preventing the spread of infection. Hands should be thoroughly washed with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds before and after any care is provided to your loved one. Hands should also be washed thoroughly if they become contaminated with blood or body fluids, after gloves are removed, and before preparing or eating food. Recent research has also found that using an alcohol-based rub (a gel, rinse, or foam) is equally effective at reducing bacteria on hands, as long as they are not visibly soiled or contaminated with blood or body fluids.

To help stop the spread of Influenza (flu) and other respiratory infections respiratory hygiene is an important practice. To help stop the spread of germs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue
- Wash your hands often (see Good Hand Washing tips above)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth

### **Oxygen Safety**

Overall, oxygen therapy is extremely safe to use in the home. It has been routinely used for decades in the home care setting. Although like any other medical intervention, there are a few safety precautions that should be followed. **Below are tips to keep you safe.** Oxygen is not in itself combustible; however, it will accelerate a flame and make a fire burn hotter.

- Oxygen should not be used within 5 feet of an open flame (examples: candles, fireplace, wood burning stove, gas stoves, cigarettes, lighters, etc.)

- Clients should never smoke while on oxygen (if a client must smoke, they need to remove the oxygen source from their face and be without oxygen for at least 30 minutes before lighting up – even though the oxygen may be off the face or turned off, the body and clothing can remain “oxygen rich” for up to 30 minutes)
- Oxygen signage should be posted on entry and exit doors of the oxygen client’s home; this is to alert anyone who enters that there is oxygen being used in the home, but more importantly, it is to alert the fire department, in the event of a fire, that oxygen is in use
- Oxygen cylinders should be stored lying on their sides in a secure place (under a bed, etc.) or in a cart that cannot easily fall over (you must be careful when handling oxygen cylinders that you do not drop them, especially on their “stem” The gas in these cylinders is under pressure and the cylinders can become projectiles if they are dropped and broken)
- Do not use petroleum jelly products, grease or any other flammable product around your nose or facial areas
- Make sure that you have working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and also an emergency fire exit plan

### **Oxygen Concentrator**

An oxygen concentrator is a machine that is used to pull oxygen and nitrogen out of the room air. It separates the nitrogen and discards it. The oxygen is then stored in the concentrator to be delivered to the client.

- In the event of a power failure, use your back-up oxygen supplied in the tanks
- The concentrator also has an alarm that will be heard for about 30 seconds when you turn the power on (the alarm should not be heard during operation; if this alarm does not go off, use back-up oxygen and call the DME provider)
- Do not use oil or grease on oxygen equipment – it’s a potential fire hazard
- Never take the unit apart
- Never use extension cords
- Always use a grounded electrical outlet
- Plug unit into its own outlet
- Keep units 12 inches from walls or furniture for proper ventilation and cooling
- Keep units 5 feet from radiators, heaters and hot air registers

## **Hurricane and Disaster Preparedness**

### **What is a Hurricane?**

A hurricane is a type of tropical cyclone, which is a generic term for a low pressure system that generally forms in the tropics. The cyclone is accompanied by thunderstorms and, in the Northern Hemisphere, a counterclockwise circulation of winds near the earth's surface.

Hurricane Season starts June 1 and continues through November 30. There is no way to predict how many storms may develop and if they will threaten our area. Currently local and federal disaster agencies are telling everyone to be prepared to survive on your own for 72 hours after a storm or disaster. That is why it is essential that everyone have a plan and be prepared.

### **Hurricane Preparation**

Hurricane preparation for our clients can prevent special challenges and that is why it is very important to have a plan and be prepared should a hurricane threaten our area.

### **Stock Your Home**

- Water - at least 2 quarts of water per day per person for drinking
- Food - non-perishable, high energy foods to feed your family for up to 7 days
- Supplies - battery operated radio, first-aid kit, flashlight, blankets or sleeping bags, paper plates and disposable utensils, bottle or can opener, toilet articles and sanitary items, extra batteries
- Medications - enough to get by for at least a week
- Extra oxygen tanks, if you use oxygen

### **Evacuations**

Your plan should include what you would do should an evacuation be ordered for your area. Some things to consider in an evacuation:

- Leave early before roads become crowded
- If you are going to a shelter, let your Covenant Caregivers staff know
- Tell Covenant Caregivers where you will be going, so they can locate you after the storm
- Don't take more supplies that you can carry; take only what you will need
- If you will need evacuation to a special needs shelter, please talk with Covenant Caregivers

### **After the Hurricane**

- If you have evacuated, local authorities will announce when it is safe to return to the area you live in
- If you are at a special needs shelter, call Covenant Caregivers to assist you in making plans to return to your home
- Assess your home for any structural damage before you go inside or when you are able to safely go outside
- Watch for loose or dangling electrical lines, broken sewer, and water or gas lines; notify local authorities immediately if you see any of these
- Do not drink water from your faucet until officially notified that the water is safe from contamination (use your emergency supply that you stocked prior to the storm)

# **There's no place like home.**

**Covenant Care** offers exceptional Personal & Companion Care services, tailored to help each client thrive and maintain independence in the familiar comforts of home. Give us a call to discuss the best care options for you or your loved one.



HOME HEALTH CARE  
COVENANT CAREGIVERS  
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