

Ready to move?

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The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)

of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) wants to make

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The best defense against moving fraud is to be informed and aware of your options when choosing a reputable moving company. While most household moves go smoothly, there are dishonest or “rogue” movers you should be aware of. For more information on interstate moves, visit the FMCSA Web site at: www.protectyourmove.gov. You can also use this site to link to other government, law enforcement and moving industry information sources. This is very important if you're looking for more detailed State and local information, including how to file a complaint.

Responsibilities Before Selecting a Mover

Before moving your household goods, movers are required to give you this brochure and a booklet entitled *Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move*. They provide basic information that will help you understand the documents that a mover will ask you to sign. The booklet also explains your rights if your household goods are lost or damaged. Copies of this brochure and booklet can be downloaded from the Web site www.protectyourmove.gov, which has additional helpful consumer information.

Use Only Registered Movers

Make sure the mover you select has been assigned a USDOT number, is registered with FMCSA to engage in interstate transportation of household goods, and has the proper level of insurance.

You can determine if a mover is registered with FMCSA by accessing www.protectyourmove.gov, or calling FMCSA at (202) 366-9805 for licensing and (202) 385-2423 for insurance.

Read and Understand All Information Provided by the Mover

The mover should provide you with the following basic documents as part of your move:

- Estimates

The estimate should clearly describe, in

writing, all charges for services the mover will perform. Make sure the estimate is signed by the mover. Do not accept oral estimates.

- Order for Service
The order for service is a list of all the services the mover will perform and shows the dates your household goods will be picked up and delivered.
- Bill of Lading
The bill of lading is a contract between you and the mover and a receipt of your belongings. You should be given a partially completed copy of the bill of lading before the mover leaves the residence at origin.
- Inventory List
The inventory is the receipt showing each item you shipped and its condition. Be sure you receive a written copy of the inventory after your household goods are loaded, and that you agree with its description of your household goods' condition.

What if There Is a Problem? Dispute Settlement Program

Before moving your household goods, interstate movers are required to provide you with information regarding their dispute settlement program. Movers must offer a neutral dispute settlement program as a means of settling disputes that may arise concerning loss or damage of your household goods.

Loss or Damage of Goods

If your goods are damaged or missing at delivery, request a company claim form from the mover. Complete the claim form to the best of your ability. The mover will tell you where to mail the completed form. You must file a written claim with the mover within 9 months of delivery.

Your claim must be in writing but does not have to be submitted on a mover's claim form. It is suggested that you send the claims information to the mover by certified mail. If you are not satisfied with the settlement offer made by the mover, you have the option

of submitting a loss and damage claim with the mover's dispute settlement program or to seek other legal remedies.

Applicable Transportation Charges

The charges that a mover assesses for its services must be contained in a published tariff, which must be made available to you upon request. If you feel that a mover has overcharged you, you can contact the Surface Transportation Board at 1-866-254-1792 to obtain further assistance.

Filing a Complaint

FMCSA does not have the authority to resolve claims against a moving company. However, you may file a complaint against a mover by visiting www.protectyourmove.gov or calling 1-888-DOT-SAFT (1-888-368-7238) Monday - Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. EST. Your complaint may trigger a federal enforcement investigation against the mover.