

NACAA

The National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators

Interstate (From One State to Another) Moving Tips

Checking Up On Movers

1. **Get referrals from people you know.**
2. **Check for complaints about the mover.**
Call your local consumer protection agency and Better Business Bureau.
3. **Contact the Federal Highway Administration** to find out whether the mover is licensed (legal) (202-358-7061 or 202-358-7063.)

What to Ask Potential Mover(s)

1. **Get written estimates from at least three movers.**
Do not trust estimates given over the phone. Inspections at your home are more accurate. Tell the mover all about the place where you are moving: Is it a walk-up? Is there a narrow one-way alley where they will have to unload? Lots of stairs in front? Restricted hours for move-in? Any other restrictions?
2. **Ask for three recent references** (and call them – you may be surprised.)
3. **Ask if the mover operates under any other names.**
You may think you are shopping around, when you are really calling the same company.
4. **Ask whether the mover will use a ‘subcontractor.’**
(Another company may do the move.)
5. **Ask whether your goods will be moved from one truck to another.**
6. **Ask whether another family’s goods will be on the truck with yours.**

7. Ask how you can reach the mover during the move in case of problems.

The Contract

1. **Never sign a blank contract.**

All promises should be in writing. All changes and additions should be in writing (even last-minute changes.) You and the mover should sign your names next to any changes.

2. **Check to see whether your estimate is “binding” or “non-binding.”**

A binding estimate means that you pay the amount in the contract. A non-binding estimate can go up.

3. **Make sure the estimate sets out everything that you’ve discussed.**

Include: price, dates for pick up and drop off, how they calculate costs (weight or volume), packing material costs, extra charges for bad weather etc. (Write things into the contract yourself if they are not there – yes, you can do this!)

4. **Check the contract to find out how you may pay.**

If you can, pay by credit card, not cash, so that you can stop payment if you need to. Second best would be check or money order.

5. **Make sure you have enough insurance.**

Often the insurance only covers 60¢ per pound– only good for bricks and books you do not like. Ask about additional coverage. Check the deductible. Find out what’s not covered. Find out whether your homeowner’s policy covers any loss or damage in a move.

6. **At the end of the move don’t sign a release unless you’ve opened all of your boxes and inspected your furniture.**

Do not sign a paper that says that you have received all of your goods in good condition until you have had an opportunity to look through your things. (You can write onto the movers’ form that you have not had time to look over your belongings.)

If something goes wrong

1. **A mover must release your goods if you pay 110% of the non-binding estimate (or the full amount of a binding estimate.)**

The mover may sue you later for the higher, disputed amount, but cannot hold your goods hostage (run away with them, put them in a storehouse, or dump them in the river.)

2. File all claims with the mover on time.

Most contracts require filing within nine months from the date of delivery. Keep a copy of your letters. Keep a record of your calls.

3. Report your problem.

Use your local consumer protection agency, the Better Business Bureau, and the Federal Highway Administration.

4. Legal action against the company may be an option

However, your contract may require arbitration.

Important free information

Your mover is required to give you a copy of “Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move” prepared by the Federal Highway Administration (202-358-7061 or 202-358-7063.)

<http://www.mcs.dot.gov/factsfigs/moving.htm>.

It's free and has lots of detailed and helpful information.

Also check out the website (**www.moving.org**) of the moving industry's trade association, the American Moving and Storage Association. It contains pre-move information, as well as detailed information for solving problems that might come up with your move.