

Seven things your clients don't know about movers



Your clients probably are more concerned about negotiating a fair price than who's going to move their stuff. But before it's time to pack up the truck, give them information to make a sound choice in moving companies.

1. Beware a low estimate—it might not be all it seems.

A very low estimate for moving your belongings could be a sign that you're dealing with a "rogue" mover. In this scenario, the company quotes you a rock-bottom price—usually over the phone or via e-mail—loads your goods onto a truck, and refuses to deliver or unload them until you cough up a much higher fee.

2. The company should make a house call.

To make sure you get an accurate estimate, require the company to send a representative to your home to assess your move. Most legitimate companies will take this step. Although a refusal by a company to perform an in-home inspection doesn't mean that company is operating illegally, it should cause you concern.

Get a move on

The following sources provide more information on how to protect yourself during a move:

-American Moving and Storage Association: Moving.org

-Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration: ProtectYourMove.gov

-Southwest Movers Association: SouthwestMovers.org

3. Movers must tell you your rights.

Your mover must give you an information pamphlet when you hire them. For moves within Texas, you'll get "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move in Texas," and for interstate moves, you should receive "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move." *Interstate* is defined as your goods crossing state lines at any point, even if they start and end in the same state.

4. Movers must be registered somewhere.

Companies that transport goods within Texas must register with the Texas Department of Transportation. When you're deciding which company to choose for your intrastate move, call TxDOT at 800/299-1700 to verify whether the mover is properly registered. The department can also give you information about the mover's complaint history. Interstate movers are not regulated by TxDOT but must instead register with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA); check information about those companies at ProtectYourMove.org.

5. It may be better to pay for packing.

Packing your own boxes might save you money, but if the articles you pack get damaged, it might be more difficult to establish your claim against the mover.

6. Insurance is usually paid by the pound.

The default insurance that movers carry—released value insurance—covers 60 cents per pound per article. That likely isn't the best option. If your five-pound antique lamp worth \$200 gets damaged, you'd get \$3. Any additional liability for intrastate moves (e.g., transit insurance) isn't regulated by TxDOT but is usually available for a fee. Interstate movers must also offer full-value protection, which means the mover must repair, replace, or pay for any damaged item. This coverage, although regulated by the FMCSA, varies in cost and level of protection from company to company.

7. Report any loss or damage promptly.

For intrastate moves, you have 90 days from the delivery date to get your written claim into your mover's hands. If you're unsatisfied with your moving company's response, you may file for mediation through TxDOT. Federal regulations give you nine months from the date of delivery to file your written claim against interstate movers. Similarly, you can file for mediation of an unresolved claim through the FMCSA.