



BEWARE OF MOVING COMPANIES THAT SCAM CONSUMERS

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

SUMMER IS THE BUSIEST TIME OF YEAR for moving companies. While most legitimate movers comply with the law, unfortunately a few unscrupulous operators employ a range of practices that take advantage of their customers.

Some unscrupulous movers give customers an artificially low estimate for their services. Then, on moving day, they revise their estimate and provide a much higher price. By that time, customers have no time to find another mover and have little choice but to go along with the increased rate.

Another type of moving scam is perpetrated after a customer's belongings have been loaded up and hauled away. With the customers' property in the movers' possession, the company refuses to deliver or unload the customer's property unless the customer agrees to pay a higher fee.

Knowledge is always a valuable weapon, so Texans in the market for a moving company should research several options and secure written estimates before moving day. Care also should be taken to ensure that movers are properly licensed and

insured. Texans can look up a moving company's rating and complaint history at the Better Business Bureau's Web site, www.bbb.org.

Moving scam warning signs include:

- Movers that offer advance estimates without seeing their customers' home or belongings. Estimates based on cubic footage are also red flags.
- Movers that fail to provide a copy of "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move." This booklet must be provided to all customers who plan an interstate move. The federally mandated pamphlet contains instructions about how to respond if goods are lost or damaged during a move.
- Movers that require a large deposit or payment in cash.
- Movers that lack a local address and do not provide licensing information on their Web site. To check motor carrier registration status, consumers can visit www.txdot.gov (in-state) and www.protectyourmove.gov (interstate).

Movers are required by law to deliver a customer's goods for no more than 10 percent above the price of a nonbinding

estimate. Customers are not required to pay any amount above a binding estimate. The mover is required to bill customers for any additional charges within 30 days of delivery.

Texans can file complaints against moving companies with either the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). TxDOT accepts complaints against movers that carry goods within the state of Texas. FMCSA takes complaints against movers that cross state lines.

Common complaints include:

- Overcharging;
- Holding shipments hostage for more money than originally quoted;
- No license, registration or insurance;
- Failure to acknowledge, process and settle loss and damage claim within 120 days of receipt; and
- Failure to honor agreed pick-up or delivery dates without proper notice.

Texans who want more information about moving scams or wish to file a complaint against a moving company can contact the OAG at (800) 252-8011 or online at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov.

POINTS TO REMEMBER



MOVING COMPANY SCAMS

Beware of moving companies that:

- Providing an estimate without seeing the home and belongings
- Don't notify you of your rights and responsibilities
- Require a large deposit or payment in cash
- Have no local address or licensing information

For interstate moves (across state borders)

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

(888) 368-7238

www.protectyourmove.gov

For intrastate moves (inside Texas)

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

(800) 558-9368 • www.txdot.gov

Federal Trade Commission

(877) FTC-HELP • www.ftc.gov

Better Business Bureau

www.bbb.org

Office of the Attorney General

(800) 252-8011

www.texasattorneygeneral.gov



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