



# Hiring a Mover

From the Office of Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson

The Attorney General's Office urges consumers to take precautions before hiring a mover. Moving can be a stressful event, and some companies and individuals take advantage of consumers by not obtaining insurance, misrepresenting rates and quotes, or failing to cover broken or damaged goods.

Consumers should consider the following tips before and during a move:

- **Make sure the mover is licensed.** State law requires that licensed movers be insured, have licensed vehicles that meet certain safety and other requirements, and provide for a system in which complaints can be made and dealt with properly. Check with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to see if your mover is properly licensed.
- **Ask friends for recommendations.** Do not select a mover simply because it has a large advertisement in the Yellow Pages or other publication. This is not an indication of reliability.
- **Get several written estimates.** Telephone estimates may not be reliable. Be wary of choosing on the basis of price alone. The mover with the lowest price may not provide the best service.
- **Follow-up with the State.** State law requires movers to file their hourly rate with the Department of Transportation. Some movers may quote below this rate and then attempt to charge the rate they filed with the State. To find out more about a mover's rate, call the Minnesota Department of Transportation.
- **Be sure you understand the terms of the moving contract.** Get everything in writing, including the mover's liability to you for breakage or loss. Consider whether to buy additional replacement insurance to cover loss or damage. Check your homeowner's insurance policy to see what, if any, moving coverage you may already have.

- **Compile an inventory of all items shipped and their condition.** Check items as they arrive at your new destination to determine if they are broken. Write "subject to further inspection for concealed loss or damage" on the moving contract to allow for damage you may discover as you unpack.
- **Pack and move rare, fragile, or sentimental items yourself.** This way, you avoid the headache or heartbreak of possible breakage of precious items.
- **File a written claim with the mover immediately if any loss or damage occurs.** Keep a copy of your claim.

To obtain licensing and rate information or to file a complaint concerning a mover, consumers may contact the Minnesota Department of Transportation as follows:

## Minnesota Department of Transportation

Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations  
395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 420  
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1800  
(651) 215-6330  
[www.dot.state.mn.us](http://www.dot.state.mn.us)

In addition, if consumers purchase moving services for a move to another state, federal regulations apply. Consumers may learn more about their rights and responsibilities in the United States Department of Transportation ("USDOT") publication *Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move*. Consumers may obtain this publication or additional information or file a complaint by contacting the USDOT as follows:

## U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration  
4749 Lincoln Mall Drive, Suite 300A  
Matteson, IL 60443  
(708) 283-3577  
[www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

## “DO-IT-YOURSELF” MOVING

Some consumers may choose to rent a truck and move their property on their own. Consumers renting a moving truck should consider the following tips:

- **Confirm your reservation.** Most rental truck companies provide customers with a confirmation number after the customer has reserved a vehicle for a given day. Consumers should confirm the exact time they are scheduled to use the truck, and get this information, along with their confirmation number, in writing if possible. Consumers should write down the names of the employees that they speak with to protect themselves in case problems arise with the reservation.
- Understand the terms of your agreement. Since some rental truck companies are nationally-owned chains, the confirmation a consumer makes with a company may not be for a specific location in the consumer’s area. Some companies require their customers to wait until 24 hours prior to their scheduled moving date before confirming the exact store branch location. Consumers should be aware that the store branch location assigned to them may not necessarily be the most convenient location in their area.

Consumers should ask questions to fully understand the rates and terms of the agreement. Additional products, such as insurance, may not be covered in the quoted rate, and may not be necessary if the consumer already has an insurance policy in place that covers the rental truck. Check with your insurance company to see if you already have coverage. Consumers should also inquire about additional costs, such as gas, mileage, damage, or cleaning costs.

- **Hold the company accountable to its confirmation.** Some consumers run into scheduling problems when it’s time to pick up the vehicle they have reserved. Some consumers reserved a truck only to be told that the company has “overbooked” and that the truck is not available. In such a case, the consumer should ask to speak to a manager immediately. Consumers should be prepared to document their confirmation number, the names of the staff that the consumer confirmed the reservation with, and the dates and times of such correspondence.
- **Inspect the rental truck before beginning the move.** Some consumers have complained that they began a move, only to realize that the truck they rented was not fit to drive, or transport their property. Consumers should thoroughly investigate the vehicle on-site, before signing any papers. A consumer should also inspect the unit after the move to ensure that the company does not charge for damages not caused by the consumer.

For further information, or to make a complaint about an unscrupulous mover or rental truck company, contact the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office.

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