

Finding Reputable Movers

With all the excitement and stress of a move, the last thing you want is to be taken advantage of by rogue movers.

While most movers are legitimate, hard-working service providers, there are those who will take advantage of you. USA.gov offers several suggestions for how to recognize and avoid fraud.

HOW TO HIRE A MOVER

The first step to protecting yourself from fraud is to hire a good mover.

Reach out to several movers and ask them for written estimates. Expect movers to ask you about how much time might be involved, the number of movers needed, who does the packing and the number of rooms that need to be moved.

Make sure a company representative comes to your house to give you an estimate based on your actual belongings and how many rooms you have. Ask them to show you proof of insurance that will cover your goods if they are damaged during the



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REAL ESTATE 101

Using the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration database

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation that regulates the trucking industry. While the primary mission of the FMCSA is to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities involving large trucks and buses, if you are hiring a mover you can use the FMCSA database to check the registration of your moving company. Visit the website to learn more at [fmcsa.dot.gov](https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov).

move. Also ask them for their U.S. Department of Transportation number and use the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration database to see if the company is registered. Check Yelp or your local, county or state consumer affairs agency or state attorney general to see if they have a complaint record.

RECOGNIZING FRAUD

USA.gov lists several red flags that a mover might be trying to cheat you. First, a mover might demand cash upfront before the move or avoid giving you a written estimate. Rogue movers might ask you to sign a blank contract in advance. Others might give you a verbal quote over

the phone without showing up to your home or apartment to inspect your goods.

Be concerned if the moving truck shows up and there is no company logo on it. Be suspicious if they have only a cellphone number as a contact and cannot give you a local physical address.

Two other warning signs: If

movers give you a low price and change the estimate once you arrive at your destination. The other is if they refuse to give you your belongings unless you pay more money.

MOVING DOCUMENTS

If you've recently bought or sold a house, you know there is a lot of paperwork involved. Moving is no exception. A mover should provide you with four documents:

- **Estimate:** Always get this in writing. It should clearly describe all services and the charges for each one. Make sure the mover signs the estimate.

- **Order for service:** Once you have accepted the estimate, the mover should provide you with an order for all the services they will perform and the dates on which they will be done. It should clearly tell you when your goods will be picked up and delivered.

- **Bill of lading:** This acts as a contract between you and the mover. It is also a receipt for your belongings. The mover should give you a partially complete bill of lading before they leave the residence you are moving from.

- **Inventory list:** This lists every item you shipped and its condition. Be sure you review it before they leave and that you agree with the description of the condition of your property.



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HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

Warranty: A binding promise that certain statements are true. SOURCE: MLS.com

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