

Protecting Wisconsin Consumers for 75 Years

Interstate moving

Know your rights and responsibilities before selecting a mover

Before moving your goods, movers are required to give you a pamphlet entitled "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move". It provides basic information that will help you understand the documents that the mover will ask you to sign.

The pamphlet also explains your rights if your household goods are lost or damaged by the mover. Copies of this pamphlet and another entitled "Ready to Move?" can be downloaded from the web site protectyourmove.gov, which has additional helpful consumer information.

Use only registered movers

Make sure the mover you select has been assigned a USDOT number, is licensed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to engage in interstate transportation of household goods, and has proper insurance. You can determine if a mover is registered with FMCSA by accessing www.protectyourmove.gov, or by

calling FMCSA at (202) 366-9805 for licensing and (202) 385-2423 for insurance.

Read and understand all information provided by the mover

The mover should provide you with the following basic documents as part of your move:

Estimates

The estimate should clearly describe, in writing, all charges for services the mover will perform. Make sure the estimate is signed by the mover. Do not accept oral estimates.

Order for service

The order for service is a list of all the services the mover will perform and shows the dates your household goods will be picked up and delivered.

Bill of lading

The bill of lading is a contract between you and the mover and a receipt of your belongings. You should be given a partially completed copy of the bill of lading before the mover leaves the residence at origin.

Inventory list

The inventory is the receipt showing each item you shipped

and its condition. Be sure you receive a written copy of the inventory after your household goods are loaded, and that you agree with its description of the condition of your household goods.

REMEMBER

Do NOT sign blank paperwork or documents you do NOT understand!

What if there is a problem?

Dispute settlement program

Before moving your household goods, interstate movers are required to provide you with information regarding their dispute settlement program.

Federal regulations require movers to offer a neutral arbitration program as a means of settling disputes that may arise concerning loss or damage of your household goods for claims less than or equal to \$10,000.00. If there is a fee associated with the arbitration it is split between the consumer and the mover or the responsible party may be determined by the arbitrator.

If your claim exceeds \$10,000.00, the mover may

decline to participate in arbitration. In this case, the only option is to initiate legal action. See the website protectyourmove.gov for more information.

Loss or damage of goods

If your goods are damaged or missing at delivery, request a company claim form from the mover. Complete the claim form to the best of your ability. The mover will tell you where to mail the completed form. You must file a written claim with the mover within nine months of delivery.

Your claim must be in writing but does not have to be submitted on a mover's claim form. It is suggested that you send the claims information to the mover by certified mail.

If you are not satisfied with the settlement offer made by the mover, you have the option of submitting a loss and damage claim with the carrier's dispute settlement program or of seeking other legal remedies.

Applicable transportation charges

The charges that a mover assesses for its services must be contained in a published tariff, which must be made available to you upon request.

If you feel that a mover has overcharged you, you can contact the Surface Transportation Board at (866) 254-1792 to obtain assistance.

Moving checklist

Before the move

- Obtain the booklet "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move" from the mover.
- Ask for recommendations from neighbors, friends, and relatives regarding the mover.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau and the Bureau of Consumer Protection regarding the mover.
- Find out what the mover's responsibilities are for damages that may occur to your belongings.
- Ask if the mover has a dispute settlement program.
- Obtain estimates from at least three movers, and compare costs and all other services to be provided by the mover.
- Check to determine whether the interstate mover is registered with FMCSA, and has a USDOT number.
- Find out how and when pickup and delivery of your household goods will occur.
- Ask the mover how they can be contacted before the move, during the move, and after the move.
- Adequately insure your belongings.

Moving day

- Be present to answer questions and give directions to the movers. Stay until they finish.

- Accompany the movers as they inventory your household goods and resolve any questions regarding the condition of materials being moved.
- Carefully read the information on the estimate, order for service, bill of lading, inventory, and all other completed documents before you sign them.
- Keep the bill of lading until your goods are delivered, the charges are paid, and any claims are settled.
- Before the moving van leaves, take one final look throughout the house to make certain nothing has been left behind.
- Give the driver directions to your new home, or ensure that the driver has the correct directions.
- Inform the driver and the moving company of where you can be reached during the move.

Delivery day

- Be present to answer any questions and give directions.
- Pay the driver, according to the terms of your agreement, before your goods are unloaded.
- Supervise unloading and unpacking of your goods.
- Note on the inventory list all boxes or other items that are damaged before you sign any documents.

Useful web sites & telephone numbers

What is the FMCSA official web site?

www.fmcsa.dot.gov

Where can I get a copy of "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move"?

www.protectyourmove.gov

Where can I find out whether a mover is registered with FMCSA?

www.protectyourmove.gov

Where can I obtain information about a mover, broker, or freight forwarder's insurance and process agent?

li-public.fmcsa.dot.gov

or call

(202) 385-2423

How do I get assistance to determine if a carrier has assessed the correct transportation charges?

stb.dot.gov

or call the

Surface Transportation Board

(866) 254-1792

How can I learn more about movers and transportation?

www.protectyourmove.gov

This website from the FMCSA has information to assist you in a successful move across state lines. While most household moves go smoothly, we are concerned about consumers who experience difficulties in resolving disputes with household goods carriers (movers) – or worse, are defrauded by dishonest movers.

We want you to be informed and aware of your options when choosing a reputable mover.

FMCSA develops, maintains, and enforces Federal regulations that establish safe operating requirements for commercial vehicle drivers, carriers, vehicles, and vehicle equipment. FMCSA regulates interstate household goods movers and requires them to register with the agency.

Its regulations assist consumers on interstate moves and define the rights and responsibilities of consumers and household goods carriers.

FMCSA does not have authority to resolve claims against a moving company. However, you can file a complaint against the mover by visiting nccdb.fmcsa.dot.gov or calling (888) 368-7238 Monday-Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. e.s.t.

Your complaint may trigger a Federal enforcement investigation against the mover.

For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection.

**Bureau of Consumer Protection
2811 Agriculture Drive
PO Box 8911
Madison WI 53708-8911**

E-MAIL:

DATCPHotline@wi.gov

WEBSITE:

datcp.wi.gov

**Toll-free in WI:
(800) 422-7128**

(608) 224-4976

FAX: (608) 224-4677

TTY: (608) 224-5058