

INTRASTATE Household Moving

Very few events in life possess more potential for stress than having to move your belongings from one residence to another. For that reason alone, many consumers prefer to enlist a professional mover handle this rather arduous task. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) is responsible for regulating intrastate movers of household goods under the Household Moving Services Act. This consists of any move within Florida that does not cross the state boundary. The following tips help consumers avoid unnecessary or excessive expense when employing someone to move household goods within the state of Florida.

Plan Ahead When Possible

Try to give yourself between two and six weeks to plan and prepare for your move. During this period, request at least three companies to come to your home and provide you with a detailed estimate. Prior to providing any moving services, a mover is required to supply you with a contract and estimate in writing. It must be signed and dated by both parties. Avoid companies that are only willing to do an estimate over the phone or Internet. In order to ensure an accurate estimate, a mover should see the items that are to be transported and discuss all aspects of the move with you. You should also be cautious when contemplating the use of a moving broker. Many times these middlemen are found when using the Internet for research. Don't rely on a broker's sophisticated website for obtaining quotes as there is a strong possibility that this method may actually be more costly.

Know Who You're Dealing With

Research whether the company is properly registered with DACS and if any complaints have been filed against them.



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
www.800helpfla.com ■ 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) ■ 850-410-3800

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This can be done by searching the name of the business in the “Business/Complaint Lookup” at www.800helpfla.com or by calling 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352).

Ask Detailed Questions

- How long has the company been in business?
- Can the company provide proof of workers’ compensation coverage, general and legal liability coverage?
- What type of protection does the company offer against loss or damaged goods (full replacement cost, depreciated value or the basic 60 cents per pound valuation that carriers are required to provide)?
- Does the mover have a good reputation for settling claims and is arbitration offered for claim disputes?

Read Before You Sign

Read the entire contract and estimate thoroughly, ask questions and do not sign it if you have doubts about anything. Under Florida law, there are a number of items that must be incorporated into this document. For a complete list of the required items, visit www.800helpfla.com. You should make sure all the services you requested and require have been listed. Be aware of clauses that outline extra costs, such as fuel surcharges or fees for boxes and packing materials.

Be Aware of Scams

Scams can occur whether you are dealing directly with a moving company or using a broker. A common scam begins when the moving company quotes a low price in order to secure your business, then increases the cost substantially after loading your household goods onto the truck. If you refuse to pay, the company will hold your belongings hostage until you comply. Keep a copy of your contract and estimate with you during the move at all times to show law enforcement, if necessary. By law, a mover can refuse to relinquish belongings only when the shipper has not tendered payment in the amount specified in the written contract and estimate signed and dated by the shipper. Even then, under no circumstances can the mover refuse to relinquish prescription medicines and goods for use by children, including children’s furniture, clothing or toys.

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