

It's well known that some things will always stay out of our control no matter how hard we try to be in the driver's seat. And sadly enough, sometimes we are forced to become mere spectators as an unfortunate event takes the steering wheel out of our own hands.

Whenever faced with the arduous process of moving house, it can be really disheartening, to say the least, to put so much time and efforts into planning and preparing a good local or long distance move only to have a bad moving company ruin it all. Yes, there are some dishonest, disreputable and fraudulent movers out there that wreak havoc on the relocation scene and build a really bad reputation for the moving industry as a whole.

And this is exactly why it's imperative that you do your homework "How to deal with a bad moving company" in advance – learn how to spot a bad mover, how to avoid a moving scam, how to report a bad mover and how to deal with a bad move. In other words, being a [well-informed shipper of household goods](#) will enable you to lock the stable door *before* the horse is stolen.

## How To Spot A Bad Moving Company

It may seem obvious enough but the best way to deal with a moving fraud is to avoid it altogether. And, in this line of thought, the very first thing you can do to avoid falling into the wrong hands is to learn how to spot a bad moving company.

### Bad online reputation



Our moving tips will teach you how to spot a bad mover before it's too late.

Your initial stop on the road to exposing bad movers is to take a look at the moving reviews and testimonials left by their customers. [MyMovingReviews](#) offers you a free access to one of the most extensive databases of state-by-state local and interstate movers in the country, complete with the movers' contact information, licensing information and most importantly in your case – genuine moving reviews, ratings and testimonials.

Good and reliable movers understand how important their professional reputation is and do their best to keep their online record clean by providing excellent relocation services and handling quickly and fairly any claims, disputes and issues with their clients. This is why, if you find moving companies with bad reviews (mostly), you should proceed with caution. Also, you're encouraged to check the moving companies' rating and any unresolved claims with the [Better Business Bureau](#).

Bad moving company reviews may not always be the most accurate way of spotting a bad mover, but they can serve as an initial indication and a warning sign that something is not quite right.

## No licensing information

All interstate movers must be registered with and licensed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). By using the [search engine on the FMCSA's website](#), you can quickly check the required licensing information. Each mover that does interstate moves is assigned a USDOT number by the U.S. Department of Transportation – the proof on a government level that the moving company is legitimate. In other words, run far and away from interstate movers with no proper licensing.

Have in mind that local movers that do not cross state lines are governed not by federal regulations but by individual state ones. Nevertheless, good local moving companies that take a pride in their services adhere to the federal relocation standards and regulations.

So, regardless of whether you're moving [locally](#) or [across the country](#), make sure you ask your movers about their licensing details.

## Estimates over the phone or Internet



No matter what your movers tell you, estimates over the phone or Internet can never be as accurate as in-home ones performed by moving experts.

Think about this for a second – do you really think a mover can give you a precise moving estimate over the phone or online *without* performing a detailed in-home inspection of all the household items you have for moving? This household assessing method, more suitable for science fiction scenarios than real life situations, could be perfectly fine if you were a moving expert yourself (chances are you aren't) or if the moving company representative who contacted you had psychic powers (chances are they don't).

Therefore, in order to get a detailed and accurate moving estimate, request an in-house inspection by a qualified representative from the moving company. The moving expert's primary job is to determine exactly how many items you have for moving and any special item properties (too heavy, awkwardly shaped, fragile, too valuable, etc.). Also, the rep will be responsible for noting down any details that will affect the final cost, such as special packing requirements, long flights of stairs, narrow hallways or doorways, necessary disassembly of certain furniture pieces and so on.

To make the long story short, do not accept estimates over the phone or the Internet, and settle for no less than three to five accurate in-home written moving estimates from different reputable movers before your final decision.

## **You are refused proper insurance**

Moving companies are required by law to assume proper liability for the value of the items they relocate from point A to point B. It's your right as a consumer to ask your moving company for proof of insurance and request additional information about each insurance option and the process of filing a claim in case of damage or loss of an item. If a mover refuses to provide you with adequate moving coverage for your items on the strangest of pretexts, do consider hiring a *properly insured moving company* for your upcoming move.



You want me to sign this blank document? No, thanks.

For your information, the two most common types of [moving coverage](#) are:

- **Released-value protection:** it's offered for free but this default coverage is practically less than minimal. In case of damage or loss, the mover is obliged to pay you back only 60 cents per pound per article. Therefore, you are strongly advised to purchase the full value protection.
- **Full value protection:** you're going to have to pay extra for this type of protection but you'll soon find out that it's definitely worth every penny. Should something bad happen to any of your valuable possessions, the moving company will be liable for the repair or replacement value, or cash settlement for each damaged or missing household good.

Moreover, consider buying third-party moving insurance if none of the options above work in your case. Contact your current household insurer and ask them if your present insurance policy covers your possessions during a move. If not, maybe your insurance company will offer some affordable coverage options.

## **Additional red flags when deciding on a moving company**

More often than not, the main three things you'll be looking for in a moving company are high levels of professionalism, reliability and affordability. With some extensive research and a little luck, you'll be able to find a really good mover.

However, you should be aware of the extra telltale signs that you're dealing with a bad mover. Something is not right if:

- You call a local or long-distance mover and they do not answer the phone with their company name. Each moving company should be proud of who they are, what they do and how they do it.
- You fail to find the mover's website simply because they don't have one or you visit it, but no info is present about their license, no insurance options are given or no local address is available. After all, we live in the Information age – what kind of a company would want to withhold useful information from their clients?
- The mover does not provide flexible payment options but demands a large deposit or a cash-only payment.
- The mover gives you incomplete or worse – blank documents and expects you to sign them. **NEVER** agree to place your signature on blank, incomplete or incomprehensible [moving documentation](#).
- On moving day, your movers arrive in an unmarked moving truck, seem unprofessional, bring dirty or damaged packing materials or act in an unacceptably rude manner.

## How To Avoid Moving Scams

Now that you know how to recognize a bad mover from a good mover, it's time to learn what you can do to protect yourself against possible moving frauds. Remember that the best protection against moving scams is the timely prevention. Observe the safety tips below and you will not become a victim of moving fraud.



Being well-informed is your best protection against unscrupulous movers.

Devote more time to finding reputable movers. Read moving reviews and testimonials. Check ratings and licensing information. Check for unresolved claims. Ask for recommendations from friends, neighbors, colleagues and such.

- Once you've shortlisted reputable moving companies by [filling out a free moving quote](#), request precise in-home estimation of your household from 3 to 5 different movers regarding the total moving costs. Opt for a [binding moving estimate](#).

- Compare carefully the moving services and their corresponding prices in the received moving offers. If a quote is way lower than the others, it could be a sign of a trouble in disguise. A dishonest moving company may be trying to bait you for the job in an attempt to increase the costs drastically later on once you've said yes.
- Ask your movers for undeniable proof that they are properly licensed and insured according to the federal or state regulations.
- Make sure you get satisfactory answers from your chosen moving company to the following 2 questions: Are you going to handle the entire move or are you letting subcontractors do parts of the relocation? Are you sending experienced movers or inexperienced temporary hired laborers?
- Do not hand over your valuable items to your movers but keep them with you during all relocation stages. Important documents (IDs, deeds, insurance policies, tickets, etc.), cash, bank cards, jewelry, electronic equipment and the like have no business being in the hands of strangers anyway.
- Take plenty of photos of your possessions before they are packed and later when they are neatly packed in labeled moving boxes. Possessing photographic evidence will help you resolve future disputes with the moving company. If possible, turn on the automatic date imprinting function of your camera.
- If you notice damaged boxes upon delivery, react immediately – open the moving containers in front of your movers and ask them to confirm the damage in writing.
- You should understand the conditions of all documents before you agree to sign them. Ask for clarification if you're unsure what a document is all about or what a specific clause means. As mentioned above, incomplete or blank documents are not worthy of your signature.

## How To Deal With A Bad Moving Experience

Unfortunately for you, it may be too late for precautionary measures. As you're reading this article, the damage may have already been done. There are too many ways in which your move can go wrong but the most common reasons for botched moves are:



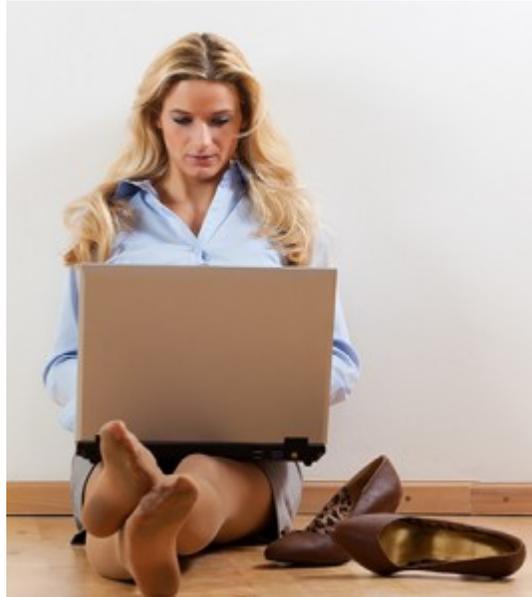
Photographic evidence of damaged items during the move is important for settling a dispute with your movers in your favor.

**A household item is broken or missing:** these are exactly the situations where proper moving insurance should kick in. It's very important that you consider your insurance options and choose the best coverage for your item. With the exception of specific instances when you're moving with few belongings of no significant value (for example, college moves), assume that the released-value protection, offered at no additional cost, will not be enough.

- **Your household items are delivered late:** late delivery is also one of the most frequent reasons for disputes between customers and moving companies. [If your movers are late](#) to deliver your stuff to your new address, contact them immediately in an attempt to find out what happened. The nature of the problem can vary from scheduling mistakes due to misunderstanding to force majeure circumstances that are out your movers' control. In any case, the best course of action for you is to remain calm and be patient, but to also inform your moving company of the inevitable inconveniences the late delivery have caused you and demand compensations for any out-of-pocket costs you may have incurred in the meantime.
- **The final price is way over the estimate.** Remain calm and try to understand why the moving costs have ended up being higher than originally estimated. An estimate remains just that – an estimate, but if you opted for a binding estimate (as you always should), then the final moving cost should not exceed 110% of the price stated in the estimate. Unless, of course, there were additional services or charges you were not aware of. Good moving companies do their best to honor their estimates even if the moving circumstances have changed along the way. However, bad moving companies play it much more unscrupulously than that, so your only option is to first try to negotiate a peaceful solution that will be beneficial for both parties, and then if that attempt fails, to [file a claim against your moving company](#).
- **Rude movers:** Don't forget that moving day is the most stressful period when moving house and some things have the tendency of going out of control. No matter how organized you are and how well you have planned the moving preparations, perfection is rarely attainable and there will (almost) always be at least one little detail that will go wrong. And when things do not go according to plan, then emotions like to run higher than the healthy limit. In such situations, when the moving tension in your house is almost palpable, the last thing you'd want is to have rude strangers in your own home. So, if you happen to be faced with a rude crew member, do not put up with such a disrespectful attitude. Contact the moving company right away and report the ill-mannered mover – chances are that this minor problem will be dealt with swiftly.

## How And Where To Report A Bad Moving Company

However, sometimes reporting a member of the moving team is not enough to make things right. If you feel that you have been wronged by the moving company, you'll want to know what steps you need to take to report a bad mover.



Share your unfortunate moving adventure and help a compatriot have a much better moving experience.

### Step 1: Resolve the issue with your movers

Of course, the first step you should take on the road to moving justice is to contact your moving company and try to resolve the issue peacefully. Present your case objectively, provide as much evidence as you can (don't forget to take a lot of photos during the move) and request a fair settlement for both parties. Try to remain composed and level-headed during the negotiations as anger, aggression and offensiveness will usually work against you.

### Step 2: Leave a moving review

If your moving company is playing dumb or offers you an unsatisfactory solution to the problem, your next step is write a moving review about your movers, narrate what they did wrong and rate their services appropriately. Be objective and describe what really happened. Your moving review can be a [powerful dispute solver](#) and as a result, your movers may choose to contact you and offer you an adequate settlement in exchange for your correcting the negative feedback you left. If it doesn't happen, at least you'll know you did your duty and fired a warning shot for other people who will be facing a

move soon. Either way, bad experiences with moving companies should be shared and not kept to oneself.

You can easily leave a moving review about your bad movers [here](#).

### **Step 3: File a formal complaint against your moving company**

If none of the steps above works for you, it's time for you to escalate the issue.

- **File a complaint with the Department of Transportation.** The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration will accept your complaint against a bad moving company in instances such as overcharging, unlicensed or uninsured operation, damaged or stolen items and so on. Fill out the FMCSA's [complaint form](#) or call 1-888-DOT-SAFT (368-7238) from 8am-8pm, Mon-Fri ET for assistance.
- **File a complaint with the AMSA.** The website of the American Moving and Storage Association has a separate section dedicated to requesting arbitration or filing a complaint against moving companies. Fill out their special [arbitration form](#) to let them know of your unfortunate situation.
- **File a complaint with the BBB.** You can use the [complaint section](#) of the Better Business Bureau's website or pay a visit to their nearest office.

### **Step 4: File a lawsuit against your moving company**

If you're still not satisfied with the results of the above steps, the last resort is to [seek justice in a small claims court](#). However, make sure you get a sound legal advice and weigh in your options with extreme care before you decide to go all the way. First and foremost, get a good answer to the question, "Is it worth it? Will eventual justice justify my time, money and nerves?"

If you know how to choose the [best cross country movers](#), then, whether you realize it or not, you're making yourself a big favor. The time and efforts you devote to the process of selecting a reliable and trustworthy moving company with high level of professionalism and experience will pay off tenfold in the end. The smooth and trouble free moving experience will leave you satisfied with the right choices you've made during this testing transitional period. And what's more, you won't find yourself wondering, "*Why are moving companies so bad?*".

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