



Tips For Choosing The Right Mover

**Maryland
Motor Truck
Association
Maryland Movers
Council**

Moving is one of the most stressful events in a person's life. Finding the right company to handle your move is no easy task; however, with the proper research and planning, you can make sure you hire a qualified mover that you can trust.

What Type of Move are you Planning?

There are several different types of movers. Some companies specialize in moving household or office goods, while others will move all types of possessions.

The origin and destination of your move are important. Generally there are three types of moves:

- *Local* moves are those moves that normally fall within the same town, city or county.
- *Intrastate* moves are those that take place entirely within the same state.
- *Interstate* moves are those moves that begin in one state and end in another.

What Services Do You Want the Mover to Provide?

Movers provide a variety of different services to their customers. For example, customers may want a mover to pack all of their goods, or they may have the mover pack only certain special items, such as mirrors or china. If you are not moving immediately into your new home, movers can store your goods until you are ready to move in. Generally, the more services you want a mover to provide, the greater the cost.

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Once you know the type of move you are planning and the services you want the mover to provide, how do you choose the right mover? The following tips can help:

- Make sure that the company you hire for your move will be the same company that actually performs your move. Some movers, particularly during the busy summer season, may schedule more work than they are capable of handling. As a result, they may turn your move over to another company - a company that you have not researched.
- Check the reputation of the company. How long have they been in business? Contact the Better Business Bureau at www.bbb.org to see if the company has numerous customer complaints. While responsible movers may have a few complaints lodged against them - the more moves they handle the more likely it is they will have a complaint - their record should show that the company responds to and resolves those complaints.
- Make sure the mover's place of business actually exists. If you are having the mover store your goods, can you visit the mover's warehouse? Beware of companies that provide no physical business address or won't allow you to view their facilities.
- Whenever possible, ask any company you are considering hiring to come to your home, inspect your goods, and give you a written estimate of the cost. Ask for estimates from more than one company



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and then compare them. Don't just look at the final price. Are the services provided the same? Are there differences in the estimated weight of your goods? How will the company be packing your goods? Will everything be stored in boxes or will items be wrapped in plastic? Is the cost of all materials, including boxes, plastic wrap, and packing paper, included in the price? Be suspicious of companies whose estimates are extremely low. The lowest cost is not always the best deal.

- Make sure you understand the amount of compensation you will receive if your goods are lost or damaged. "Valuation" is the mechanism typically used by movers to determine a level of protection for a customer's goods. The amount of valuation will impact the move's overall price. Valuation specifies the compensation that the customer will receive from the mover for damage or lost goods. Valuation is not insurance. Insurance transfers the level of risk and compensation responsibility for damaged goods to a third party, the insurance company, in exchange for payment of a premium. Unless a moving company is actually offering insurance through a third party insurance company, there should be no references to the term "insurance" in a company's marketing materials, bills of lading, or other documents.
- Check to see that the mover is properly licensed. For intrastate moves, some states require movers to be licensed and regulated by a government agency. Maryland has no formal licensing requirements for intrastate moves, however

movers must abide by any applicable consumer protection laws. ALL movers that perform interstate moves must be licensed by the United States Department of Transportation. Check the agency's website at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/factsfigs/moving.htm.

- Check to see if the company is a member of their state moving and storage association or the industry's national trade association, the American Moving & Storage Association, (703)-683-7410, www.moving.org. In Maryland, MMTA's Maryland Movers Council is made up of moving companies located throughout the state. To find out if a company is a Maryland Movers Council member, or if MMTA has received any complaints against a company, call (410) 644-4600.
- Once you've chosen your mover, schedule your move as early as possible. The time of the month/year may affect the price of the move. There is a higher demand for moving services at the end of the month and/or during the summer.

This publication is for general information only and is not intended to provide legal advice. Specific questions regarding your move should be directed to your mover or your attorney.

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