

MOVING OUT OF STATE

Trap

Mike was ecstatic about his new job with a prestigious marketing company. His only major concern was the need to move from West Palm Beach to New York. To save money, Mike decided to hire a mover who advertised a low rate on the Internet. The rental truck arrived on moving day three hours late! Pressed for time, he signed forms he didn't read. Two weeks later, Mike's furniture was delivered with many pieces damaged or missing. Mike contacted the mover who refused to consider his claim.

Tips

Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs licenses local movers. However, when your furniture is transported across state lines, the responsibility to investigate complaints falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Here are some tips to help you select the right mover:

- Get written estimates from three movers based on visual inspections.
- Companies who conduct interstate moves must have insurance and a United States Department of Transportation (DOT) permit issued by the FMCSA. The DOT number must be displayed on all estimates, bills of lading (contract) and trucks. You can verify a mover's license at FMCSA's Web site, www.protectyourmove.gov.
- Getting the cheapest price can be costly in the long run. You may be required to pay more than the agreed upon price before the mover will release your goods.
- By law, movers are required to deliver your goods based on a "binding or non-binding" estimate. Call the FMCSA at 1-800-832-5660, and ask for the booklet, "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move," to learn more.
- Ask the mover about "full value protection" if you are concerned about possible damage. The most common valuation coverage is "release value" which means you will only be reimbursed 60 cents per pound for lost or damaged goods.
- Never ship valuables, heirlooms, irreplaceable family photos or medicine.

Consumers can check for licensed moving companies and consumer complaints by going to our Web site at: www.pbcgov.com/consumer.

Consumer Affairs 561-712-6600 (Boca/Delray 1-888-852-7362 toll free)