

# Protect Your Move

## 10 Ways to Avoid Internet Moving Scams

Text from the [American Moving and Storage Association](#).

If you're looking for an inexpensive moving company on the Internet, you'd better do your homework first, or your furniture won't be the only thing that gets taken for a ride.

"The nation's moving and storage industry is made up of courteous, hard working, dedicated professionals," said Linda Darr, president of the American Moving and Storage Association (AMSA). "Unfortunately, there are some unscrupulous characters who are sully our industry's good name by using the Internet to prey on people during a very stressful time in their lives. Make no mistake, these people are not movers, they are criminals. And we're trying to put them out of business."

To address the problem, AMSA developed 10 tips that will help families avoid Internet moving scams.

**Don't be fooled by slick websites.** Anyone with a few bucks and a good IT person can build a professional-looking website. Don't be fooled by the flash.

**Locate their operating license.** Every professional interstate moving company will proudly display their U.S. Department of Transportation license and their Motor Carrier number on their website. If you don't see the license number, move on to another website.

**Verify the license.** You can verify the MC number at <http://www.protectyourmove.gov>  
<.br/>**Look for the 'brick and mortar.'** Make sure the website lists a street address and then do a quick Google search to see if it really exists.

**Get at least three written in-home estimates.** The Internet is full of 'moving cost estimators,' but the only estimate that counts is one offered by a professional mover who visits your home.

**Check references.** If a company displays the Better Business Bureau or AMSA logo, verify that they are using these seals legitimately by contacting AMSA or the BBB.

**Avoid companies that require large deposits or down payments.** Professional movers generally do not require a deposit, so avoid those that do.

**Avoid Internet brokers.** People who enter their contact information on websites that promise to find movers often find themselves inundated with aggressive scam artists.

**Be skeptical.** Remember: if you receive an estimate that seems too good to be true, it probably is.

**Use an AMSA mover.** To find an AMSA mover and to learn more about protecting yourself during your move, visit AMSA's consumer website, <http://www.moving.org>.

## Top 10 Things To Do For A Smooth Move

### 1. Get three written in-home estimates.

Be wary of phone or internet estimates. Show the mover everything that will be moved, including items in attics, basements, garages, storage areas, sheds, etc. Typically two of the estimates will be very close together in price, weight, and service. Select one of those two estimates. The other bid will be very high or low. Avoid that carrier.

### 2. Obtain and read the three "pre-move" required documents from your carrier.

These documents include: Your Rights and Responsibilities and Ready to Move brochures, and information on the arbitration program that the carrier participates in. These documents are all required for every interstate shipment.

### 3. Avoid large down payments.

Be wary of carriers seeking large down payments to hold dates or to reserve service.

#### **4. Ask questions.**

If you do not understand something, ask. The moving business is complex and has its own language. If you aren't satisfied with the answers to your questions or if the carrier hesitates when you ask for clarification, talk to another carrier.

#### **5. Plan an off-peak season move (when possible).**

June to September is the high season. If you can avoid moving during those months, you will likely receive better service. If you must move during the high season, move mid-month, mid-week, and avoid the end of the month.

#### **6. Be reachable by phone.**

Make sure the carrier is able to reach you by phone during your move. This can save time and storage costs if the driver is ready to deliver and you're ready to receive the shipment. Be sure to have the driver's full name, id and truck number to allow for fast and easy communication.

#### **7. Take valuables with you.**

Valuables, such as cash, coins, jewelry, photographs, and important papers should be taken with you or sent ahead. Be sure to use a traceable service, such as FedEx or United Parcel Service.

#### **8. Segregate personal travel items.**

The items traveling with you, such as clothes and papers, should be put in one place or in the vehicle you are taking with you to avoid having those items loaded on the truck and having to find them later.

#### **9. Try to relax.**

No matter how prepared you are things occasionally go wrong. Moving is one of the most stressful times in your life. Take a deep breath, be patient, and get a good night's sleep before moving day.

#### **10. Use an AMSA mover.**

Make sure your mover is a member of the American Moving and Storage Association. Visit AMSA's consumer website: <http://www.moving.org> and also visit the Department of Transportation's web site: <http://www.protectyourmove.gov>.

[What is a ProMover?](#) - link