



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Stephen J. Weitekamp
President
California Moving & Storage Association
Phone: 562-865-2900; 800-672-1415 (within CA)
Fax: 562-865-2944
Email: sweitekamp@thecmsa.org

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HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM ILLEGAL MOVERS

CERRITOS, Calif. (May 1, 2015) — California’s moving and storage industry is experiencing a high volume of residential and commercial moves within California. **Sadly, the very factors that have spurred residential and commercial moves have also ignited a rash of illegal movers who prey on consumers shopping by price.**

According to the California Moving & Storage Association (CMSA), calls to its consumer information line are high. **A large percentage of the consumer calls are from victims of illegal movers.** Illegal movers appear to be legitimate in advertisements or online but, in fact, quote below market value prices, engage in unlawful practices, bully consumers into paying outrageous prices once the move is underway and threaten to sell the personal goods if their demands are not fulfilled.

“We have discovered that most of the abuses result from moves booked online,” explained Steve Weitekamp, president of the CMSA, the 97-year-old nonprofit trade association for the moving and storage industry in California. The CMSA offers free services and information to assist consumers in choosing a professional mover.

According to the CMSA, consumers are subject to potential fraud if they book a move over the phone or online without doing their homework. The Association suggests two strategies to validate the legitimacy of a mover: 1) Verify the license number with the CMSA or the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the state agency that regulates the moving and storage industry or 2) visit the physical location to ascertain the company’s level of professionalism. Touching base with CMSA is best because the association’s professional team knows its members — about 400 moving companies statewide.

CMSA members are profiled alphabetically and by county on its website (www.thecmsa.org). Members are licensed and maintain professional liability insurance and workers' compensation insurance — which clears the consumer's liability if a member of the moving crew is injured while on your property. If a mover did not have appropriate insurance coverage, the consumer may be held liable. Members also provide training for their staff to ensure a professional move, maintain clean moving vans and equipment, and adhere to a strict professional code of conduct to uphold the industry's standards for service, pricing and professionalism.

Finally, Weitekamp suggests that consumers plan and coordinate large moves at least a month in advance to give themselves time to properly investigate movers and obtain written estimates. For consumer tips, a glossary of terms (to help consumers read the legal documents provided by the mover) and other valuable information, visit the CMSA's website at www.thecmsa.org or call 800-672-1415.

The California Moving & Storage Association is a nonprofit trade association representing more than 385 licensed and insured movers operating in California. The CMSA also includes more than 185 associate member companies. Established in 1916, the CMSA is comprised of 12 chapters strategically located throughout California.

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