



PRESS RELEASE

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TIPS TO AVOID ILLEGAL SCAM MOVERS

CERRITOS, Calif. (July 15, 2025) — The California Moving & Storage Association (CMSA) offers the following tips to consumers on avoiding being scammed by illegal movers throughout the year.

1. Don't book your move online or over the phone without verifying that the mover has a location in your area. Drive by the location. Go in and meet the company's personnel. Use your instincts to discern if the company's personnel appear to be professional and trustworthy. Let your common sense guide you ... but don't stop there!
2. Verify the company's license. All movers are required by law to demonstrate their legitimacy on all their documentation.
3. Verify the license number with the CMSA or the California Bureau of Household Goods & Services (BHGS). The CMSA staff or the association's website (www.thecmsa.org) also provides profile information on licensed movers.
4. Obtain written estimates for moves of three or more rooms. Legitimate movers are price competitive. Make sure the estimates are based on the same factors (i.e. move and pack; move only, etc.). If a company provides an unusually low bid ... beware! The company could be illegal or they may have made an error while estimating your move. If the latter is the case, the price will likely escalate on moving day.
5. Illegal movers may charge by the cubic foot. Legal movers charge by the hour (local moves) and by weight/mileage (distance moves).

6. Scam movers “rip off” innocent consumers by charging exorbitant fees for extensive and unnecessary packing on items that should be pad wrapped. Furnishings should be wrapped with shrink wrap or protected with special moving blankets.
7. Scam movers intimidate consumers to tip the crew. Tipping is not customary, but it is accepted when the customer has received exceptional service.
8. If you suspect that the mover you have hired is a scam mover, take a photograph of the van and the personnel, if possible. Call the police. Scam movers intimidate innocent victims and take possession of their personal possessions while attempting to extort more money. Once they pull away from the curb with your possessions, you are liable.
9. If you are an elderly person or a single woman, do not be alone on moving day. Scam movers bully and intimidate their customers into paying unfair prices.

The California Moving & Storage Association is a nonprofit trade association representing licensed and insured movers operating in California. The CMSA also includes associate member companies. Established in 1918, the CMSA is comprised of 12 chapters strategically located throughout California.

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