



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Move Smart

Texas Department of Motor Vehicles shares tips for safe moves

AUSTIN – May is National Moving Month and the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) reminds Texans to follow some basic steps to protect themselves whenever they hire a moving company.

“Moving is often both exciting and exhausting, and the last thing you need is to make a mistake when hiring the moving company,” says the TxDMV’s Carol Fallin, who heads the enforcement section that regulates moving companies.

Thousands of Texans move inside the state each year, most of them between May and September, according to industry experts. The Austin-based Southwest Movers Association notes summer is popular with families, who prefer to move when children are out of school.

“But Mom and Dad should do their homework before hiring a moving company,” Fallin says.

Recently several people in Houston were taken advantage of by an illegal moving company operation and it’s a scenario repeating itself throughout the state. Unfortunately, it’s easy for illegal operations to post Internet deals that are too good to be true.

“We support the TxDMV’s efforts to make sure consumers understand how to protect themselves when they hire a moving company,” says John D. Esparza, the Southwest Movers Association’s executive director. “There are many reputable moving companies in the state, and we want to make sure you can find them.”

One of the first steps in hiring a mover is to use the Internet to check the company’s status on the Motor Carrier Complaint Management System. The database will tell you if a mover is properly licensed and whether any complaints are lodged against the company. A licensed company will have an “Active” certificate status. You can access the database by going to www.TxDMV.gov and clicking “Household Goods Movers.”

Next, be sure to connect with the “DOT.”

By law, moving company trucks must display a registered Department of Transportation number that is issued either by Texas or the U.S. “If a truck pulls up without displaying a DOT number, send it away,” Fallin advises.

Finally, read the contract. Contracts are binding, and you need to know what's in it. "Also, never accept a verbal quote or agreement," Fallin warns.

Texas law requires that moving companies provide you with:

- A written proposal or estimate that shows either a guaranteed price or a "not to exceed" maximum amount for the move.
- A written contract before the move.
- A brochure that outlines your rights and responsibilities under Texas law.
- Another copy of the contract upon completion of the move. This contract should include the total charge for your move; an itemized list of what the charges are for; and the method used to calculate the charges.

If at any time during the move you should decide to alter the original contract, the moving company is required to write a contract amendment that outlines any additional charges and services. You and the moving company representative must sign and date the amended contract.

Charge disputes or damage claims must be filed with the mover within 90 days after the move date. The TxDMV can advise you on claims handling procedures, coordinate mediation, and respond to inquiries and complaints. More information is available on www.TxDmv.gov or by calling (800) 299-1700.

On the Web:

www.TxDmv.gov

www.southwestmovers.org

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