

Choosing a moving company

A consumer checklist

Much of the stress that comes with moving can be relieved by hiring the right people to do the job. It is wise to do some research about moving companies before choosing one. Consumers should check with the **Canadian Association of Movers (CAM)** to find out if the mover is a member or a **Certified Canadian Mover** and call the **Better Business Bureau (BBB)** or the provincial consumer protection agency to check the mover's reputation. Ask at least three movers for estimates.

START WITH THESE QUESTIONS

- Does the company apply Industry Canada's Good Practice Guidelines for Canadian Movers?
- Is the company insured? Ask them to provide you with the insurance company's name and policy number.
- Does the company have their own equipment, or will it sub-contract all or part of the move?
- Who will provide unpacking, claims settlement, and storage services at destination?
- Will your belongings be secure during the move? Are the

company's vehicles designed for household goods moving?

■ Whose storage facilities will be used—the company's or a third party's? Visit the company's offices and storage facilities before you move.

■ Does the mover have a workers' compensation board certificate?

ASK FOR AN ESTIMATE

■ For a long distance move, a reputable mover will inspect your belongings to prepare an estimate. If a company says the inspection isn't necessary you're better off dealing with someone else.

■ Be sure to give the mover as much information as possible about your move to avoid being charged more later on.

■ Make an inventory of everything you want moved. Ensure that arrangements are made for goods requiring special attention (e.g. electronics, appliances, pianos).

■ Get estimates and other assurances in writing, including the delivery date, the name of your contact, the name, telephone number and address of the company, the number of boxes to be moved, the size and value of items, the rate, terms of payment, and timing of services to be provided.

■ For a local move, the estimate must show the number of hours the move will take, the dates of the estimate and the move. Don't sign a contract unless conditions are spelled out in writing.

■ Beware of a price that is much lower than others. This is often an indicator of sub-standard service or higher charges to come later.



■ Beware of movers who forego the GST or who will only accept cash. Such a mover is unlikely to pay claims or even deliver your goods.

GET THE DETAILS

■ Ask about liability if you pack the items yourself.

■ Are there special seasonal rates or any other factors that may affect the cost of the move?

■ If a deposit is required, will the money be put in trust, as is sometimes required by law? Is it refundable? Clarify methods of payment at the outset.

■ What are the terms and conditions of protecting your goods under the mover's Replacement Value Protection policy?

WHAT IS REPLACEMENT VALUE PROTECTION (RVP)?

Even with the best mover, you need to have adequate protection, either through your own insurance policy or through the moving company.

■ Check with your household insurance agent to find out if your policy provides coverage during the move, what the deductible is and if it's "All Risks" coverage.

■ Check with the mover for the cost of RVP and how it works. With RVP the mover will be liable for the value of your property up to \$10 per pound of shipment weight. Declare enough value to replace all

your goods. Ensure you get RVP and NOT depreciated value only. Without RVP, the mover is liable for 60 cents per pound on any article damaged or lost.

MAKING THE BEST OF YOUR MOVING DAY

■ Make sure both your original and destination locations are ready. Book your elevator, notify your building manager of your arrival time and arrange for street parking.

■ Keep an inventory of the goods being moved. For long distance moves, ensure you are supplied with the inventory. For a local move, you should make it yourself.

■ Supervise the loading and unloading. Check off each piece at unloading and note any changes to the inventory prior to signing it. Notify the mover quickly of any damage or loss. Normally claims must be made within 30 days for local moves and within 60 days for long distance moves.

■ After both loading and unloading, check your premises, the trucks and building accesses to ensure nothing has been left behind.

■ Take any personal, important documents and valuables (e.g. jewellery, prescriptions, art) with you. Back up your computer data and take the data and the computer with you.

■ Make special arrangements for perishables and pets.

■ Enjoy your new home!

This is an overview of a Consumer Checklist For Choosing A Moving Company that was prepared by the Office of Consumer Affairs, Industry Canada, the BBB and CAM. The group also produced the Good Practice Guidelines For Canadian Movers that sets moving standards. Complete documents can be viewed on CAM's web site, www.mover.net.

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