

A CONSUMERS GUIDE TO CHOOSING A MOVER:

What to look for in a mover



You are planning your next move and are determined to avoid the unhappy moving experiences you've seen on television or heard about from friends.

The Canadian Association of Movers (CAM) gets calls from consumers like you every day – sometimes to find a reputable mover and sometimes to complain about the mover they've used. We haven't heard every type of complaint but we think we've heard most of them. The best way to avoid problems is to hire a reputable, professional mover. Here are some features to look for when you are selecting your mover.

The reputation of a professional mover will be known by the moving industry. Contact the Canadian Association of Movers (CAM) to find out what the mover's reputation is in the industry or if the mover is a CAM member in good standing and a Certified Canadian Mover.

A professional mover will resolve customer complaints. Check with your local Better Business Bureau (BBB) and/or the provincial government's consumer protection agency to find out if they have a record of unresolved complaints against the mover.

A mover's large advertisement in a newspaper or telephone book does not ensure the company is ethical or will provide professional moving services. In every phone book there are both reputable and disreputable moving companies. Logos in the ad are useful indicators of the company's affiliations, but only if you verify them with their respective organizations.

A professional mover will advertise their street address.



- News Canada

They can be easily located if you need personal service, before and after your move. Ask for the mover's street address. If they won't give it to you, there's usually a good reason. They may not have one – that is, they operate without a storefront. Perhaps they don't want their office locations advertised so that unhappy customers cannot locate them or file their complaints with the mover face-to-face. Or the mover may work from a home office. In the household goods moving business, this can be problematic. It becomes difficult to locate your goods once they've been loaded onto a truck or are in transit or storage. It's often a good idea to visit a mover's office before booking your move to ensure they can be found after your move.

All movers use cell phones and many use toll-free telephone numbers to help in their customer communications. But some movers ONLY operate with a cell phone or toll-free number. Contacting a mover that can only be contacted in these ways can be very difficult if you have questions or problems before,

during or after your move. The mover often decides to avoid your calls. And going out of business or ignoring you can be as simple as turning off the cell phone. Find a mover that has a local telephone number, again, so they can be located when you need them.

A professional mover will tell you where your goods will be stored, if they have to sit in a truck overnight, or are in long-term storage. Try to visit the mover's warehouse or storage area before booking your move to satisfy yourself that your goods will be held in a clean, secure area.

An ethical mover will provide information, estimates and assurances in writing. Movers who won't put their estimates in writing are unlikely to honour their promises. A professional mover will provide a written estimate that includes 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 will show the number of hours the move will take, the date of the estimate and the move.

An ethical mover will be clear about their liability if there is loss or damage of goods during the move. They will explain their liability if you pack or they pack the goods. And they will provide you with this information in writing.

A good mover will clearly spell out their costs and payment terms and conditions, in writing. There are movers who are willing to forego the GST, who will only accept cash or who offer a price that is much lower than others. These are movers who are unlikely to hold to their estimated cost, deliver promised services, pay claims or even recognize your rights as a consumer.

Some innovative movers have developed creative ways to trap the unwary consumer into a moving contract and, possibly, a miserable moving experience. ALWAYS stick to the four basic principles of choosing a mover.

1. Find a reputable mover through the BBB at 416-621-9184 (Toronto area) or 1-800-459-8875 (toll free), Ontario's consumer protection agency, the Ministry of Government Services, at 416-326-8800 and/or CAM at 905-848-6579 or toll-free at 1-866-860-0065.

2. Ask at least three movers for estimates.

3. Get the terms and conditions of your move in writing.

4. Make sure you have adequate insurance protection for your goods.

Visit CAM's website www.mover.net for helpful hints to have a successful moving experience or to validate your mover.