

Consumer Tip Sheet – Understanding the Moving Bill

No one said moving was easy. And understanding the moving bill can be just as difficult.

Bill of Lading

Professional moving companies will provide you with a 'Bill of Lading'. The bill of lading serves as a contract between a carrier (moving company) and their customers. You should pay attention to the clauses related to movers' right to limit their liability.

Your Bill of Lading should include:

- **Mover's contact information** including name, office street address (no PO #) and phone number.
The absence of a physical address and/or phone number should be a sign that something with the status of the company is not right. You may even be dealing with a rogue operation.
- **Your contact information** (or the contact information of the entitled person – in case you are not present on pickup and delivery days) must be noted properly too.
- **Origin and destination address of the shipment.** Check if the addresses are noted properly. If you give the wrong or mistaken address(es) to the moving company, this will impede the relocation process, and could affect your final charges.
- **Agreed date or period of time for pickup and delivery.** If you are moving locally and being delivered on the same day, you will only need the date of the move. However, if you are being picked up one day and delivered at a later date, that information should be located on the bill. For long distance moves, a delivery range of dates is normally provided and that should be noted.
- **Services' rates & method of payment.** All the services with their respective rates must be included in the Bill of Lading. Professional movers offer packing materials & labour, storage and hoisting solutions along with the moving service. Any additional service which the moving company will provide for you must be included in the Bill of Lading. When you contact movers, let them know if there will be any obstacles for the truck to park at your place.

Most moving companies offer different methods of payment – cash, money order, certified cheque, credit and debit cards, and even money e-transfer. Some movers ask for a non-refundable deposit on the moving job – beware if the deposit exceeds 10% of the final cost of your move. If you are asked to pay more than that for a down payment, be wary. Rogue operations often want to be paid large sums in advance. We recommend that you do not pay in cash – in case of an issue, you won't be able to provide evidence of payment if you have paid cash.

The terms and the conditions for payment of the total moving related charges, including notice of any minimum charges, should be annotated properly on the bill.