

How to find reliable movers

Seek recommendations, consult BBB website, get estimates from 3 movers.

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So how do you find a legitimate moving company?

The best advice for anyone planning a move is to do research, according to industry representatives and consumer-protection professionals. Start with friends and family and ask about their experiences. Then, begin to look into companies more thoroughly through customer reviews and the Better Business Bureau.

"Anyone can advertise their business on the Web with a good website, but that doesn't necessarily mean they have a good reputation," said James Negrete with Budget Movers, an accredited moving company with an A+ rating from the BBB.

"There are plenty of companies out there that have a bad reputation, but the public are still using them and finding out the hard way by not doing their homework."

Dircks Moving & Logistics, which also has an A+ rating with the BBB, suggests asking three questions when deciding which company to select:

» Does the company have a physical address?

» Is there licensing information on the website?

» Is the company a member of the BBB or the American Moving and Storage Association?

If the companies you're researching meet those requirements, it's time to get in-home estimates. Representatives of the companies interviewed all suggested three in-home estimates.

"Three companies should be enough after doing your research," said Charlotte Smith with Family Moving Storage, another moving company with an A+ rating from the BBB. "More than that, it just gets confusing."

But getting three in-home estimates after you've done your research can take time. It's important for customers to remember that the more time they allow themselves, the better decision they can make.

"If it can be avoided, don't wait until the last minute to hire a mover so you can talk to several companies about quotes," said Felicia Thompson, vice president of communications at the Better Business Bureau of Central, Northern & Western Arizona. "We often hear from people who hired a company a day or two before the move and then didn't have a choice but to pay undisclosed fees because they had to be out immediately."

Accredited moving companies are well-aware that rogue movers are out there and might be enticing potential customers with promises of a move at a much lower cost. It might sound good, but at the end of the day, is it too good to be true? Companies point to the cost of actually doing business as something for customers to keep in mind.

"What we do is a difficult process for not a lot of pay," Smith said. "It is very costly to keep a company going in this day and age with insurance, truck payments, fuel, taxes, good labor, workman's comp, medical, drug testing, etc."