

**"What Everybody
Who's Planning a Move
Ought to Know When
Hiring a Moving Company"**

Compliments of

All Jersey Moving & Storage

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Dear Friend and Neighbor,

Thank you for reading our booklet.

Moving companies haven't always had the best reputation. We've all heard horror stories about the mover that never showed up and left you hanging on moving day, the furniture that was badly damaged, or the nightmare odyssey that took twice as long and cost three times as much. That's why I wrote this booklet.

Inside, you'll learn the mistakes people make when hiring a mover, some ways to save money, some misunderstandings about the moving industry, and some things to look out for.

Moving companies fall into two main categories:

1. Reputable companies that follow a strict code of ethics, handle your belongings with care, treat you with respect and consideration, and stand behind their work.
2. The fly-by-night operator; the guy who seems friendly but cuts corners by hiring untrained workers, not packing your belongings the right way, or not being properly insured.

So how do you tell them apart? That's what this booklet is all about. There's no reason for you to endure the agony that so many others have lived through. Your moving experience CAN be painless and trouble free.

“How to Avoid the 7 BIGGEST Mistakes People Make When Hiring a Moving Company”

Mistake #1 -- You hire a mover based on price alone!

The old adage is really true, “You get what you pay for.” This is especially true with moving companies. If you want a trouble-free move, then decide to deal with a mover because of the overall value you receive, NOT because they are the lowest priced.

Here’s why... **Value = Quality + Service + Price**

It is often said that no company in any industry can offer the cheapest price, have the highest quality, and provide the best service all at the same time.

You can deal with high caliber people and get super service, but you can’t get both and still have the lowest price.

Just like in any business, the mover that hires the best people and gives the highest level of care to your belongings has to charge more for their services.

Total value is all three... quality, service, and price!

The three most common problems YOU WILL have when you hire a mover who only offers the lowest price:

1) The first problem is that low-priced movers usually don’t give you – or your personal belongings – much protection. Sure, there are moving companies who might offer to move you for a little less money than we do, but where are they cutting corners?

To give the cheapest price, they might hire low-wage, inexperienced employees that have not been adequately trained, or illegal immigrants with who-knows-what kind of history.

2) The second problem with a mover who offers the lowest price is that they tend to cut corners on the most important aspects of their job. You may think they’re handling your belongings with care, but you end up with dents and bruises everywhere.

Plainly said, “Shoddy work will cost you money.” No amount of savings is worth this misery. You’ve worked too hard and invested too much money in your valuable possessions. Why throw it away for the few pennies you save on poor service provided by a rogue mover?

3) And the third reason why hiring the cheapest mover is a problem is that you will likely get charged extra for things other movers included in their estimates in the first place.

You may be charged more than you were told because they made a lot of assumptions in preparing their estimate. Low-bid movers will nickel and dime you to death. They purposely make assumptions that result in an estimate that's unrealistically low. What seemed like a good price actually ends up costing you more in the end. This is a tactic fly-by-night operators use to get you to commit to them. Horror stories are all over the internet.

The end result is that the little bit of money you saved ends up costing you more in the long run! Believe me, this is a little saying we tell our customers: *"The pain of poor service lasts long after the pleasure of low price is forgotten."*

To avoid buying on price alone, we suggest you choose two or three movers and rank them in the order that is important to you, like Quality first, Service second, and Price last.

Mistake #2 -- You Think All Moving Companies Are the Same

Every company is different. This is especially true of moving companies. Every mover has different expertise and different processes... and different employees, each with their own capabilities and skills.

Packing personal belongings a special art. Most people who hire a moving company don't truly understand that – even though it seems simple – the process that's followed in wrapping or packing an item and then loading it onto the truck has a huge impact on the shape that item is in at the end of the move.

Contrary to what a lot of people think, moving is not just grabbing furniture and boxes, throwing them onto the truck, and doing the reverse on the other end. It takes careful planning and close attention to detail before a mover can even start a job.

Asking the right questions is the key to hiring the best moving company for YOU.

- ✓ Ask how many moves they've done
- ✓ Ask how long they have been in business
- ✓ Ask what experience they have with your type of move
- ✓ Ask how long their employees have been with them
- ✓ Ask any other questions that are unique to your needs

This will help you decide whether they are the best moving company for YOU!

After you ask your questions, it will become pretty obvious which company you should choose. I've given you our Consumer Guide – a list of 32 questions to ask every moving company you're talking to. Take your time to decide who you would like to use – which one is the best fit FOR YOU.

Mistake #3 – You fail to check into the mover’s financial stability.

Your moving company’s financial situation could have a big impact on you.

Financially troubled movers often resort to underhanded games in order to keep cash flowing.

For instance, they may agree to move you for a low price to make sure they have something on the schedule for that day. But, a few days before the move, they get a call from someone who needs a last minute move and is willing to pay full price. Then you’re left scrambling... that is, if they bother to call you at all.

They may also try to save money by dropping their insurance. This is a big problem for you. If the mover doesn’t have insurance and a worker gets injured while working on your property, you are most likely going to be responsible for those medical bills.

Movers who get in financial trouble may be desperate to land your job just to keep their business afloat. They’ll do anything, say anything, and put anything in writing just to get you to sign their contract.

I recommend that you ask every mover you’re considering for a bank reference, a reference letter from their suppliers, and a copy of their property damage and workers compensation policies to be sent to you directly from their insurance agent. They should also have liability insurance, although this is not required.

And eliminate from consideration any mover that hesitates to give you any of these items. If you fail to do so, it will almost certainly lead to problems for you.

Mistake #4 -- You Believe That Having a Truck, Some Blankets and a Business Card is All a Moving Company Needs to Handle Your Relocation Properly!

I hate to admit that getting into the moving business can be as easy as renting a truck and printing up a business card. Here in New Jersey, there are many movers that are not properly licensed. That puts a lot more burden on you to make sure you are hiring a reputable, honest mover.

How can you tell? For one thing, look for a mover who is a member of a professional association, like the American Moving and Storage Association. Here in New Jersey, the reputable movers belong to the NJ Warehouseman and Movers Association.

Look to see if they are members of Better Business Bureau, and check their complaint record.

And don't rely only on the internet to do your research. Many companies appear legitimate and have professional websites. Make sure the mover has the proper credentials and license to ensure that your move will be handled properly and on time

Mistake #5 -- You Don't Give Your Mover Enough Time To Properly Complete Your Estimate!

Mistakes happen when you rush!

When you're in a hurry, you may forget to tell your mover certain details. If you were concentrating on getting it done – instead of getting it done right – you may forget to mention specific items that require special handling, or a garage or storage shed full of items that need to be moved.

The key to avoid these oversights is to....

Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.

Before you begin planning your move in detail, talk with your mover. Get him or her involved from the beginning because there might be a more efficient way to accomplish your move that he or she can recommend for you.

You can save time, money and headaches from the very beginning by communicating early with your mover!

Why do most people do the opposite and wait until the last minute to talk to their mover about the details of their move? Most everyone thinks the mover is sitting around waiting for their job to come through the door. This isn't the case. We perform over 1,000 moves each year. Scheduling is critical.

You should think of your mover as your "relocation partner." Consult with him or her. Let them know in advance exactly what you need and how you want it done. Ask if there are any tips they can give you to make the move better or smoother.

The more information and detail you can give the mover at the start, the more accurate his estimate will be – and the less likely you will be misled by a low-ball bidder. To protect yourself, you need to work together.

Mistake #6 -- You Hire a Mover Who Doesn't Offer Full Value Protection for Your Property.

Look, things can go wrong when fragile items are moved.

It's important for you to know that movers are only required to reimburse you \$0.60 per pound for damaged goods. That means, if your new \$3,000 flat screen TV that weighs 30 pounds is destroyed, you would receive \$18 in compensation.

Good movers will offer you Full Value Protection coverage, which would reimburse you for the full value of that TV. The cost is low and we recommend this coverage to our clients.

Rogue operators don't have even the basic insurance and don't offer higher levels of coverage to you. This is a tell-tale sign that you're dealing with a fly-by-night operator.

Steer clear!

Mistake #7 -- You Don't Ask for References.

This is probably the easiest way you can avoid any problems with a moving company. ALL good reputable movers will eagerly give you references.

Ask every mover to give you at least ten names of people who they have done business with. And also ask them how long ago they worked with these customers.

Ask them what type of move they did for those references. Try and get the names of customers who had similar size and type of move that you need done. And then call the references.

I've put together a list of questions for you on the last page of this booklet, so that you know exactly what to ask when you call a reference. This is the easiest way you can hire the right mover!

AND...

Mistake #8 – Not Knowing What to Look Out For

Alright, this wasn't one of the original mistakes for this booklet, but it IS important. It's so important, I decided to define some of the things to look out for if you do have problems.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

NO WRITTEN ESTIMATE GIVEN IN ADVANCE:

Disreputable movers will not provide you with their estimate and other legally required documents in advance. They'll show up on your move date – when things are hectic – and ask you to sign their agreement on the spot. This puts you in a very bad position. You have no options if you want to move that day.

A MOVER IS ASKING FOR A BIG UPFRONT FEE:

You are at risk using a mover who is in financial trouble. If a moving company is asking for an unusually large upfront fee, it usually means they have outstanding bills to pay. That's not good for you. Be very careful!

MOVER IS NOT LICENSED:

It is unlawful for an unlicensed moving company to perform a move within New Jersey, or to perform an interstate move without registering with the USDOT and FMCSA. Think about it, if they are willing to operate unlawfully, can you trust them with your belongings?

MOVER DOES NOT DO A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY:

A mover is required to survey your belongings prior to calculating an estimate, unless you waive this requirement. (This waiver is one of the documents they'll spring on you the day of your move.) Don't trust a mover who doesn't perform their own survey.

VERY FEW OR NO REFERENCES:

Just about anyone can find three people to be references for them. It's not unheard of for movers to use their friends, cousins, aunts and uncles, etc. to be references. Get at least 10 or 20.

“Costly Misconceptions About Moving and Moving Companies”

Misconception #1: As long as everything looks good, it's okay.

Not necessarily. Even substandard moving companies can hide behind a professional looking website or a glossy brochure. Another thing to be aware of is brokers. These operators provide estimates to you based on a brief phone call. Your move is then sold to a local mover who will actually be responsible to perform the service. You may have had no contact whatsoever with company that shows up on moving day, and no opportunity to check them out. And, if something goes wrong, the broker is not required to assist you in any way in resolving the problem.

Misconception #2: You don't need to get into specifics with your mover... they know how to do their job.

Of course, you don't need to tell a trained mover how to load a truck. But the best ones will ask you plenty of questions and get your input before presenting their estimate. Why? It's impossible for a mover to give you an accurate estimate without knowing details about what items you want moved, or the specifics about where they will park the truck, staircases involved, and so forth. You see, it's much more than just putting some numbers on paper.

Misconceptions #3: It's normal for there to be some errors and to expect to pay more than the estimate.

No. If your final cost isn't very close to what you expected it would be, then there was too little communication with the mover either at the outset or during the process. Be wary of the mover that's not asking you a lot of questions or doesn't want to perform a very detailed survey.

Misconception #4: Anyone with a strong back and a truck can perform my move.

Not true. Trained and qualified moving professionals are well worth the extra cost. Having *trained* crew members who properly pack or wrap your possessions – and protect your floors, walls and bannisters – avoids damage and aggravation. No one wants their belongings – or their home – to be banged up or destroyed in the moving process. The cost of qualified movers doesn't add up to a lot when you consider everything involved in moving.

Misconception #5: The moving company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.

Maybe – but not always. Here are a few points to consider.

The price you see offered may not be the price you end up paying. We've talked about this already, but here are a few more things to consider:

Price is almost always an indication of quality and service. Taking the time necessary to properly wrap and pack your belongings costs more. Better trained and more skilled employees cost more. Carrying the proper insurance – which protects you – adds cost. You don't buy the cheapest car, clothes, or foods. Don't let price be the deciding factor when choosing a mover.

Remember, it's easy for an unscrupulous mover to give you an estimate and later change the price, sometimes adding thousands of dollars. Too many people have learned that the low price they were given in the estimate was not the amount they paid.

And if you've hired a mover before, you too may have been the victim of a misleading estimate. You probably learned the hard way that some companies offer a cheap price – and then ask you to pay 2 to 5 times more once they get your belongings on their truck. Some even engage in illegal bait and switch tactics.

As in all businesses and professions, the moving industry has its share of bad apples. I take no pleasure in telling you this, but some are dishonest and, sadly, a few are downright unethical. By their misleading advertising and false promises, they cast a dark shadow on our entire industry.

Then you'll find other companies – professionals like me – who work hard to earn your trust and respect.

As a way of improving our profession, I've dedicated myself to educating the public. The only way you can make an intelligent decision is to have all the facts you need. This is why I've written this booklet.

“Three Simple Ways To Save Money on Your Move”

Recommendation #1: Make a commitment to yourself to be completely upfront and thorough with any mover you see. The more a mover knows about the details of your belongings, the time frame you have for your move, and the specifics about the location, the more ideas he can give you to save money.

Recommendation #2: The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. You have our Consumer Guide, which has a list of questions that you should ask of every mover you're considering. Here are five questions I suggest you ask every mover before you even invite them to prepare an estimate:

- 1) Are you a member of a professional trade association?
- 2) Are you a moving company or a broker?
- 3) Are you a licensed and registered mover?
- 4) Will you provide me with proof of insurance?
- 5) Will you provide me with bank and supplier references?

Recommendation #3: Once you're satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent, professional moving company, invite them to discuss the details of your move. Plan to spend 30 minutes to an hour. Remember, planning and estimating a move is complex.

And finally, here are some tips from our team here at [Company name]...

Oftentimes, your “gut feeling” is right. Be sure to avoid any moving company that, for some reason – even if you can't put your finger on it – doesn't feel right.

If a moving company says they don't need a survey in order to prepare an estimate, run the other way. Remember, a mover or broker who doesn't do a detailed survey is making a lot of assumptions, and their estimate is based on these assumptions.

You should plan to move certain items yourself. These include cash, securities, jewelry, furs, firearms, personal papers, collections, and family heirlooms.

Items like marble or glass table tops, pool table slate, special antiques, chandeliers, artwork, and flat screen TVs should be properly crated before moving. Quality moving companies offer special handling services.

If you pack small items yourself, do yourself a favor and don't use newspaper. The ink will come off and all of your delicate items will be covered in black dust when you unpack them. Get yourself some packing paper.

If you are packing your own boxes, don't use old boxes from the grocery store. These boxes will be of all different sizes, weakened from use, dirty, missing the top, or – worst of all – infested with bugs. It's best to buy new boxes in two or three different sizes.

Mark each box in permanent black marker with the room you want it placed in at the destination. And be sure to mark boxes with FRAGILE or THIS SIDE UP. You may want to consider numbering each box and then creating a master list with a description of each box's contents.

Packing your belongings will take longer, and require a lot more boxes, than you think. Start the process AT LEAST two weeks before your planned moving date. Even then you will probably be rushing to get the job done.

If you want great service by a well-qualified, reputable moving company that can deliver the worry-free move you desire – professionally and on time – then I invite you to call me.

I'll be happy to answer your questions – provide you information over the telephone – or come into your home to discuss the details about your move – without obligation of any kind. To reach me, call 732-748-1200.

THANK YOU

How to Check References

Many people have told us over the years that they checked references for a moving company and still got burned.

To help you get the important information you need when calling references, I have put this list of questions together.

I suggest that you ask each reference three or four of these questions. Having a list ready for each call would be a helpful way to stay on track. You may want to ask that they rate the mover on a scale of one to five.

- 1. Did they arrive on time on the date of the move?**
- 2. What was the main reason you picked them?**
- 3. Was the estimated price the amount you ended up paying? If not, why not?**
- 4. How did they handle issues that came up during the move?**
- 5. Were all of their crew members polite and respectful?**
- 6. Did your belongings arrive at the destination in good shape?**
- 7. Did you discover any problems after the move was completed? Did they correct the problem?**
- 8. Were any walls or floors damaged during the move? How was that handled by the mover?**
- 9. Did they take their boxes, packing materials and garbage with them at the end of the move?**
- 10. Would you hire them if you were to move again?**

Remember to confirm that they are licensed, get a bank and a vendor reference, and proof of insurance. This is very important!

This Reference Guide will help you get the information you need to make the best choice when it comes to evaluating and selecting a professional moving company.