

Moving Tips

Each year thousands of Texans move from one home to another, many of who enlist a professional moving company to manage this process. The vast majority of professional moving companies are reputable, honest, and dependable, and in fact, any mover who transports a shipment of household goods within Texas is required to register with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and abide by the organization's strict consumer protection guidelines. The following information is provided to help familiarize you with each step before, during and after your move.

BEFORE YOUR MOVE

Choosing Your Mover:

- Make sure your mover is registered with TxDOT by calling 1-800-299-1700 or visiting www.dot.state.tx.us.
- Check out the mover's registration number, references, and complaint history BEFORE entering into a moving services contract.
- Get multiple bids to determine which mover offers the services you need at a price within your budget.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions, and make sure you get everything in writing, including the full company name, physical address, and telephone number of the mover.

Proposal for Moving Services:

- Prior to loading, your mover must provide a written proposal (either binding or not-to-exceed) outlining the maximum amount you will be required to pay.
- A binding proposal states the exact price of the move and a not-to-exceed proposal states the maximum price of the move, but allows the mover to charge less than the maximum.
- This written estimate should include all the decisions you have made regarding what you want moved, the size of the vehicle to be used, required staffing, and the mover's liability for loss or damage. Have your mover sign your copy of the estimate.
- To help a prospective mover create an accurate proposal, be prepared to identify all items that will need to be moved as well as any additional services that may be required at your destination, such as stair carries, long carries or elevator use.

Pickup and Delivery Dates:

- In scheduling your move, consider the dates and times for pickup and delivery and note any potential conflicting deadlines on your written proposal or moving services contract.
- If you are not available at the agreed upon times, the pickup and delivery may be delayed and you may be charged additional fees.

Inventory

- Your mover may offer to prepare a descriptive inventory of the shipment, which includes a listing of your goods and their condition. The mover may charge a fee for this service only if you agree to the preparation of the inventory.
- The mover will ask you to sign the inventory after loading and possibly after unloading.
- **Important:** Since inventories are often used during the claim process, inspect your shipment carefully to make sure all boxes and items are accounted for and to assess any loss or damage during the move.

Moving Services Contract:

- Your mover will prepare a moving services contract in the form of a bill of lading, work ticket or other receipt.

- This contract lists important information about your move, including your name; the mover's name, address and phone number; services to be performed; when, how and what they will charge for the move; and the mover's limitation of liability for loss or damage to your goods.
- Be sure all agreements between you and your mover, including services to be provided at the destination, are written on the moving services contract. Do not rely on any verbal agreements.
- **Important:** Read the entire document and make sure you understand and agree with all parts of the contract before you sign your name.

Choosing Coverage:

- Your mover has a basic liability of .60 cents per pound per article. This means if your 50 pound television is damaged, your mover is liable for a maximum of only \$30.
- Your shipment will be valued at 60 cents per pound per article unless you and your mover agree to a higher level of liability on your moving services contract.
- Your mover may assess additional fees, (sometimes referred to as a valuation fee), for assuming the higher level of liability.
- **Important:** A higher level of mover liability is not the same as purchasing transit insurance.

DURING YOUR MOVE

Basic tools:

Following are important and useful items that you may need during your move and should keep with you in a box or kit:

- Tools - hammer, screwdriver, utility knife, nails, tape, flashlight, light bulbs, etc.
- Payment for the movers, the moving services contract and attachments.
- Bathroom needs - towels, soap, toilet paper, shower curtain, etc.
- Kitchen needs - snacks, drinks, disposable utensils, cups and plates, etc.
- Cleaning needs - sponges, cleansers, broom, dustpan, garbage bags, etc.
- Personal needs - eyeglasses, medications, telephone, alarm clock, clothes, keys, etc.
- Children's games and toys
- Pet supplies - water, food, identification tag with new address.
- Anything else you might need during the first day in your new home.

Packing and Loading:

- Depending upon your agreement with the mover, you may be required to handle some of the preparation for the move.
- If you're doing your own packing, be careful about overloading cartons and be sure to use appropriate cartons so your goods will arrive safely.
- Carton tops should be flat and taped securely for easy handling and safe stacking in the truck.
- To avoid damage, do not pack fragile items and heavy items in the same carton and clearly mark fragile cartons.
- **Important:** Do not pack valuables such as jewelry, money, medication, or important papers, as the mover is not responsible for these items.

Delivery:

- Be sure you are at the destination site at the time agreed upon for delivery.
- If you are not there and delivery cannot be made because of your absence, your property may be put in storage and you will then be responsible for storage charges.
- Check the condition of your property before signing a delivery receipt, including any boxes that you do not intend to immediately unpack.
- If there is damage or loss, make a written notation on the inventory or moving services contract.

Transit Insurance:

- You may wish to purchase transit insurance to cover loss or damage to your goods, either through your mover or directly from an insurance company.
 - Transit insurance is not regulated by TxDOT or the Texas Department of Insurance, so be sure to read the transit insurance policy and understand the coverage and any deductibles.
 - Your mover is required to provide you with a copy of the policy or other appropriate evidence of insurance purchased through them before the move is begun.
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AFTER YOUR MOVE

Payment of Charges:

- Be prepared to pay the maximum amount of money shown on the written proposal.
- The proposal must explain when you will be required to pay your mover and what forms of payment are accepted, such as personal checks or credit cards.

Claims:

- If you have a dispute about the charges or loss or damage to your goods, you should first file a written claim with your mover within 90 days of delivery of the shipment.
- Include in your claim the specific amount of money or other resolution you are seeking.
- If your claim involves damaged goods, preserve the containers and any damaged goods so your mover may inspect them.
- Your mover must contact you within 20 days (excluding Sundays and holidays) of receipt of your written claim.
- Your mover has a right to inspect containers or damaged goods within 30 days of receiving your claim, and must pay or deny your claim, or make a firm settlement offer, within 90 days of receiving your claim.
- If you are not satisfied with your settlement, you can contact TxDOT for mediation or you may pursue the claim in a court of law.
- If you wish to file for mediation through TxDOT, you must submit your request within 30 days after any portion of your claim is denied. Additionally, if your mover has not paid or denied your claim or made a firm settlement offer within 90 days of receiving your claim, you have 30 days to request mediation through TxDOT.