

*MoveRescue is endorsed by a network of legal firms throughout the United States, United Van Lines and Mayflower Transit.*



**How do you protect yourself  
from disreputable movers?**



*help is on the way.*

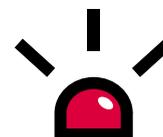
## **Moving Scams – A Growing Problem**

They are known as “rogue movers” – disreputable moving companies who charge their clients additional, often exorbitant fees. And with more and more consumers using the Internet to find a moving company, the problem is becoming an all too familiar one.

Although reports from consumers differ, each seems to follow a common pattern. Victims connect with a rogue mover online, household goods are picked up and then services or the goods themselves are withheld until additional money is paid. The Department of Transportation cites nearly 4,000 move-related scam reports a year, while news outlets figure the number to be as high as 10,000.

These shady movers use a number of techniques to get their money, but the most commonly reported, and most difficult to combat, is illegally holding victims’ household goods “hostage.” Just like a real kidnapping, the goods are not returned until additional payment is made, and many times victims may be unsure where their belongings or the movers actually are. Aggravating the situation is the fact that local police may only become involved if the moving company has broken a local or state law, since they’re not authorized to enforce the federal civil laws that govern the moving industry.

Despite the amount of media coverage about mover fraud and the lack of control over it, the support system for victims of move-related crimes has been poor.



## How to Avoid Being Scammed

As with nearly any detail-driven event, prevention is key. And planning ahead can help to reduce the possibility of problems during your move.

### Before You Choose a Moving Company

Word of mouth is usually a great indicator of reliability. Ask around. Talk to friends, relatives, and business associates. Look up their recommendations in the Yellow Pages under “Movers.” Just keep in mind that a big ad or a Web site isn’t necessarily a sign of a reputable mover. As a matter of fact, nearly all moving scam victims report finding their moving companies on the Internet.

When you’re searching for the right company try to find at least three companies that:

- Have offices in your area
- Have been in business at least 10 years
- Have local affiliations with organizations such as your local Chamber of Commerce.

### Using the Web

Don’t use the Internet until after you’ve narrowed your search. Use the Web to research your individual choices. Don’t forget to check with the Better Business Bureau (<http://www.bbb.org/>) or other consumer organizations.

### Professional Affiliations

Professional affiliations are a good way to gauge a company’s integrity. Moving companies who are members of the American

Moving and Storage Association (AMSA) have all agreed to:

- Abide by the terms of published tariffs (the carrier’s provisions and rates for services performed applicable to your move).
- Participate in the Arbitration Program sponsored by that organization.

Many AMSA members are also participants in the AMSA Certified Mover and Van Line Program. To find out if your potential moving company is a certified member of AMSA, search online at one of these links:

AMSA certified van lines:

[www.moving.org/before/certmoverlist.html#certvan](http://www.moving.org/before/certmoverlist.html#certvan)

AMSA certified movers:

[www.moving.org/before/certmoverlist.html#certmover](http://www.moving.org/before/certmoverlist.html#certmover)

### Working with Estimates

Compare prices from at least three moving companies. Ask them to visit your home for an on-site estimate; this service should be free. If they won’t come to your house to do an on-site estimate, then find another company!

**Never rely on a quote provided sight-unseen whether it’s over the phone or over the Internet.**

### Price and Value

Don’t be swayed by a super-low price or extras. If one of the quotes is substantially lower than the rest, be careful. Quoted prices that are dramatically lower than the rest of the competition are probably too good to be true. “Low ball” price quotes could mean lower-quality service. Plus, scam victims often report being hooked by low prices only to be hit with added charges or having to pay a “ransom” for their belongings.

### Insurance versus Valuation

Some consumers assume the moving company’s insurance covers the full value of their goods at no extra charge. This is not true!



Make sure you ask about “valuation” options. Valuation provides protection from loss or damage to your possessions. Valuation is not insurance; it is simply a level of motor carrier liability.

### **The 110% Rule**

Moving companies are required by law to provide you with a copy of the brochure “Your Rights and Responsibilities.” In this brochure, the “110% Rule” is explained. The rule states that under a non-binding estimate, the moving company cannot require you to pay more than the amount of the original estimate, plus 10 percent, at the time of delivery. You are obligated to pay any remaining charges, over the 110 percent amount, within 30 days. Any services you request from the moving company over and above the estimate provided may be demanded to be paid in full at the time of delivery, in addition to 110 percent of the original estimate.

### **What To Do if You’ve Been Scammed?**

Now there’s a new resource for consumers who have been victimized by these rogue moving companies, a new resource that you and your family can rely on – MoveRescue.

With one toll-free phone call to MoveRescue, consumers can connect with a wealth of valuable move-related assistance. From direction and guidance to legal counsel, MoveRescue is your resource for information and support from trusted moving industry professionals.

### **Who is MoveRescue?**

MoveRescue is a service created with two simple goals in mind:

- Provide support to consumers who have been scammed by “rogue movers.”
- Provide educational resources to consumers to help prevent being scammed by “rogue movers.”

Endorsed by industry leaders United Van Lines and Mayflower Transit, MoveRescue offers consumers a connection to assistance, information and a nationwide network of legal professionals.

Along with improving consumer awareness, MoveRescue has assisted in move-related incidents by helping consumers get possession of belongings that have been held hostage.

### **Take Action**

If you feel that you’ve been scammed by a disreputable mover – whether you’ve been forced to pay outrageous unforeseen charges or your belongings are being held “hostage” – the first step toward resolving your issue is action.

Connect with MoveRescue online at [www.moverescue.com](http://www.moverescue.com) or by calling our toll-free number **800-832-1773**. You’ll find information and assistance, as well as help in determining how to choose a professional mover. Or, to find out more about your rights and responsibilities when moving visit MoveRescue’s Web site for pre-move education tips.

