

A CONSUMERS GUIDE TO CHOOSING A MOVER:

# Making a long distance move?

## How to get it done right



**A** major cause of consumer dissatisfaction is the mover's failure to deliver on their promises for packing, loading and delivering the goods. Whether you are moving up a few floors from one apartment to another, or a few blocks away, or across the country, you must make an informed decision when you choose a mover. Check to make sure your mover can provide you with services they've promised – just because they say they can, doesn't make it so.

All movers make promises about their long distance services, but it's your responsibility to check that they can do the job.

In a long distance move, you contract with a moving company and they arrange for carriage of the goods with a long-distance hauler, usually a van line. Is your mover a van line agent? If not, ask your mover who will haul your household effects. Also ask who will follow through on the destination services you require, such as unpacking, appliance servicing, storage, claims settlement or customer service. The mover should arrange these through

their agent at the destination.

Unlike a local move whose cost is based on an hourly rate, the cost of a long distance move is based on weight and mileage, over the most practical highway routes. Small shipments may be weighed on the mover's warehouse scale. You will be required to pay for any special transportation charges such as ferry charges, fuel surcharges or excessive distance charges. Your mover should explain any rules or regulations that affect out of country carriage. You may be offered or can ask for a guaranteed price for your move.

Having your paperwork in order is especially important in a long distance move. The mover's estimate must be in writing and tell you the pick up date, delivery date (or possible dates), estimated weight calculated after an on-site visit and detailed information on how to contact the mover including street address and telephone number. Before loading, the driver will inspect the shipment for any weight variance. You should be advised of any variance and provided with a copy of the bill of lading that contains the

shipping terms and conditions and an itemized listing of all charges. The mover should attach an inventory of your goods to their shipping information. You should sign both. After the load is weighed by a certified public scale, the mover will attach a weigh scale ticket to the bill of lading as proof of actual weight of the goods. You can ask for a copy of this. Usually you have to pre-pay for your move, but may be asked to pay on delivery, depending on the mover's policy.

Damage can occur on any move, whether local or long distance. Obtain information about the carrier's liability in the event of loss or damage. Consider purchasing Replacement Value Protection from the mover. This increases the protection for your goods from \$0.60 per pound, to repair or replacement cost, at the mover's option. Ask about any deductible. Also ask what the mover's claims process is if there is loss or damage so that you have the necessary information to file a claim.

As we've said before, do your homework and follow the four principles of choosing a mover:

**1.** Find a reputable mover. Contact the following agencies to get useful information about a prospective mover:

- the Better Business Bureau (BBB) at 1-800-459-8875 (toll free),
- Ontario's consumer protection agency, the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, at 416-326-8800, and/or
- CAM at 905-848-6579 or 1-866-860-0065 (toll free), or visit [www.mover.net](http://www.mover.net).

**2.** Ask at least three movers for estimates (the lowest estimate is often the most expensive).

**3.** Make sure you have adequate insurance protection for your goods.

**4.** Get the terms and conditions of your move in writing.

The Canadian Association of Movers (CAM) has published many articles in this magazine that provide consumers with information to make their moves go smoothly. All of these articles can be seen in the consumer section of our web site, at [www.mover.net](http://www.mover.net), on the 24 hours Find-a-Rental link.



[www.findarental.24hrs.ca](http://www.findarental.24hrs.ca)