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Acting Insp. Ian Nichol says a moving company employee has been charged in relation to an alleged fraud and extortion scheme.

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A 30-year-old employee of a moving company is facing charges after clients of several moving companies claimed they were overbilled for services.

Acting TPS Insp. Ian Nichol said that in April of 2017, two families came forward to police with complaints against **Green Moving, Ryder Moving and Landmark Van Lines, all based in Toronto.**

He said the families sought out quotes from the companies for moves from Alberta to the Maritimes.



After receiving quotes for the service online, both families accepted and had movers take their belongings away.

Receiving a quote online should have been a red flag to the victims, Nichol told reporters Wednesday.

“Legitimate companies don’t provide you a legitimate estimate over the web – you need to have them inspect the load at the scene.”

Nichol said that in both instances, moving company employees allegedly exaggerated the weight of goods moved in an attempt to increase their fee.

Nichol said in one case, the company quoted a family \$2,700 but then billed them \$14,000.

When the families refused to pay the inflated fee, company representatives allegedly held their belongings in Ontario, and in one instance threatened to destroy their property if they didn’t pay up.

“You cannot use a person’s property as leverage to negotiate a price,” Nichol said.

Nichol said the suspects would use various company names and aliases to confuse victims and law enforcement.

On May 17, Toronto police, RCMP and Ontario government officials raided a warehouse in Scarborough and allegedly located the belongings of both families inside.

A CTV News Toronto reporter was at that facility when undercover police officers executed a search warrant.

At the time, they removed truckloads of household furniture but would not say why.

When asked why the officers were removing the items, an unnamed employee at the facility said, "Because they're not making their payments."

"They haven't paid anything for the moving costs," the man, who would not provide his name, said.

"We scale the truck. We get what the weight is. That's what they agreed on. We're not giving any flat rates."

The Better Business Bureau rated Green Moving online as an "F."

"Consumers have advised our office that the cost of their move increased substantially from the intimal quotes that lead them to enter a contract," the Better Business Bureau website reads. "When consumers request an explanation or reduction, they are advised that their items will not be delivered until full payment is remitted."

Earlier this month, CTV News Toronto spoke to one woman who said her furniture was being "held hostage" by a moving company who transported her things across the country.

"It's extremely upsetting. I don't know where my things are," Ashely, who did not provide her last name, said.

"They change their story every single time I talk to them. Everything they say is a different story each time," she said.

All property has since been returned and both families were finally able to complete their cross-country moves.

On May 24, a suspect identified as Burak Ozgan was arrested.

He was charged with two counts of fraud over \$5,000, two counts of possession of property obtained by crime over \$5,000 and one count of extortion.

He is scheduled to appear in court at 1911 Eglinton Avenue East on July 4.

Nichol said he is not believed to be the leader of this alleged scheme and an unspecified number of other suspects are being sought.

Other victims are also being sought.

"I believe this has been going on for a long time and I believe there are other victims," Nichol said, adding it is believed other victims may also reside outside the province.

Anyone with information is asked to call police at 416-808-7300.