

Ask These 7 Questions and Get on Top of Your Move



A move to your new dream home, some larger office space or an apartment in Paris where you're on assignment is exciting. But it's no small task. The logistics alone can be overwhelming.

Being a savvy consumer is the first important step to ensure things progress seamlessly. And researching several companies and asking these seven important questions are giant steps toward getting on top of your transition.

1 ARE YOU PROPERLY LICENSED?

Companies that move residential, commercial and international customers from Point A to Point B without a license are breaking the law. For your own protection, we strongly recommend you steer clear of any mover that isn't properly licensed.

Verify a company's New Jersey license on the **NJ Division of Consumer Affairs'** website or call the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs at 973-504-6512.

Some states require moving companies to have a USDOT number and an MC (Motor Carrier) number if they're moving you across state lines. Confirm a company's USDOT and MC numbers at **The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Bureau**.

2 DO YOU CARRY THE MANDATORY LEVELS OF INSURANCE?

To obtain the necessary licensing, moving companies are required to carry insurance to protect you. That's why you should always inquire about a prospective mover's insurance protection. Ask this question: *"Do you offer full-value protection for my property?"*

You will be wise to steer clear of this mover if the company representative answers "No." Unfortunately, there are some fly-by-night operators who don't have even basic insurance coverage, and, therefore, cannot offer high levels of protection to you. Again, avoid these companies. They are not the movers you'll want to trust with your move.

3 WILL YOUR COMPANY PERFORM MY MOVE, OR WILL IT BE PERFORMED BY ANOTHER MOVING COMPANY?

Companies called moving brokers are typically found on the internet. When you contact them, they will ask you a few questions over the phone, give you an attractive estimate, then try to sell your move to a local moving company—and you'll have no opportunity to check that company out. They'll just show up on moving day, or they may not show up at all. Even worse. There's a good chance the amount you'll end up paying will be more than the estimate.



4

ARE THE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL BE PACKING AND LOADING MY BELONGINGS TRAINED AND VETTED PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK FOR YOUR COMPANY?

Some operators use untrained day laborers. The background of these workers is typically unknown, and they will be in your home, handling your most valued possessions, and interacting with your family. Beyond that, these workers are typically not insured. If one of them gets injured while working on your property, you are most likely going to be responsible for their medical bills. What's more, they lack training in proper packing techniques, which potentially exposes your belongings to more damage.

Only work with movers who have hired trained professionals—or hired and trained--workers who have undergone criminal background checks.

5

WILL YOU PERFORM AN ONSITE OR VIRTUAL SURVEY AND PROVIDE ME YOUR WRITTEN COST ESTIMATE IN ADVANCE OF MY MOVE DATE?

Unless you waive this requirement, a mover is typically required to survey your belongings prior to calculating an estimate. But disreputable operators only ask you a few questions over the phone before giving you an estimate, then base their figures on a lot of assumptions designed to make the cost appear very attractive. They'll show up on moving day when things are hectic. They'll ask you to sign a waiver of your rights on the spot, and this puts you in a very bad position. The hammer really begins to drop once they have your possessions on their truck when they inform you that the cost will be much higher because of factors not taken into consideration on their estimate.

Avoid this situation at all costs. Tell every moving company representative you want someone to come to your home or conduct a virtual walk-through and followup with a detailed, written estimate that thoroughly spells out what it will cost you to complete your move.

6

DO YOU REQUIRE A DEPOSIT?

Be very suspicious of any company asking for a large upfront deposit. And be especially distrustful of a company that requires you to pay in cash. There have been too many horror stories of operators who disappeared after being paid a big deposit. Reputable movers may ask for a modest, refundable deposit with the balance due at the end of the move.

7

WILL YOU GIVE ME AT LEAST 5 REFERENCES TO CALL?

It's not unheard of for less-than-ethical companies to use their friends, cousins, aunts and uncles, etc. to be references or give them reviews. Get at least five references from bona fide customers to make sure they have had a successful experience with the mover. Then use the guide on the next page to get the information you need to make the best decision in hiring a mover.