

WASHINGTON



UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

Consumer Help Line
888-333-WUTC (9882)
consumer@utc.wa.gov

TTY
800-416-5289

Education and Outreach
360-664-1110

Media Line
360-664-1116

The UTC regulates the services of privately or investor owned utility and transportation companies. Our mission is to ensure that services are fairly priced, available, reliable and safe.

Regulated companies:

- Telephone
- Electricity
- Natural Gas
- Water
- Garbage
- Recycling
- Residential Movers
- Charter Buses
- Airport Shuttles
- Commercial Ferries
- Natural Gas Pipeline

General Information
360-664-1160
www.utc.wa.gov

PO Box 47250
1300 S Evergreen Pk Dr SW
Olympia WA 98504



Before You Hire a Mover

WARNING! There are currently unlicensed moving companies taking advantage of people, holding goods hostage for large sums of money, and illegally inflating estimates. An intrastate moving company operating in Washington without a valid UTC permit is violating state law. A mover with a UTC permit must comply with state safety, insurance and service standards. They must perform their services at reasonable rates and within a reasonable time. Movers without a permit operate outside the law and may provide little, if any protection for loss or damage to your belongings.

Before you hire a mover, confirm that they are permitted at www.utc.wa.gov/consumer/movingtips or call 1-888-333-WUTC (1-888-333-9882).

Do Your Research

Get recommendations from neighbors, friends, and co-workers who have used a mover recently. Ask for and check the company's references. Contact the UTC and the Better Business Bureau, www.thebbb.org, to inquire about consumer complaints.

Compare Costs

The UTC sets the minimum and maximum rates a mover can charge you for moving services. You may get a copy of these rates, called a tariff, from your mover or the UTC. Moving costs are calculated by one of two methods:

- Moves 56 miles and over – rates are based on the weight of your goods and the distance hauled.
- Moves up to and including 55 miles – Rates are based on the number of workers used; the amount of time it takes to load, move and unload your goods; and the mover's hourly rate for service.

Get a Written Estimate

Movers are required to provide you with a free written estimate of the probably cost of your move. Verbal estimates are not allowed. The estimate should clearly and accurately describe all charges.

Before You Hire a Mover

There are two types of estimates:

- A non-binding estimate is an educated guess of what your move would cost based on the mover's survey of your belongings. Your final cost can be more than your non-binding estimate, though in **no instance** are you required to pay more than 25 percent above the estimate and any supplemental estimate.
- A binding estimate is a written agreement that guarantees the price you pay based on the items to be moved and the services listed on the estimate.

Regardless of which type of estimate you get, you are best served by an accurate one. Show or provide the estimator with information about every single item to be moved, including items in the attic, basement, garage, shed, closets and under beds. Reach a clear understanding about the amount of packing and other services needed.

Inventory

The mover is required by law to make an inventory list of your property. Make sure that it is legible and accurate. If you disagree with the inventory, note it on the list before you sign. Make sure all notations also appear on the movers copy. Without an inventory, you could have difficulty proving a claim. Anything omitted from the estimate but later included in your move will add to the cost. If circumstances change from the time of the estimate resulting in additional costs, the mover must provide a supplemental estimate, and have you sign it, before performing the additional services.

Bill of Lading

This is your contract with the mover. It states the mover's responsibilities, such as the services they will perform, when and how they charge for the move and what liability they will assume. Be sure you understand this contract, especially the part about the mover's liability for loss of damage and get a copy. Movers are required by law to issue you a bill of lading, so do not hire a mover who does not want to use one. You must sign the bill of lading before the truck leaves with your belongings and sign it again as a receipt upon delivery. The driver should also sign the bill of lading as a receipt that your belongings were picked up. Be sure you keep a copy of the bill of lading safe and available until your belongings are delivered and unpacked.

Loss and Damage Options

Movers must assume some level of liability for loss or damage to your belongings during your move. Your mover's liability will likely be less than the value of your goods; the mover is not liable for the full value of your property unless you pay an additional charge for that protection. Mover's must explain their liability for loss or damage to your property, and how to increase your protection. **DO NOT** hire a mover who refuses to offer liability protection or discuss the options of coverage for your belongings.

Having Problems with Your Mover? Call the Commission.

Commission staff are always ready to answer questions about regulated companies. We can help you with problems regarding their service and rates. Please try to resolve your complaint directly with the company first. If you feel you have given them adequate time to correct the problem, and you are still not satisfied, call the commission for help at 1-888-333-WUTC.