

Southeast Florida - Tri-County

LOCAL MOVING CONSUMER “BILL OF RIGHTS”

Broward Miami-Dade Palm Beach

Each of the three county governments (Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach) has separate ordinances regulating moving companies. Most regulations within the three ordinances are similar, but each county is responsible for its own enforcement. The following information provides consumers with a basic understanding of their rights and responsibilities when dealing with a moving company in the tri-county area. These ordinances only regulate moves that begin **and** end in any of the three counties.

Written Estimates - Consumers anticipating a move are entitled to a detailed written estimate that includes **ALL** expected charges related to labor, transportation, packing, inventory, storage, and additional valuation coverage. It is important that consumers clearly designate and reveal all that is to be moved. Moving companies may charge for an estimate; however, the cost of preparing an estimate must be fully disclosed and approved by the consumer. Moving companies cannot require that the right to an estimate be waived. All three counties require the moving company to provide the consumer with a written contract (contract for services/bill of lading) containing the total cost of the move and the consumer's written authorization (including signature) **prior** to starting the move. A moving company cannot refuse to deliver your goods if you have paid the amount agreed in the written estimate and/or the written contract.

Written Inventory - Consumers have a right to a written inventory of all household goods to be moved by the moving company. The moving company may charge for the inventory. The moving company cannot require that the right to an inventory be waived, but the consumer may voluntarily waive the inventory process. All charges to complete an inventory by a moving company must conspicuously be disclosed to the consumer. In Palm Beach County a moving company must provide a “no charge” inventory* when the move is not point-to-point/same day or storage is required.

Written Contracts - A written contract, often called a **bill of lading** or **contract for services**, is required to be prepared by the moving company and must be signed, timed and dated by the consumer (or her/his representative) **and** by the moving company representative before the work begins. The contract must conspicuously provide the “**bottom line**” cost of **all** charges associated with the move (i.e., inventory preparation, labor, transportation, packing materials, storage and any additional valuation coverage).

Lost/Damage Claims - The consumer has up to 60 days to notify the moving company **in writing** of any claim for loss or damage. If the claim cannot be satisfied in 30 days from date of the claim, the mover must advise the consumer of the status of the claim and the reason for the delay. The mover must satisfy or object to a claim no more than 90 days after receipt of the consumer's written notice. If asked to sign a statement acknowledging receipt of goods, consumers may make notations on the receipt as to damaged or missing items.

Licenses/Permits - Moving companies operating in the tri-county area are required to be licensed/permitted by their respective county government consumer agency where the mover's primary business is located and the Florida Division of Consumer Services. Consumers may call the appropriate county consumer agency to determine the current license status of any local moving company.

If a problem is unable to be resolved with a moving company, please contact the appropriate government consumer agency immediately.

The above are general descriptions of the three ordinances regulating moving companies. More information may be obtained by contacting your county consumer agency.

* Contact the Palm Beach County Division of Consumer Affairs for more details regarding written inventory.

Information or complaints involving an Interstate move, call the Federal Motor Carrier Administration at 1-888-368-7238.

Information or complaints involving moves in Florida, outside the tri county area, call the Florida Division of Consumer Services at 1-800-435-7352.