



Highlights: Moving Companies

Relocating is never easy, but working with a quality moving company can eliminate much of the stress. With ratings of local moving companies, price information, and expert advice, **Bay Area Consumers' Checkbook** (Checkbook.org) will help make your move a smooth one. Highlights from Checkbook's report:

Tips for a smooth move

- Beware of brokers. In recent years, more moving brokers have been operating online. These companies simply collect a deposit and arrange for a moving company to handle the move. Customers have no control over which company is hired. And some brokers reportedly work mainly with unlicensed or otherwise disreputable companies.
- To ensure you aren't dealing with a broker, if a moving company can't be reached via phone, or won't come to your home to provide an on-site written estimate, don't hire it.
- Think about what services you'll want. You can save a lot of money by doing work yourself, particularly by doing your own packing—although having a company pack for you saves you time and gives you a better basis for filing a claim if damage occurs.
- Shop around. To get a good price on a move, have several different reputable companies give you written, signed estimates, showing what you want moved, the number of crew members needed for the move, and the hourly rate for the crew.
- For moves within California of 100 miles or fewer, almost all movers set prices based on the number of workers and the amount of time needed for the job. For longer intrastate moves, charges must be based on mileage and weight, subject to maximums set by state regulations; carriers usually charge less than the maximum rates.
- For packing assistance on both short- and long-distance intrastate moves, the price will include charges for labor and any company-supplied containers. Be sure estimates detail the services to be performed and include an inventory describing the major items to be moved.
- Be present and attentive when belongings are loaded and unloaded. Be sure the mover prepares an inventory and that it specifies the condition of each item.
- Carefully read the bill of lading (the contract between you and the mover) before you sign it, and keep it until your shipment is delivered, all charges are paid, and all claims, if any, are settled.
- As your goods are unloaded, check your inventory to be sure each item has arrived in good condition. Don't sign anything without first writing in notes of any damage.
- No matter who does the packing work, move fragile or valuable belongings on your own.

Price and quality of local companies

- Checkbook found substantial company-to-company price differences for the same moving jobs. For example:
 - Prices to move a four-bedroom house from Fremont to Union City ranged from \$1,935 to \$5,500.
 - Prices to move a townhouse from Milpitas to San Jose ranged from \$625 to \$2,170.
- Among the companies Checkbook evaluated, there were significant differences in ratings for "overall quality" among customers. Choose a company carefully.

Checkbook's editors are available for interviews. Please contact Jamie Lettis at 202-454-3006 or jlettis@checkbook.org to schedule.