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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CONSUMER ALERT: As New State Law Protecting Floridians from Moving Scams Takes Effect, AG Moody Issues Warning



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—A new state law protecting Floridians from moving scams is effective today. The law requires movers to register with the state, provide clear contracts and avoid misleading advertising. Penalties are also increased for movers who refuse a lawful order to return private possessions to a client. To highlight these important changes and inform Floridians about moving scams, Attorney General Ashley Moody is updating the *Scams at a Glance: On the Move* resource.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Moving is stressful, and deceitful movers can compound the stress involved with relocating. Starting today in Florida, there is a new law in place to better protect consumers trying to relocate. To highlight these changes and equip Floridians with the tools they need to spot and avoid moving scams, we are updating our *Scams at a Glance: On the Move* resource."

In an effort to protect those moving to or within Florida, Attorney General Moody's Consumer Protection Team is taking action against more than 18 movers and moving brokers that reportedly scammed consumers. Since Attorney General Moody took office in January 2019, consumer protection investigations have led to approximately \$27 million in fines and restitution

against moving firms.

The new provisions of Chapter 507 of the Florida Statutes take effect July 1. The law introduces a series of consumer protection measures for household moving services occurring within Florida, including:

- **Mandatory Registration:** All movers and moving brokers must register with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, ensuring proper vetting and authorization to operate;
- **Enhanced Transparency:** Movers are required to provide detailed and clear estimates and contracts to customers, outlining all potential costs, dates and terms—moving brokers are now banned from providing contracts for services that include estimated moving costs;
- **Advertising Integrity:** Strict guidelines are set for advertising moving services, preventing false claims and ensuring the company's registration status is disclosed; and
- **Clarified Punishments:** It is now a third-degree felony, and may result in fines of up to \$50,000, if a mover or mover's employee, agent or contractor refuses to comply with an order from a law enforcement officer to relinquish a shipper's household goods in certain situations.

Following the enactment of the new law, Attorney General Moody is updating the *Scams at a Glance: On the Move* to continue providing Florida residents with information to avoid common pitfalls during the moving process and help stay protected against fraudulent or deceptive business practices.

Tips from *Scams at a Glance: On the Move* include:

- Know that movers and brokers that conduct interstate moves must be licensed with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration—check a company's licensing by visiting [FMCSA.DOT.gov/Protect-Your-Move](https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/Protect-Your-Move);
- Check if movers and brokers handling intrastate moves are licensed with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by visiting [FDACS.gov/Consumer-Resources](https://www.FDACS.gov/Consumer-Resources);
- Read all contract documents thoroughly before signing; and
- Consider personally moving important items, such as daily medication or supplies, that will be needed immediately upon arrival.

To view the updated guide in English, click [here](#).

To view the updated guide in Spanish, click [here](#).

To report a moving scam, contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by [filing a complaint online](#) or calling 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352).

Scams at a Glance is Attorney General Moody's consumer outreach program with information about common and emerging scams. The downloadable brochures are designed to teach consumers how to avoid falling victim to fraud and scams.

To access the Scams at a Glance webpage for more content related to common scams, click [here](#).

To view other Consumer Alerts, visit [MyFloridaLegal.com/Consumer Alert](https://www.myfloridalegal.com/consumer-alert).

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting [MyFloridaLegal.com](https://www.myfloridalegal.com). To view recent Consumer Alerts and for other information about avoiding scams, visit [MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert](https://www.myfloridalegal.com/consumer-alert).