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Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

SSS: Beware of Summer Moving Scams



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is continuing the Summer Scams Series with a warning about moving. Summer is traditionally one of the most popular times of the year to move, and Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a Consumer Alert to help both current and new Floridians avoid scams. Moving can be stressful and scammers may take advantage of the situation to rip off consumers. Florida has recently seen a population boom. According to a U.S. Census report, Florida saw the second highest growth of any state in the nation last year—making it a target-rich state for anyone trying to take advantage of people relocating.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “People are moving to Florida in droves, and many will spend the next few weeks relocating before the new school year begins. This season of high demand could attract scammers trying to take advantage of those moving their belongings. Today, I am issuing a Consumer Alert highlighting common moving scams and how to avoid falling prey.”

In March, Attorney General Moody announced more than $20 million secured and a lifetime industry ban against a deceptive moving business operating several scams under multiple company names. To read more about the judgment, click here.

Common signs of moving scams that consumers should watch out for include:

- Sight-unseen Estimates: Know that if moving companies provide an estimate without ever looking at the clients’ personal items, the actual cost of the service may increase

exorbitantly on moving day.

- Speedy Estimates: Be wary of someone providing an estimate without going through closets, cabinets and other storage areas—they may be trying to offer a lower quote and then hold items hostage until more money is paid before delivering.
- Demanded Deposits: Understand that money is generally paid upon delivery of items, not before. If a company is demanding a deposit before the move, it may be a scam.
- Business Name Changes: Do thorough research on a company before hiring—including asking for legally required information, like this federally required information packet that must be provided to consumers. Sham companies may not provide this information and change business names regularly to avoid being known as a fraudulent business.
- Unexpected Fees: Make sure to ask about any potential fees that may arise before agreeing to pay. Although not always a scam, fees may be added on to moving costs for a variety of reasons. Moving companies could charge extra fees for consumers who live on a second floor or above, did not provide boxes or moving materials, and for other unforeseen obstacles.
- Faulty or Unavailable Paperwork: Be sure to obtain all the proper paperwork and check for validity. If a company promises insurance, be sure to review the policies.

For helpful tips and red flags regarding moving scams, view Attorney General Moody's *Scams at a Glance: On the Move*.

Moving scams can be reported to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or filing a complaint online at MyFloridaLegal.com

Interstate moving scams can also be reported to the U.S. Department of Transportation by clicking here. Intrastate moving scams can be reported to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by clicking here.