

## *MOVING ESTIMATES: Get It In Writing!*

### **Trap**

Laura and her family were moving from Lantana to a new home in Jupiter. With only a week before the move, she decided to look for a moving company. She called several and asked for estimates. All but one company offered to evaluate the items to be moved prior to providing a written estimate. That mover gave her a “low ball” estimate by phone of \$999 to move everything. Trying to save a few dollars, Laura selected this company. On moving day, the truck came and removed all her property. Upon arrival at her new home, the movers demanded \$4,000 and threatened to hold her property until she paid in full.

### **Tips**

The Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs Division licenses and regulates companies conducting residential moves in Palm Beach County.

- Movers must prepare a written, signed and approved estimate for the consumer detailing all charges (e.g., boxes, tape, blankets, etc.) associated with the move.
- Prior to the loading the truck, the mover must provide the consumer with a signed contract for service (Bill of Lading) which verifies the complete breakdown of all moving costs.
- A mover must relinquish household goods and place them inside the consumer’s home when payment is made in the amount specified on the contract (Bill of Lading). It is a criminal offense for a moving company to hold goods hostage when the contractual payment is made. Movers must accept two of the following three forms of payment: cash, imprinted personal check or credit card (Visa/MC).
- A mover must also provide a Household Disclosure Form explaining “evaluation” coverage options and the damage claim process prior to a move.
- Read and understand all information provided by a mover.
- Do not sign incomplete documents.

**For more information, contact Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs**



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