

Determining the Cost

When getting an estimate, show the mover everything you plan to move and tell the mover every move detail. Moving charges are determined by several factors, including:

- total mileage
- total weight
- packing and unpacking
- flight charges (for moves involving stairs)
- elevator charges
- long carry charges
- storage costs (if applicable)
- cost to shuttle goods with a smaller truck if the road at origin or destination is steep or narrow,
- the number of hours involved, and
- any other special services.

Ask the mover how the company determined your estimate and if there are any additional charges you might expect.

There are two types of estimates: binding and non-binding. Though moving companies are not required to give a binding estimate, it is recommended.

A binding estimate is a contract that is good for 30 days. The mover must charge for the actual cost of the move or the binding estimate, whichever is less. However, if you have unforeseen costs, not covered in the binding estimate, such as extra stair carrying charges, the mover has the right to add these to the estimated costs.

Unlike a binding estimate, a non-binding estimate is NOT a contract or a bid. It is simply a written statement of the estimated cost. It does not guarantee the cost of the move. The actual cost could be much higher.

Neither type of estimate is valid if changes are made to the original estimate, such as date, location, or amount of goods moved. It is your responsibility to notify the mover of these types of changes so that they can write a new estimate. Additionally, if your move changes to include crossing of state lines, the cost could increase significantly.

If the move is based on the weight of your goods, you have the right to view the weighing at no cost. Coordinate with your mover prior to the day of the move. If you ask for a reweigh, it may cost up to \$20.

What is a Bill of Lading?

A bill of lading is part of your contract with the mover. Movers must issue a bill of lading. Do NOT hire a mover without asking to see a sample of one and reading all of the terms. You should sign the bill of lading before the mover picks up your goods. Although it may not include the final cost on it (because your items have not yet been weighed or the number of hours the shipment will take are not determined), it does list all the mover's responsibilities including services, liability and when and how the company charges for the move. These should all be listed on the backside of the bill of lading document.