

IT'S A MOVING EXPERIENCE

WHY TRUST YOUR VALUABLES TO AMATEURS?

THIS YEAR, about 10% of the U.S. population will experience an upheaval widely recognized as one of life's most stressful events. That's because an estimated 35 million Americans—families, corporate transferees and military personnel—will undertake a move.

Choosing a mover from the many that advertise on the Internet can contribute to the anxiety. The reason: It can be hard to distinguish professional movers with high standards from unethical pretenders often offering bargain basement rates. And if people choose strictly based on price, they may be putting their most valuable possessions at risk. The Internet abounds with so-called "rogue" movers who often request a deposit or give appealing estimates off the top of their heads without ever visiting the home. Then, at delivery, they may demand double or even triple the price—and hold belongings hostage until paid.

There is a way to choose a reliable mover, however. Experts advise that you look for one certified as a ProMover by The American Moving & Storage Association (AMSA), the national trade association for the professional moving and storage industry. They are committed to consumer protection and educating the public about the moving industry.

"When you hire professionals," says Andy Kroll, Vice President and General Manager of northAmerican® Van Lines, "you get intangibles that contribute to a better moving value, such as reliable customer service, quality audits, driver and crew training, standards of excellence and state-of-the-art technology."

To find quality professional movers, Kroll adds, ask the following questions in these key areas:

ESTIMATE PROCESS: Does the mover conduct an in-home survey or video survey of belongings before providing a guaranteed price? (Professional movers insist on an accurate method to best define the scope of work. Physical in-home surveying has traditionally been the best

method, followed by newer video technology, to accurately determine the cost of a move.)

TRAINING: Has the moving crew been trained on the correct way to pack boxes and load a trailer to minimize damage? Do they follow industry-established guidelines to protect your home, as well as your prized possessions?

TECHNOLOGY: Does the mover use technology to accurately communicate special needs to the driver and electronically verify that every item loaded has been delivered? Does the company use electronic routing to maximize efficiency and reduce delivery time?

QUALITY STANDARDS: Does the mover employ quality standards for vehicles and personnel? Does it conduct background checks on drivers and crews? Are its storage facilities secure, clean and climate controlled? Does the mover use an unbiased third-party company to survey customers post-move and use that truthful data to improve performance? What is the mover's Better Business Bureau (BBB) rating?

"Well-accredited movers are highly considerate of the needs of their clients," Kroll says, "and the vast majority of people who use professional movers will have a good experience." ●

For more information, please visit northAmerican.com.

