

Media Release

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WHEN MOVING HOUSE

The Andrews Labor Government is urging Victorians who are moving to be vigilant when hiring a furniture removal company, following a jump in the number of reports about removal and freight services.

Moving house is one of life's more stressful tasks – made all the more painful if your valued furniture and possessions are damaged, delayed or lost.

In 2017-18, Consumer Affairs Victoria received more than 700 reports about removal and freight services—up from around 580 in 2015-16.

The reports commonly related to complaints about items lost during transit, delays with collecting or delivering items, and items damaged during transit or in storage.

If things go wrong during a move, consumers have protections under the Australian Consumer Law with furniture removalists required to meet certain obligations – referred to as consumer guarantees. For example, services must be provided with due care and skill, and be provided within a reasonable time.

Consumers can do their part to avoid issues when hiring furniture removalists by following these tips:

- Do your homework – get online and search the company's name. Find out what others are saying about them on review websites
- Accreditation – consider choosing a removalist company that is accredited with an industry body such as the Australian Furniture Removers Association
- Location, location – find out ahead of the move if the company has a physical office and its own storage facility and where these are. This will make it easier to locate goods during any storage period
- Happy snapping – take photos of items packed, particularly fragile and valuable ones
- Cross 'Ts' and dot 'Is' – read any contracts very carefully and do not feel pressured to sign
- 'Ts' and 'Cs' – ask about terms and conditions, including any possible extra costs, such as if the move takes longer than expected. Get clear information about whether the cost is flat or charged hourly
- Peace of mind – consider taking out transit insurance from an authorised removalist or third-party company.

For more information go to consumer.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Marlene Kairouz

“Moving house can be a stressful time – so it's important to know your rights when dealing with removalists.”

“There are protections in place for anyone moving furniture and belongings to avoid being caught out by dodgy removalists – so it pays to do your homework.”

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