

What Is the FMCSA and Why Do You Need To Know It?

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is a subset of the U.S. Department of Transportation that sets out to prevent commercial motor vehicle-related fatalities and injuries. The administration ensures safety in motor carrier operations, such as with moving companies.

As a realtor, you must know about the FMCSA because it is an organization that spends a great deal of effort to protect your clients from moving fraud and other potential moving issues. The government agency dedicates an entire site to this subject at www.protectyourmove.gov. This site contains a bevy of information on how your clients can protect themselves in the moving process.



Moving fraud is a real issue that your clients need to be aware of, and the FMCSA created several documents that will help inform your clients of what they need to know and look out for. Two of the most important documents they provide are the Moving Fraud Prevention Checklist and Red Flags of Moving Fraud.

The first document provides checks such as making sure the moving company your client uses is registered with the FMCSA, notes situations to avoid with movers and details things their movers must do and provide by law. The second document lists a number of red flags that your clients should be on the lookout for. These red flags indicate a strong likelihood of moving fraud. Payment before service, claims that your client's goods are completely covered under a mover's insurance and movers using rental trucks – instead of their own – are just some of the indicators that your clients are dealing with “rogue” movers.

Your clients can find other important information regarding the pre-move process. If using a moving broker rather than a moving company itself, your client should survey the FMCSA's Moving Broker Checklist. Much of this information overlaps the information provided in the Moving Fraud Prevention Checklist, but defines the differences between movers and brokers and makes key points relevant only to brokers. Some of the other pages and documents will inform your clients on how to choose a moving company, how to plan for their move and how to understand their valuation options.

The moving process doesn't necessarily finish when your client's household belongings arrive at their new home. The FMCSA also provides information relevant after a move is completed. There is a lot of guidance that revolves around post-move disputes, loss and damage, and how to file a complaint. These are not situations that are expected or a common occurrence, but your clients need to know where to find information on this type of situation should it occur.

Your clients can use a number of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's resources to educate themselves, but also to research potential moving companies and their complaint history. The FMCSA also guides people to other organizations that can support them in their move. When your clients are ready to plan this big step, you'll know to point them to the FMCSA as a critical source of moving knowledge.