

# BUSINESSSAFE

*BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.*

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## BusinessSafe Threat Topic – Moving Scams

The Better Business Bureau reported a 62% increase in moving scams from 2020 to 2021. According to the Department of Transportation, over 35 million Americans move across state lines each year, which gives criminal actors an opportunity to take advantage of this life transition. The prevalence of this scam fluctuates depending on the time of year. For instance, the summer months may have more college students moving for school.

### Types of Scams

There are many variations of moving scams which include hostage movers, contract fraud, and moving brokers:

- Hostage movers relocate the customers' belongings, only to hold them at a ransom for more money. Hostage movers may also require a deposit from the customer before the moving company will move property. This will take away the customers' guarantee that the property will ever be seen again.
- Contract fraud is the deceptive use of a faulty contract to scam customers into paying more money than initially expected. The movers may ask for a payment before signing the contract, or require the customer sign a blank contract that would leave room for the scammers to fill areas of the contract to require a higher payment.
- Moving brokers collect deposits and arrange the move itself, but do not pick up or deliver the goods. Instead, they "sell" the job to someone else and receive profit from the victims.

### How to Protect Your Business

- Use the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) [search tool](#) to find updated registered movers, as well as complaint history.
- Get several quotes from different moving agencies.
- Get a contract with the movers to avoid any hidden costs.
- Look carefully at reviews, and be wary of fraudulent or manipulated reviews.



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### How to Report a Moving Scam

- Report moving scams to your local law enforcement agency.
- File a complaint online on FMCSA's [National Consumer Complaint Database](#).
- File a complaint with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) [Consumer Complaint Form](#).

### Resources

- FMCSA offers a [database](#) for registered movers.
- FDACS offers a helpful [webpage](#) for consumers looking to move.



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