



Public Safety Alert, Fraudulent moving companies

Broadcast time: 10:06
Friday, March 19, 2010

55 Division
416-808-5500

The Toronto Police Service would like to make the public aware of some moving companies defrauding customers.

It is reported that:

- some moving companies will quote a very low cost, then have the client sign a contract on the day of the move, which is usually not read by the client,
- they ask for a deposit up front, before any work has been done,
- as they are halfway through the job, they increase the cost of the job,
- if a client refuses to pay the increase, the company threatens to hold the client's property in storage or to unload their possessions into the street until the customer pays in full,
- the moving companies will advertise in local papers, free newspapers and on the internet.

Here are some tips to help you avoid being taken advantage of:

- when hiring a company, contact the Better Business Bureau and the Consumer Protection Branch to see if there is a complaint history for the company,
- use a moving company that has been used by friends or family or ask the company for verifiable references,
- limit the amount of any deposit that you provide to a moving company,
- beware of very low rates which are often too good to be true,
- ask for contracts prior to the date of the move,
- when presented with a contract, read it thoroughly, and don't sign anything you disagree with or don't understand,

- you have the right of refusal to the services of any moving company.

Check this Ontario government [website](#) for consumer protection information.

Anyone with information is asked to contact police at 416-808-5500, Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477), online at www.222tips.com, or text TOR and your message to CRIMES (274637).

Constable Tony Vella, Public Information, for Detective Kevin Hooper, 55 Division

Toronto police crack down on moving companies

Investigators arrest six people and seize 12 trucks in early-morning raids

Jill Mahoney

Globe and Mail Update Published on Thursday, May. 20, 2010 9:16AM EDT Last updated on Thursday, May. 20, 2010 9:18AM EDT

Toronto police have launched a crackdown on dodgy moving companies, arresting six people and seizing 12 moving trucks in early-morning raids on Thursday.

"It sounds like a lot of people were defrauded of their money. Some people may think it's a civil dispute, but it's not," said Constable Tony Vella.

Police raided several locations, including homes and businesses, in the Greater Toronto Area early Thursday, Const. Vella said. In addition to the trucks, they also seized a quantity of cash. In all, the raids affected about a dozen moving companies.

"The investigation is ongoing," Const. Vella said.

Police believe there may be further victims and will make a public plea for more information at a 2 p.m. news conference. Investigators will also release photos of those arrested and advertisements used by the affected companies, Const. Vella said.

In March, Toronto police issued a public safety alert about fraudulent moving companies, noting that some provide low-cost quotes and then raise the price after they have started loading up customers' property. If the client refuses to pay the higher price, police said movers threaten to hold their belongings in storage or unload it in the street.

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Nine arrested in moving-company scheme

Range of hidden costs arise once movers have belongings hostage

SARAH BOESVELD

From Friday's Globe and Mail Published on Thursday, May. 20, 2010 9:16AM EDT Last updated on Friday, May. 21, 2010 8:26AM EDT

Leslie Nye had scoured online classified sites for a cheap, efficient, reliable mover and thought she'd hit the jackpot with one Toronto-based company.

Master Movers, she said, promised a seamless job done for just \$500, a price that included insurance and a \$180 flat fee to cover gas for the move from Toronto to London, Ont., where her husband, Steve Blakeney, lived.

Perfect, Ms. Nye thought.

The experience on moving day was anything but, she said. As soon as the movers arrived on Dec. 13, 2009, (half an hour late, she said), out popped all kinds of hidden costs – \$30 for each time a mover carried an item down the stairs, she said. Then, she added, they charged extra for insurance and wouldn't reconnect the couple with the person who had given them the original quote.

“At that point my husband turned to me and said ‘I think we're going to be screwed.’”

When all of their items had been locked in the truck, she said the movers demanded about \$1,460.

The company is among 11 named in a massive Toronto Police crackdown on moving companies in the Greater Toronto Area.

Early Thursday morning, police executed raids on homes and businesses they had targeted in a lengthy investigation into schemes in which movers allegedly defrauded clients and often held their belongings hostage.

They arrested eight men and one woman who face a total of 160 charges, many of them related to fraud.

During the raids, police seized 13 moving trucks, \$20,000 in cash and two vehicles, including a 2004 Audi and 2001 Mercedes Benz.

Police are still hoping to arrest one man who had been in contact with authorities but refused to turn himself in, said Constable Tony Vella.

Companies allegedly involved are Indo-Pak Movers, Desi Movers, Supreme Movers, Comfortable Movers, Dynamic Movers, Elizabeth Movers, Pacific Van Line Moving Inc., Master Movers, A1 Express Movers and Xpress Movers, police say.

Calls and e-mails to Master Movers were not returned Thursday night.

In March, Toronto Police warned consumers to watch for companies that first quote a very low price, then have the client sign a contract on the day of the move.

If the client refuses to pay more, police said movers threaten to hold their belongings in storage or dump them in the street.

Ms. Nye said she was able to haggle the moving company down to about \$1,300. After agreeing on that amount, she said the movers followed the couple in their truck as they got the money from the bank. Then the couple followed the moving truck to their home in London – just to make sure it arrived.

“The conversation between my husband and I on our way to London was ‘What can we do? They've got our stuff, they've got our money. We're screwed,’ ” she said.

They reported it to police only on Thursday when they learned about the investigation, she said.

Many people don't report being defrauded, said Constable Vella, because they're embarrassed to not have heeded any red flags.

Ms. Nye said the whole experience made her feel “very stupid and naive.”

Charged are Syed Altaf Hussain, 57, Arif Adnan Syed, 27, Syed Amit Monwar Hussain, 29, Clyde Alen Muffty, 34, Scott Paul Slater, 31, Vanessa Longhurst, 38, Joseph Lima, 22, and Syed Tamim Rejw Hussain, 25, all residents of the Toronto area. Jimmy Roland Veilleux, 35, of Toronto, is wanted on fraud charges.

Police believe there may be more victims.

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Police arrest family members in moving firm probe

Cheap “cash only” moving rates raised by threats and ransom demands

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Henry Stancu
Staff Reporter

Toronto police have arrested members of a family-run, "cash only" moving firm, alleging customers were threatened and their possessions held for ransom until they paid up.

"It's all cash – cash only," said Det. Kevin Hooper after police arrested six people and seized a dozen moving vans Thursday in what they dubbed "Project Overhaul."

Three more people are being sought on police warrants for extortion.



Moving truck from Desi movers, shown in a 2008 file photo.
TARA WALTON/TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

Police have identified Desi Movers as the subject of their investigation.

Officers began investigating after they say a woman collapsed when a moving crew tossed her possessions off a truck because she couldn't pay more than the original agreement.

Police issued a public warning last March after finding many people had been scammed by movers who advertised cheap rates in newspapers and on the internet.

They said some companies were quoting costs that were almost too good to be true, taking cash deposits and having customers sign contracts on the day of the move.

When the trucks are loaded, they said the rates were jacked up, threats made and property held for ransom until the victim comes up with the cash.

"We focused on one particular crew and it all started with the dad," Hooper said.

Police allege that the father trained his two sons and step-son, who branched out and operated their own numbered companies.

Many such cases go unreported, Hooper said, because "a lot of people are embarrassed."

Police are expected to release more details at a news conference Thursday.

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