

(Washington, DC) -- The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has granted a petition by the American Moving & Storage Association (AMSA) to require interstate household goods brokers to comply with a number of rules and consumer requirements already required for household goods carriers. The changes take effect January 28, 2011.

“Until now, brokers have not been subject to the same consumer protection requirements as licensed interstate movers,” said Linda Bauer Darr, AMSA president & CEO. “Few, if any, consumers understood the distinction between brokers and carriers, leaving them feeling cheated of their rights. This action by the federal government closes a loophole that too many of these middlemen have been exploiting for years. In some cases, brokers connected consumers with fly-by-night rogue operators, posing as movers, and were ripped off.”

Highlights of the new rule include requirements that brokers: 1) must include their US DOT number in their advertisements and on their websites; 2) must provide the same consumer information brochures as required of interstate household goods carriers; 3) must make clear their policies on deposits, cancellations, and refunds; and 4) by January 1, 2012, must provide an increased \$25,000 surety bond (currently \$10,000).

The FMCSA's ruling also addresses three other AMSA recommendations:

- Brokers will only be able to provide estimates performed by authorized carriers with whom the broker has a current agreement and then only based on the carrier's tariff.
- Physical surveys will be required for shipments located with 50 miles of the authorized carrier's or broker's place of business and only permits an electronic waiver of the physical survey, if agreed by both carrier and shipper, as evidenced by an agreement on the bill of lading.
- Broker advertisements and Internet sites can only include names and logos of FMCSA authorized carriers with which the broker has a current agreement.

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*The American Moving & Storage Association, home of the ProMover program, is the national trade association representing the nation's moving and storage companies, which provide household goods moving services, specialized transportation for sensitive freight such as computers and trade show exhibits, and warehouse storage services. The association has 3,000 members, including more than 200 international members, and sponsors programs and activities that promote consumer protection, professional development, safety, and operational efficiency*