

A Little Guys Movers Guide



15 RED FLAGS

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SCAMS,
DAMAGE, AND DISASTER



Here's the honest truth: we're biased. We've been moving people in Denton since 1992, we love what we do, and yeah—we think Little Guys is the best option. But this guide isn't really about us.

It's about protecting you.

Over the last 30+ years, we've completed more than 250,000 moves. We've worked in this industry long enough to see the worst of it—the scammers who take deposits and disappear, the fly-by-night operators who treat your grandmother's china cabinet like it's a cinder block, and the companies that hold your belongings hostage until you pay three times the original quote.

We've also seen good people get absolutely devastated by bad movers. People who trusted the wrong company with irreplaceable family heirlooms. Families who couldn't afford to pay surprise bills on moving day. Customers who spent weeks trying to track down a company that simply vanished after taking their money.

That's why we created this guide. Whether you hire Little Guys Movers, or you don't, we want you to know exactly what to look for and what to avoid. We want you protected. Because moving is stressful enough without adding fraud and heartbreak on top of it.

Here are the 15 red flags you absolutely cannot ignore.

The 15 Red Flags

▶ RED FLAG #1: No Physical Address

What it looks like:

- PO Box only
- "Serving the Greater Metro Area," but no office location
- Virtual office only, no warehouse or storefront
- Can't visit their location or they make excuses

Why it matters:

- No accountability when things go wrong
- Likely a broker taking your money, then subcontracting to unknown movers
- If your belongings are damaged or lost, there's no one to find and hold responsible
- High-risk for fraud and disappearance

What to do:

- Google their address and verify it exists
 - Visit their office in person if possible
 - Look for a physical warehouse where trucks are stored
 - Check Google Maps reviews of their location (this tells you if it's a real operation)
 - If they won't let you visit, that's your answer—move on
-

▶ RED FLAG #2: No USDOT Number (For Interstate Moves)

What it looks like:

- They avoid the question when you ask
- "We're getting that soon" or "We're in the process"
- Provide a number that doesn't verify on FMCSA.gov
- Tell you it's "not required" for your move

Why it matters:

- It's illegal to operate interstate without a USDOT number—period
- No federal oversight means no recourse if they damage your stuff
- Your homeowner's insurance won't cover losses caused by illegal movers
- They're betting you won't check (and most people don't)

What to do:

- Look it up yourself at FMCSA.gov—takes 30 seconds
- Search their company name in the "Motor Carrier Search"
- Verify the number matches what they gave you
- Check their safety rating (if it's below 3 stars, be very cautious)
- No USDOT = Do not hire, period

The 15 Red Flags

🚩 RED FLAG #3: "Guaranteed" Price Without Seeing Anything

What it looks like:

- Phone quote based on "how many bedrooms."
- Email estimate without a walkthrough (virtual or on-site)
- "Just tell us what you have" over the phone call
- Estimate provided within 5 minutes of initial contact

Why it matters:

- Guaranteed to change on moving day (always higher)
- Lowball trap—they quote you \$3,000 to get you committed, then charge \$7,500
- You can't dispute it because "they didn't know what they were moving."
- Often leads to "storage hold" situations where they refuse to deliver until you pay more

What to do:

- Insist on an in-home walkthrough (physical or detailed video)
 - Ask them to write down specifics: furniture dimensions, number of boxes, fragile items, stairs, elevator access
 - Get the estimate in writing with specific items listed
 - Binding estimates are non-negotiable
-

🚩 RED FLAG #4: Huge Deposit Required (50%+)

What it looks like:

- "We need half up front."
- Cash or wire transfer only
- Pressure to pay immediately

Why it matters:

- Industry standard: 0-20% deposit
- Scammers take the deposit and disappear
- Once you've wired money, it's nearly impossible to get back

What to do:

- Never pay more than 25% upfront
- Never wire money—ever
- Use a credit card if possible (it gives you dispute protection)
- Get a written contract stating what the deposit covers
- Large deposits should be non-refundable only if they provide insurance coverage for that amount

The 15 Red Flags

▶ RED FLAG #5: Too-Good-To-Be-True Pricing

What it looks like:

- Price is half what everyone else quoted
- "Special deal just for you"
- "This price expires today" (artificial urgency)
- Significantly lower than average market rate for your move

Why it matters:

- Bait and switch is their entire game plan
- You'll pay way more on moving day when they claim "unexpected circumstances"
- Often tied to hostage situations where they refuse to unload until you pay extra
- Lowball quotes are used to strand you with the company's decision already made

What to do:

- Get multiple quotes (at least 3-5)
 - Compare detailed estimates, not just the bottom number
 - Be suspicious of outliers on either end (too low or too high)
 - Ask how they can offer such a low price (listen to their answer—it might reveal something)
 - Trust your gut: quality costs money
-

▶ RED FLAG #6: No Written Estimate

What it looks like:

- "We'll just call you with the price"
- Estimate only provided verbally
- No itemized breakdown
- Quote sent via text message only

Why it matters:

- Without something in writing, you have zero protection
- They can claim they never quoted you that price
- No itemization means no accountability
- Disputes become he-said, she-said situations

What to do:

- Refuse to book without a written estimate
- Require an itemized breakdown (labor, equipment, insurance, etc.)
- Make sure the estimate includes an expiration date
- Ask if the estimate is binding

The 15 Red Flags

▶ RED FLAG #7: High-Pressure Sales Tactics

What it looks like:

- "We can only hold this price for 24 hours"
- Multiple calls/texts pushing you to decide
- Aggressive urgency about booking immediately
- Guilt-tripping ("We've spent time on your quote...")
- Making you feel bad for getting other quotes

Why it matters:

- Legitimate companies don't need pressure tactics
- High pressure is designed to bypass your critical thinking
- They're banking on you making a rushed decision you'll regret
- This is classic scam behavior—create urgency so you don't check references or think clearly

What to do:

- Take your time deciding (at least a few days)
 - Good companies will stand by their quote
 - Get everything in writing before you commit
 - If a company is pushing hard, that's your sign to walk away
 - Trust companies that are calm and confident in their service
-

▶ RED FLAG #8: Won't Provide Insurance Details

What it looks like:

- Vague answers about insurance coverage
- "Don't worry, we're insured"
- Won't provide proof of insurance
- Can't explain the difference between released and actual value coverage
- Won't discuss what happens if something breaks

• **Released Value:** Carrier liability limited to 50¢ per pound (basically worthless)
• **Actual Value:** Full replacement cost (what you want)

Why it matters:

- Actual value (full coverage) is expensive, so many companies only carry released value (50¢ per pound—basically nothing)
- If they're cagey about it, they're hiding something
- You need to know exactly what's covered and what's not before moving day
- Without proper insurance, your \$8,000 couch can be declared "worth" \$40 if it breaks

What to do:

- Ask directly: "Do you carry **actual value** or **released value** insurance?"
- Request proof of insurance in writing (not just verbal confirmation)
- Ask about options for supplemental coverage if needed
- Get insurance details included in your written contract

The 15 Red Flags

▶ RED FLAG #9: Defensive About Questions

What it looks like:

- Gets irritated when you ask about processes
- Won't answer specific questions ("Just trust us")
- Short, dismissive responses
- Makes you feel stupid for asking
- Refuses to put things in writing

Why it matters:

- Legitimate companies welcome detailed questions—it shows you care
- Defensiveness signals they have something to hide
- They're used to customers not asking questions (which is why they get away with bad practices)
- This personality type is also more likely to be aggressive on moving day

What to do:

- You should feel comfortable asking anything
 - Take the defensive response as a red flag and move on
 - Find a company that's happy to answer questions and provide documentation
 - If they treat you poorly before the move, they'll be worse during it
-

▶ RED FLAG #10: Only 5-Star Reviews (All Recent)

What it looks like:

- Every review is 5 stars, no 4-star or lower
- All reviews are from the last 30 days
- Reviews are vague ("Great service!")
- No reviews on Google, Yelp, or BBB—only their website
- Fake-sounding review text ("The movers were professional and arrived on time!" repeated verbatim)

Why it matters:

- Real companies have hundreds of reviews with natural variation
- Fake reviews are a classic scam indicator
- Recent-only reviews suggest they're a new operation (or hiding old complaints)
- No reviews on third-party sites means they don't want public accountability
- Statistically, any company moving 100+ homes per year should have negative reviews—no one's perfect

What to do:

- Check Google, Yelp, BBB, and Trustpilot (not their website)
- Look for reviews with detail and specificity
- Be wary of operations with fewer than 50 reviews total

The 15 Red Flags

▶ RED FLAG #11: Different Crew Than Expected

What it looks like:

- No one from your original quote shows up
- Different movers arrive than you were promised
- "Your crew had another job" (excuse on moving day)
- Significantly fewer people than quoted

Why it matters:

- The crew you're quoted matters—experience and reliability vary
- A bait-and-switch crew is often less careful with your belongings
- You lose all leverage once they're loading your stuff
- Rushing with a smaller crew leads to damage and corner-cutting

What to do:

- Get the crew supervisor's name and contact info in writing before moving day
 - Call the day before to confirm crew composition and arrival time
 - If a different crew shows up, you have the right to delay or cancel (though this is messy)
 - Document crew names and IDs on moving day
 - Take photos of the crew and trucks (for insurance purposes if needed)
-

▶ RED FLAG #12: Rental Truck (No Company Branding)

What it looks like:

- Generic Penske, U-Haul, or Home Depot truck
- No company logo or name on the vehicle
- Driver isn't wearing company uniform
- Multiple companies using the same truck

Why it matters:

- Branded trucks mean accountability—the company is staking their reputation
- Rental trucks signal they might be independent contractors, not employees
- Limited insurance coverage and liability if something goes wrong
- Harder to track down the company if something is damaged or stolen
- Suggests they're not established enough for their own equipment

What to do:

- Ask before booking: "Do you use your own branded trucks?"
- On moving day, photograph the truck's license plate and any identifying information
- Verify it matches the company name you hired
- Don't load if it's not their truck—this is a major red flag
- Ask for the truck number and driver ID before loading begins

The 15 Red Flags

▶ RED FLAG #13: Demand for Cash Payment

What it looks like:

- "We only take cash on moving day"
- Refusing credit cards or checks
- Asking for payment before items are fully unloaded
- No written receipt or documentation

Why it matters:

- Cash payments leave zero paper trail
- You have no dispute protection if something's wrong
- Once cash is paid, you have no leverage if they refuse to unload
- Cash-only is the hallmark of operations avoiding taxes and accountability
- No receipt means no proof of what you paid for

What to do:

- Get everything in writing before moving day about payment terms
 - Refuse to pay cash—period
 - Use credit card for final payment (gives you dispute protection)
 - Don't pay anything until all items are unloaded and inspected
 - Get a detailed receipt showing what was paid and for what services
 - Never hand over payment to a crew member—insist on a manager and receipt
-

▶ RED FLAG #14: Price Changes Dramatically On Moving Day

What it looks like:

- "We underestimated the volume"
- "That'll be extra"
- "The distance is further than we thought" (for local moves)
- Sudden "labor surcharges" or "equipment fees"
- Price is now 2-3x the original quote

Why it matters:

- This is the most common moving scam
- They've already loaded your stuff—you have zero negotiating power
- If you refuse to pay more, they can refuse to unload (holding your belongings hostage)
- Legitimate companies build contingency into estimates to avoid this
- Once you're committed, they exploit your desperation

What to do:

- Get a binding estimate before moving day (not just an estimate)
- Have the estimate in writing and signed by both parties
- If they try to increase the price, reference the written contract
- Don't pay anything beyond the quoted price without a written amendment to the contract

The 15 Red Flags

▶ RED FLAG #15: Rushing You to Sign

What it looks like:

- "We need to start unloading, so just sign here"
- Pressuring you to sign before everything is unloaded
- Won't let you review the contract before signing
- "Just sign, we'll email you a copy later"

Why it matters:

- Once you sign, you've waived most damage claims
- They're intentionally preventing you from documenting damage during unloading
- Rushing prevents you from doing a final walkthrough before payment
- If something's broken or missing, your signature indicates you accepted it as-is

What to do:

- Don't sign anything until:
 - All items are unloaded
 - You've done a visual inspection of everything
 - You've verified nothing is missing or damaged
- You've counted major items against your inventory list
- Take photos/video of items as they're unloaded
- Note any visible damage on the moving company's documentation before you sign
- Keep a copy of everything you sign
- If they won't wait, tell them you won't sign—that's your right
- Have the driver sign off that all items were delivered, then you sign

What GOOD Movers Look Like

Green Flags - **Good Movers** have all of these:

- **Physical office** you can visit (and can verify exists on Google Maps)
- **USDOT number** provided upfront for interstate moves (verifiable on FMCSA.gov)
- **In-home estimate** or detailed virtual walkthrough before quoting
- **Binding estimate** in writing with itemized breakdown
- Transparent **insurance details** (actual value coverage, not just released value)
- **Answers questions** thoroughly and patiently (no defensiveness)
- **4.5+ stars across hundreds of reviews** on Google, Yelp, BBB
- **Branded trucks** with the company name and logo
- Been in business **10+ years** (shows stability)
- Deep **community roots** (local ownership, long-term reputation)
- Reasonable deposit (20% or less upfront)
- No high-pressure tactics (confident in their service)
- Allows time for inspection before you sign anything

The Little Guys Difference

We've been doing this since 1992. We're still here in Denton, Texas—not because we got lucky, but because we built a business on honesty and reliability. After three decades, that's not marketing language.

It's just who we are.

Our customers have given us a 4.8-star rating across 1,000+ verified reviews. Not because we're perfect (we're not), but because we show up, we care about their stuff, and we do what we say we're going to do.

When we give you a binding estimate after walking through your home, that's your price. No surprises on moving day. No "we underestimated the volume." No hidden fees. What we quote is what you pay.

We use named trucks with our logo. Our crews are experienced, and 70% of our managers started as movers—they know the job from the ground up.

They understand what it feels like to have your life packed into a truck. When possible, we send the same crew for your entire move, so you're not training a new team halfway through.

We're not perfect, but we're honest. We've built a strong community reputation over decades, and that reputation is worth more to us than any quick profit.

That's the Little Guys difference.

Ready to experience the difference?
Check www.LittleGuys.com to find your local shop!