



UNITED STATES
MOVING PROTECTION



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

The USMPO is a non-profit, independent trade organization, created in response to the FMCSA's request in improving cmv safety, identifying fraudulent moving companies and improving record keeping. Its purpose is to serve, protect, and educate consumers in the moving industry. The USMPO is not a moving broker, nor arranges moving services for any fee or payment. The USMPO is a sovereign entity, separate from the DOT, FMCSA, and U.S. government.



MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

I am excited to share the **U.S. Moving Protection Organization's** Strategic Plan, which will guide our work over the next five years. The core of our plan reflects our organization's main functions: to protect the public from deceptive business practices; assist the FMCSA in collecting and documenting data identifying fraudulent moving companies; to pursue research and analysis to enhance CMV safety; and to optimize the customer experience within the HHG moving industry. The two strategic goals reflect the lessons learned from first-hand experience within the industry and consumer feedback and encompass an umbrella of problems plaguing the marketplace. Our plan demonstrates the USMPO's commitment to ensuring its efforts benefit the industry as a whole. It promotes a more fruitful industry for carriers that operate within the principles outlined by our code of ethics. With this strategic plan, we affirm our mission to build a resilient and sustainable household goods transportation system that serves the needs of consumers and safeguards the interests of the honest carriers and communities it touches. We envision a future where every move, whether it's across state lines or within the neighborhood, is a seamless and secure experience for all involved. Just as our mission drives us to optimize the customer experience, eliminate fraudulent practices, and protect consumers, our vision inspires us to create a transportation ecosystem that contributes positively to the well-being of individuals and communities alike. We look forward to working with our network of verified carriers, our sponsors, the FMCSA, and the public, as we strive to achieve our goals.

With Integrity,

Segah Yildirim

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USMPO'S MISSION:

To protect shippers from deceptive or unfair business practices and optimize the overall customer experience in the HHG moving industry.

THE USMPO'S VISION:

A resilient and sustainable household goods (HHG) transportation ecosystem that contributes positively to the well-being of individuals and communities it touches.

OVERVIEW

Our Organization

The USMPO is an independent non-profit organization that was born out of a deep-seated desire to optimize the customer experience in the moving industry. It all began with a heartbreaking experience that exposed the devastating impact of unethical moving practices on countless individuals and families. Profoundly touched by these stories, the USMPO team is committed to driving positive change and fostering a more trustworthy and reliable moving landscape.

The US Moving Protection Organization works to promote a fair market for carriers and protect shippers from unfair or deceptive business practices. The USMPO uses a variety of tools to fulfill its mission, including audits, investigations, enforcing our code of ethics, research, studies on marketplace trends, public outreach, and consumer education.

- **Accountability:** The USMPO holds its member companies accountable to a strict code of ethics, ensuring fair pricing, transparent contracts, and honest communication with customers. Companies should prioritize customer experience and avoid practices that could mislead or take advantage of consumers.
- **Scope of Responsibility:** The USMPO acts as a gatekeeper for the moving industry, ensuring quality and ethical practices. They achieve this by implementing

a multi-step verification process and ongoing audits of customer feedback.

- **In-depth Reviews:** We thoroughly background check and review each carrier, interview company owners, check third-party review sources, and verify FMCSA records including licensing, insurance, and complaint history.
- **Direct Communication:** A direct line of communication is established between company executives and the USMPO. The USMPO conducts in-depth interviews with company owners to understand their operating procedures, work ethic, and commitment to ethical business practices.
- **Evaluation and Selection:** Based on the combined information from reviews, interviews, audits, and safety examinations, the USMPO meticulously evaluates each carrier. Only those who meet our stringent criteria of safety, reliability, ethics, and customer service are selected for inclusion in the verified directory.

We offer shippers a side-by-side comparison of verified carriers, the USMPO empowers potential customers to make informed decisions. The USMPO maintains a high standard for membership. We understand that not all companies share our

commitment to excellence. By being highly selective, we ensure our directory features only the best moving companies in the industry.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1:

PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM UNFAIR OR DECEPTIVE ACTS OR PRACTICES

The USMPO uses an interdisciplinary approach to protect the public from unfair and deceptive practices in the marketplace. The USMPO conducts investigations, builds cases, file claims and complaints, develops guidelines to protect the public, educates consumers and businesses about their rights and responsibilities, and enforces a code of ethics. The organization also collects reports about a host of consumer issues, including fraud, identity theft, and financial matters. The USMPO makes these reports available to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the Department of Transportation.

Objective 1.1: Identify, investigate, and report; creating awareness to deter deceptive practices

To fulfill its goal of protecting the public, the USMPO must identify consumer protection issues and trends in the fast-changing marketplace. The organization strives to understand the issues affecting the public, including any newly emerging methods of fraud so that it can target its enforcement, education, and advocacy in those areas where the public suffers the most harm. The USMPO leverages its resources by sharing information with and encouraging other law enforcement authorities to assist it in its efforts, by acting either independently or jointly.

The USMPO recognizes that consumers cannot always identify whether unfair or deceptive practices have occurred. For example, consumers cannot evaluate for themselves the truthfulness of a false advertisement or marketing claim of lead providers, such as *“Top 5 Movers”*, *“40% OFF Rates”* or *“Long Distance Move Starting at \$800”*. *These deceptive advertising practices of rogue movers and lead providers inflate the cost of the few advertising platforms available to legitimate carriers.* The organization, therefore, identifies targets by augmenting its complaint databases with other enforcement leads, such as ad monitoring, Internet “surfs” (monitoring the Internet for potentially false or deceptive advertising for a service), evaluation of mobile practices, and direct referrals from within its network and private sector partners.

Objective 1.2: Connect with individuals, communities, and businesses to provide practical knowledge, guidance, and tools, and to learn about key challenges and opportunities for future USMPO engagement.

Consumer and business education serves as a vital resource in fighting against deception and unfair practices. Well-informed consumers are better able to recognize,

avoid, and report fraud and well-informed business owners know where the USMPO draws the line.

- **Improve the efficacy of public-facing materials:** Publish user-submitted articles, deploy complaint forums, and other human-centered strategies to ensure that USMPO staff understands shipper needs and can help appropriately.
- **Use consumer insights to share critical information** with FMCSA members, local officials, and state attorney generals... including leadership, case, and legal teams: Through engaging with consumers and communities and employing different consumer feedback mechanisms, including soliciting public comments at open meetings, analyze and aggregate critical findings to disseminate information learned directly from consumers to the necessary parties.
- **Engage with larger moving carriers and trade organizations for financial support:** Build a strategy to engage with and make connections with industry leaders.

Maintain strong relationships with community-based organizations and advocacy organizations nationwide, while continuously seeking new ways to seek funding and build relationships with trusted community leaders.

Improve education and engagement efforts: Focus consumer and business education efforts on areas where deception, unfair practices, and information gaps cause the greatest injury. Determine this by understanding with qualitative and quantitative approaches what harms are most impacting consumers. Target groups with messages about marketplace issues that impact their safety and economic well-being in channels, formats, and methods people are most engaged in depending on the topic.

- **Legal support and relief funds:** Provide subsidized legal assistance to help victims of moving fraud go after rogue movers.
- **Promote reporting, online resources, and avenues to better engage directly with the public and gather public feedback:** Publicize the USMPO articles and identify deceptive websites and toll-free numbers in an ongoing effort to increase public awareness and inform the public of ways to contact the USMPO to obtain information or file a fraud report.
- **Work with the media:** Engage the media as part of a strategic communications program to disseminate usable, helpful, clear, and compelling content to the public at large to ensure consumers understand what companies did wrong and what the USMPO is doing to stop them. Identify and make maximum use of upcoming media opportunities to increase public outreach, awareness,

and engagement. Use different communication channels that consumers frequent including trusted leader distribution, digital communications, social media, or physical forms of information dissemination. For example, make use of a diverse set of social media platforms to drive web traffic to content on the USMPO website where relevant, and to grow awareness of the organization's consumer and business education resources.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2:

PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM UNFAIR METHODS OF COMPETITION IN THE MARKETPLACE AND PROMOTE FAIR COMPETITION.

The USMPO's efforts to prevent and police unfair methods of competition focus on preventing deceptive advertising and lead generation strategies at the top level, and bait-and-switch lowball estimates at the lower level. The USMPO also engages in policy research and development, advocacy, and education to deter anticompetitive practices and encourage federal, state, and local governments to evaluate the effects of their policies on fair competition.

Objective 2.1: Identify, investigate, and take action against anticompetitive ads and marketing companies.

It has already been identified as a common strategy deployed by brokers and rogue movers to register a company under one DOT number to obtain a license while operating under several different brand names and websites. These businesses generate one lead and call them from multiple different phone numbers and brand names, pretending to be different companies, essentially creating their competition internally. This deceptive strategy misleads customers to think they are getting multiple quotes and doing their due diligence. Unknowingly, they are

speaking with a single company, trapping a customer within their own sales funnel.

Anticompetitive business practices harm Americans through higher prices, reduced quality, and freedom of choice.

Enforcement of antitrust laws provides substantial benefits to the public by helping to ensure that markets are open and competitive.

Objective 2.2: Identify, Investigate, and take action against deceptive sellers.

After a company generates a lead, its salespeople are the initial point of contact with the shipper. It is at this crucial stage that the representative of the company must adhere to the strict principles of our outlined code of ethics.

Left unmonitored, commission-based sales representatives can easily deceive customers. This is especially important because most people engaged in interstate or cross-country moving, are stressed, vulnerable, and completely unfamiliar with the logistical process, leaving them at high risk of being manipulated.

Through research, advocacy, and rulemaking, the USMPO seeks to understand the marketplace as it evolves.

- **Establishing Standardized Base**

Rates: A possible strategy to regulate salespeople from underbidding is to determine a minimum cost to execute the move, standardize it as a “base rate” and publicize it as a tool on the USMPO and FMCSA websites.

Customers could then check and verify the rate received on their quotes to ensure the pricing is not under-quoted to lure them into reserves. Since moving rates, at their core, are derived from transparent factors such as fuel, tolls, and cost of labor...determining a fixed minimum price to facilitate the move could be easily calculated.

Providing access to transparent pricing would mitigate the risk of customers being lured in by low-ball estimates.

- **Standardizing Inventory Collection Methods:**

As the moving landscape continues to evolve, the USMPO must ensure that it becomes increasingly digitized and automated. fully grasps market realities, especially as The organization plans to be especially attentive to next-generation technologies, innovations, and nascent industries across sectors.

One particular area is inventory measurement software. Currently, the majority of inventories collected to determine move size, and the required truck space, is collected over the phone. Inaccurate inventories collected by sales reps are the primary cause of move-day discrepancies and price increases, affecting both the customer experience and the carrier’s supply chain.

By staying apprised of new developments, the agency can apply new technologies and course corrections as needed.

CODE OF ETHICS

We, as carriers part of the U.S. Moving Protection Organization verified network, stand united in our mission to protect shippers from deceptive business practices and unfair methods of competition.

We stand together to eliminate fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, and unethical practices within the HHG moving industry and engage in formal disciplinary reviews of all members involved in such practices.

As members of the U.S. Moving Protection Organization, our network of movers pledge to:

Consistently offer and provide the most efficient and reliable moving and storage services available, while adhering strictly to a policy of truth, honesty, integrity, and fairness in all business transactions.

Consistently strive for improvement in all facets of industry operations and to hold each other accountable to the individual and collective effort of optimization.

To be conscious and considerate of consumer needs and to continually promote the progress, fraternity, education, and dignity of our industry so that the public will be better served.

The U.S. Moving Protection Organization, recognizing that companies engaged in the direct selling of household goods moving services assume certain responsibilities toward customers arising out of the personal-contact method of distribution of their products and services, hereby sets forth the ethical principles and practices to which member companies of the organization will continue to adhere in the conduct of their business. Member companies shall provide adequate training to enable salespeople to operate ethically, adhering to the code of conduct set forth:

1. No member company of the U.S. Moving Protection Organization or independent salesperson for a member company shall engage in any deceptive, false, unethical, or unlawful consumer or recruiting practice. Member companies shall ensure that no statements, promises, or testimonials are made that are likely to mislead consumers or prospective independent salespeople.
2. Member companies and their independent salespeople must comply with all requirements of federal law, and the rules and regulations governed by the Department of Transportation and Federal Motor Carrier Administration. Compliance with all pertinent laws by member companies and their independent salespeople is a condition of acceptance by and continuing membership in the USMPO.

3. Independent salespeople shall not abuse the trust of individual consumers, or exploit a consumer's age, illness, handicap, lack of understanding or unfamiliarity with a language or industry knowledge.

4. Independent salespeople shall offer consumers accurate information regarding: price, accessorial services, logistics; and terms of payment; including return policies; terms of guarantee; after-sales service; and delivery dates. Independent salespeople shall give understandable and accurate answers to questions from consumers.

5. The offer of products or services for sale by member companies of the organization shall be accurate and truthful as to price, grade, quality, make, value, performance, quantity, currency, and availability. A consumer's order for products and services shall be fulfilled on time.

6. Member companies shall establish, publicize, and implement complaint handling procedures to ensure prompt resolution of all complaints. In the event any consumer shall complain that the salesperson or representative offering for sale the products or services of a member company has engaged in any improper course of conduct pertaining to the sales presentation of its goods or services, the member company shall promptly investigate the complaint and shall take such steps as it may find appropriate and necessary under the circumstances to cause the redress of any wrongs which its investigation discloses to have been committed.

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Company Name

Company Owner