

**Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods Consumer Protection
Education Subgroup Teleconference
Meeting Minutes for April 11, 2017 10:00am – 12:00pm EST**

The Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods (HHG) Consumer Protection Education Subgroup was convened for a teleconference at 10:00am EST on Tuesday, April 11, 2017.

Working Group Members Present:

Jennifer Gartlan, Esq. – Office of Consumer Affairs & Dispute Resolution Services, Federal Maritime Commission
Margaret McQueen, Safety Programs Manager, FMCSA National Training Center
Scott Michael, President and CEO, American Moving & Storage Association
Heather Paraino (Chairwoman), Esq. – Senior Corporate Counsel, MoveRescue
Jonathan Todd, Esq. – Of Counsel, Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP
Charles (Chuck) White, CAE, M.Ed. – Senior Vice President, International Association of Movers

FMCSA Support:

James Dubose – Transportation Specialist, FMCSA
Michael Evans – Transportation Specialist, FMCSA
Lawrence Hawthorne – Transportation Specialist, FMCSA
Monique Riddick – Lead Transportation Specialist and Assistant DFO, FMCSA
Kenneth Rodgers – Chief, Commercial Enforcement & Investigations Division and DFO, FMCSA

Volpe Support:

Dianne Gunther – Volpe Lead
Erin Lohrenz – Record Minutes
Julianne Schwarzer – Facilitator

1. Introduction

Kenneth (Ken) Rodgers, FMCSA, welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the new group member, and provided a brief update.

- The March onsite meeting was canceled due to administrative issues.
- Dan Veoni is no longer a member of the Working Group and has resigned from American Moving & Storage Association (AMSA).
- Dan's position on the Working Group has been filled by Scott Michael, who will now also be attending the Working Group meetings. Scott is approaching his 24-year anniversary of joining AMSA.

Julianne Schwarzer, U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center, provided a brief agenda for this meeting and announced the upcoming onsite meeting schedule.

Upcoming Onsite Meetings:

- May 2-4
- June 27-29

2. Review of January Subgroup Discussions:

Dianne Gunther of the U.S. DOT Volpe Center provided a summary of the January subgroup meetings. The presentation is included at the end of the meeting minutes.

Paperwork Subgroup January Recap:

Group discussed the following documents, which are currently required:

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- Notice of tariff may need to be included.
- Further discussion may be needed.

2. Estimate

- General consensus was to include the tariff, etc.
- Eliminate the practice of amending the estimate.
- Nonbinding estimates are rare, could cause problems for consumers.
- Are there currently carriers using nonbinding estimates?
- A Working Group member asked what outreach efforts were currently being conducted with other stakeholders?
 - Gunther's impression is that everyone is reaching out individually to their own networks.
 - Scott Michael of AMSA noted that he has a wide range of networks for a domestic carrier base.
 - The group was apprehensive about an informal outreach approach to make such a significant change, and felt that the group should reach out to the industry more broadly.

3. Order for Service

- Recommendation is to eliminate this and move any necessary information to the estimate.

4. General Recommendations:

- Carriers should be able to provide electronic versions of documents.
- Physical inspections should be changed to visual inspections.
- The group needs need more in-depth discussion of the remaining four documents:
 - Bill of lading
 - Freight bill
 - Inventory
 - High value inventory

Brochure Subgroup January Recap:

- Developed a draft of four bullet points with key messages highlighted.

- The Working Group noted the following:
 - Some of the Brochure Subgroup's recommendations contradict the Paperwork Subgroup's recommendations (e.g., allowing visual/virtual inspections would change the recommended brochure key messages). The group needs to discuss insurance and/or valuation (instead of just insurance).
- Ken Rodgers noted that FMCSA has received feedback that there is a negative outlook regarding scare tactics and that the group may want to reconsider using this approach.

Education Subgroup January Recap:

- Three focus areas:
 - What is the overall education message/strategy?
 - Who is the target audience?
 - How will we reach this audience?
- Grab consumers' attention quickly.
- Steer away from negative shock.
- Highlight legitimate movers ("good guys").

General recommendations:

- Develop education plan to focus on the three key areas.
- Use Google Analytics to help consumers find necessary information.
- Provide funding to allow for Google Analytics throughout the year, not just peak moving season.

3. Brainstorming exercise – Education Subgroup:

What are the things this group needs to accomplish to be successful? What would be a successful outcome?

Members of the Working Group offered the following comments in response to the brainstorming exercise:

- Chuck White, the subgroup spokesperson, noted that he is interested in the possibility of grabbing the consumer's attention right off the bat and that the goal should be to combat short attention spans.
- The big picture goal is to determine a strategy and succinctly explain that strategy and address the issue at hand.
- Acronyms like "STOP" and "THINK" provide the keys to what the Working Group wants people to do.
- Is it the group's responsibility to recommend a snappy acronym or to convey that direction to FMCSA?
- Rodgers noted that the group should look at the bigger picture in terms of what they want to accomplish for recommendations.
- The Working Group's task is principally strategic; Working Group members in the room represent many interests.

- Monique Riddick, FMCSA, reiterated that the goal of the subgroup was to make recommendations regarding using the internet as an educational tool, and to incorporate all of the input that subgroup members are sharing into a recommendation that relates to the FAST Act's goals.

Schwarzer summarized the conversation by noting that the Working Group can think more strategically, and does not need to come up with specific tactical details, like an acronym.

White also noted that the messaging style is important, and that the focus should be on the legitimate movers ("good guys").

- Educate the consumer regarding actions that professional movers do.
- Identify where the pitfalls may arise and provide ideas of what to avoid.
- Highlight the bad but don't spend too much time bashing the industry – keep it positive.

4. Recommendations:

Agreed-upon recommendations:

1. Enhance use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) through Google's search engine to enable consumers to find the necessary information.
 - Riddick noted that FMCSA is rolling out a campaign using an infographic with videos on their Facebook page.
 - Schwarzer clarified that it seems part of the recommendation is to ensure that Googling the subject leads to the correct information.
2. Provide funding for Google Analytics to be used throughout the year, not just peak moving season.
3. Increase staffing (ombudsmen approach) to deal with consumer outreach and enhance services FMCSA can provide.
 - The purpose of an ombuds is to:
 - Provide consumers with preventive information in protecting their move.
 - Conduct general outreach.
 - It is helpful to have someone for external relations who can answer technical questions.
 - Funding for the increased staff would require approval from Congress.
 - The cost would depend on the scope (dispute resolution vs. general inquiries).
 - Rodgers noted that FMCSA has a response agency that responds to consumers who call in with questions and inquiries.
 - There may be a high volume of complaints and an ombuds could help consumers have a better understanding of their options.
 - Using this technique could enable FMCSA to reach more people.
 - Items to consider:
 - A hiring freeze is currently in place.
 - FMCSA would need approval from Congress for funding for the increased staff.
4. Engage in multiple platforms to disseminate information (podcasts, videos, etc.):
 - Present the information in multiple formats.

- The recommendations need to be the proactive rather than reactive. The information needs to be pushed out to consumers instead of relying on consumers to come find it.
- Next steps: Brainstorm some ideas and discuss with the full Working Group.
- 5. Recommend that FMCSA develop a catchy acronym or infographic to grab consumers' attention.
 - The Working Group will focus on strategy, not tactics.
 - This could be a small document to highlight the main points.
 - Idea to have a link at the bottom of the document that will take you to where you can find more information.

Potential recommendations:

1. Develop a multifaceted approach to address the three focus areas:
 - What is our overall education message/strategy?
 - Who is our target audience?
 - How are we going to reach this audience?
2. Eliminate blank documents – make sure binding estimates are not a means to hold the consumer hostage.

5. Closing Discussion:

Schwarzer asked the subgroup what activities they would find valuable when working in the subgroup at the next in-person meeting to make the most of their time together.

- White noted that he was interested in seeing what a typical recommendation would look like.
 - Rodgers will send out an example to the group.
- White also noted that the group needs to be flexible with their next steps and continue to build on what the final product will be. Some of these next steps may depend on what the full group determines at the onsite meeting.

Action Items:

- Volpe will provide the meeting minutes to the group in time for everyone to start capturing the recommendations and move toward creating a table/outline for developing the report.
- Ken Rodgers will send out an example to the group of a typical recommendation.

Adjournment:

The teleconference for the Education Subgroup of the Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods Consumer Protection was adjourned at 12:00pm EST on Tuesday, April 11, 2017.

Attachments:

1. Presentation: Household Goods Consumer Protection Working Group, Education Subgroup Meeting, April 11, 2017



Household Goods Consumer Protection Working Group

Education Subgroup Meeting

April 11, 2017





Welcome and Call to Order

- Kenneth Rodgers, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
- Julianne Schwarzer, Facilitator





Working Group Timeline

- May 2-4, 2017 – Onsite Meeting
- June 27-29, 2017 – Onsite Meeting
- June 29 – August 1, 2017 – Wrap-up Recommendations
- August 1 – September 1, 2017 – Draft Report
- September 30, 2017 – Submit Report for Concurrence Approval





Meeting Agenda

- Review of January subgroup discussions
- Brainstorming exercise
 - Clarify subgroup objectives
- Continue discussions to make progress towards recommendations





Review of January Subgroup Discussions





Paperwork





Paperwork Subgroup

- Current Required Documents:
 - Rights and Responsibilities
 - Estimate
 - Order for Service
 - Bill of Lading
 - Inventory
 - Freight Bill
 - Invoice





Paperwork Subgroup

- Rights and Responsibilities
 - Remove requirement to waive right to physical copy
 - Could be further streamlined
 - This is a topic for further discussion
 - May want to recommend that these changes wait until the rulemaking is final
 - Could include notice of tariff





Paperwork Subgroup

- Estimate - Recommendations
 - Tariff, arbitration program, and complaint procedure could be included
 - General consensus from carriers is that consolidating these required documents is beneficial
 - Eliminate practice of amending the estimate (“checkbox” loophole)
 - Require a new estimate prior to load





Paperwork Subgroup

- Estimate – Questions for Discussion
 - Should we require all estimates to be binding?
 - Non-binding estimates are rarely used, and create problems for consumers
 - What do carriers and other stakeholders think?
 - Should date spreads be included in the estimate?
 - Many consumers don't know the exact date they are moving
 - Pricing is related to dates





Paperwork Subgroup

- Order for service
 - Eliminate this requirement
 - Cross-reference information from the order for service with the estimate to see if there anything critical that would be missing





Paperwork Subgroup

- Other recommendations for modernization
 - Allow carriers to provide these documents electronically
 - “Physical inspection” should be changed to “visual inspection”
 - Allows for the use of virtual, video-based inspections





Paperwork Subgroup

Remaining Documents (discussed during the in-person meeting):

- Bill of Lading
 - Keep but simplify
- Freight Bill
 - Most carriers combine with bill of lading
 - Potentially eliminate this requirement
- Inventory
 - Needs more discussion
 - Potentially eliminate or provide a way for shippers to waive
- High Value Inventory
 - Important – it protects carriers and consumers
 - Keep this but find better ways to get it to consumers
 - Possibly add it to the bill of lading





Brochure





Brochure Subgroup

- Draft brochure key messages:
 - Verify that your mover is licensed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
 - Make sure your mover has a good reputation
 - Before moving day, have your mover visit your residence (or storage location) to visually inspect your goods and prepare a written estimate
 - Properly insure your goods





Brochure Subgroup

- Questions for discussion
 - Should it be a traditional brochure or some other format?
 - What should be the method of delivery?
 - How does the brochure fit into the overall education plan?
 - What should it look like?
 - Consider changing the name from “Ready to Move?” to something catchier





Education





Education Subgroup

- Three focus areas:
 - What is our overall education message/strategy?
 - Who is our target audience?
 - How are we going to reach this audience?





Education Subgroup

- What is our overall education message/strategy?
 - Grab attention quickly
 - STOP acronym
 - Use graphics – traffic light or red flags
 - Catchy phrases - “Think before you leap”
 - Utilize “negative shock” messaging to grab attention
 - Highlight the reputations of the “good guys” while also scaring consumers with the “bad guys”





Education Subgroup

- Who is our target audience?
 - Target individuals experiencing life events (marriage, new job, retirement, etc)
 - Consider targeting specific age groups
 - Interstate movers only or also international movers?





Education Subgroup

- How are we going to reach this audience?
 - Utilize modern educational tools
 - Social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter)
 - Take advantage of the HHG Protect Your Move (PYM) website
 - Utilize Google analytics year-round (not just during moving season)
 - A series of podcasts that brings someone through the moving process
 - Videos
 - Texting
 - Ombuds office?
 - Event-driven outreach
 - Bridal shows, open houses, assisted living events, partner with realty groups
 - Infographic





Education Recommendations To Date

- Request that FMCSA develop an education plan that meets specific requirements determined by the working group and focuses on the three key areas:
 - What is the overall message?
 - Who is the target audience?
 - How do we reach that audience?
- Utilize Google analytics to enable consumers to find the necessary information (PYM, social media accounts, etc)
- Provide funding to allow for Google analytics throughout the year, not just during peak moving season





Brainstorming Exercise





Exercise: Subgroup Objectives

The recommendations developed by the working group shall include recommendations on—

- (A) condensing publication ESA 03005 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration into a format that is more easily used by consumers
- **(B) using state-of-the-art education techniques and technologies, including optimizing the use of the Internet as an educational tool; and**
- (C) reducing and simplifying the paperwork required of motor carriers and shippers in interstate transportation.





Discussion

