

**Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods Consumer Protection
Education Subgroup Teleconference
Meeting Minutes for May 24, 2017 11:00am – 11:45am EDT**

The Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods (HHG) Consumer Protection Education Subgroup was convened for a teleconference at 11:00am EDT on Wednesday, May 24, 2017.

Working Group Members Present:

Jennifer Gartlan, Esq. – Office of Consumer Affairs & Dispute Resolution Services, Federal Maritime Commission

Kelsey Owen, Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Better Business Bureau

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:

Lawrence Hawthorne – Transportation Specialist, FMCSA

Kenneth Rodgers – Chief, Commercial Enforcement & Investigations Division and DFO, FMCSA

Volpe Support:

Janet Bibinksi – Record Minutes

Dianne Gunther – Volpe Lead

Julianne Schwarzer – Facilitator

1. Introduction

Julianne Schwarzer opened the meeting, introduced the group, and asked Ken Rodgers and Heather Paraino if there were opening remarks from the group.

- Heather updated the group about attending the Paperwork Subgroup meeting the day before; she felt it went very well.
- Chuck White offered that he has been reading all of the information that has been sent out for review since he was unable to attend the onsite meeting.

Upcoming Onsite Meeting:

June 27-29, 2017

2. Discussion on Recommendations:

Schwarzer reviewed the recommendations document (sent in meeting invite) to confirm the following:

- Recommendations created were what was intended by the group.
- Specificity was appropriate and grouped in a logical way.
- Was there anything the group would like to add?

- **Recommendation #1 – Develop and maintain modern communications tools, platforms, and partnerships to educate consumers (Ex: identitytheft.gov).**
 - Action Item #1 – Modernize messaging (infographics, actionable statements)
 - White asked if there were any specifics on modernizing the messaging (i.e., YouTube, podcasts).
 - Jonathan Todd indicated that messaging should be short and to the point and this action item was not intended to get into specifics because consumer needs are changing.
 - One suggestion was to create short videos so the consumer can either read the information or watch a quick video.
- **Recommendation #2 – Develop and maintain modern tools to assist industry in efforts to educate consumers.**
 - White asked about the full-service movers being a natural first point of contact.
 - Todd indicated that the idea was to utilize industry (previously consumers were the audience, now the recommendation is to expand the audience to include industry).
 - Free/no obligation resources for movers could help advance the cause.
 - Recognition that there are currently no free resources available to the public.
- **Recommendation #3 – Provide funding for staff and resources dedicated to HHG consumer education.**
 - Action Item #3 – Develop data (intake interviews, make education effective).
 - White asked for clarification on this action item.
 - Todd indicated that the idea was simply the recognition that intake interviews (from consumers who were impacted by rogue movers) will prove to be very valuable and can help develop content and tactics further down the line.
 - Action Item #4 – Collaboration.
 - Collaboration needs to exist between the moving public, industry, and other organizations.
 - Resources are needed to develop and manage the relationships.
- **Other Elements for Final Report.**
 - Goal #1 – Increase awareness and expose practices that place consumers at risk.
 - White indicated that he didn't think this goal was being reached, and it is important to call out the negatives to make consumers aware. One way to do this would be to do as Goal #3 suggests below.
 - Goal #3 – Make current content more digestible, understandable, and accessible.
 - White suggested that a way to make content more digestible would be to make it smaller, into snippets (modules), so it would be easier to understand.
 - Todd indicated that there is still a lot to be drafted in terms of content and specificity.

3. Action Items:

- Some of the material should be expanded.

- Kelsey Owen volunteered to think about ways to modernize communication ideas.
- Group will reconvene on May 31, 2017 – Time TBD, but probably late in the day.
 - In the meantime, people may send their ideas around to other group members for input.

Adjournment:

The teleconference for the Education Subgroup of the Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods Consumer Protection was adjourned at 11:45am on Wednesday, May 24, 2017.

**Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods Consumer Protection
Education Subgroup Teleconference
Meeting Minutes for May 31, 2017 3:00pm – 4:00pm EDT**

The Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods (HHG) Consumer Protection Education Subgroup was convened for a teleconference at 3:00pm EDT on Wednesday, May 31, 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

Kelsey Owen – Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Better Business Bureau

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:

Michael Evans – Transportation Specialist, FMCSA

Lawrence Hawthorne – Transportation Specialist, FMCSA

Monique Riddick – Lead Transportation Specialist and Assistant DFO, FMCSA

Volpe Support:

Dianne Gunther – Volpe Lead

Erin Lohrenz – Record Minutes

Julianne Schwarzer – Facilitator

1. Introduction

Julianne Schwarzer, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Volpe Center, welcomed everyone to the teleconference and then called the meeting to order. She outlined the agenda for the meeting, which was to review the suggestions provided by both Kelsey Owen, BBB, and Charles White, International Association of Movers. Owen provided suggestions to modernize communications, and White provided suggestions on how to modularize the consumer education message.

2. Discussion on Suggestions to Modernize Communications

Owen provided the following ideas for discussion:

1. YouTube/Videos - short tips, scam red flags, stories from victims - visual storytelling, highlight reel of what to look out for.
2. Find established “How To” or “Ask the Expert” podcasts to pitch FMCSA tips to, position as expert.
3. Infographics - topics could include: red flags of a rogue mover, scam story examples, what to do if you fall victim, how to file a complaint, how to choose a mover.
4. Google AdWords campaigns for moving related keywords.

5. PSAs - video and radio media campaign around moving month, wedding season, etc.
6. Facebook presence/Twitter presence - engage with consumers, join Twitter chats and be the expert, use Facebook Ads to target different demographics.
7. Raise awareness through scam examples/personal stories, create one unified hashtag to use on Twitter and throughout platforms that use hashtags.
8. Make website easier to use (and mobile and SEO friendly) by having FAQs broken out with simple answers, similar to identitytheft.gov. Show a step by step on how to choose a mover, how to file a complaint, list other industry experts like AMSA and BBB to assist with the “doing your homework” part of finding a mover.
9. Position brand ambassadors on college campuses to help spread the word on how to “protect your move.”

Thoughts and feedback:

- The working group liked these ideas.
- The main question is how do we incorporate these into our recommendations? (Include as-is? Use as examples for FMCSA in the future?).
 - The group felt the level of specificity was good.
 - These suggestions provide a well-rounded view of the technology currently in use – YouTube channel is a great idea.
 - This gives a nice cross section of what is available to reach consumers.
 - Benefits are that these are low cost and can reach different audiences.
- One difficulty is knowing how this should be presented – group is open to suggestions.
 - Dianne Gunther, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Volpe Center, has started drafting this section of the report. She is drafting the Education section to align with the Education Subgroup’s notes (challenges, observations, and action items). She plans to put these suggestions as examples in the recommendation report, but will keep the recommendations to a sentence or two.
 - The recommendation to FMCSA will be to modernize their communication methods, and to consider some of the suggestions provided by the group.
 - Gunther hopes to have a draft ready for the group to review a week or two before the in-person meeting.

3. Discussion on How to Modularize the Consumer Education Message

White suggested an approach to break the educational approach into modules. This would support the theme of providing ideas in short snippets rather than long dissertations. Shorter snippets would make the content more digestible and accessible.

1. Module 1 – I’ve made my decision to move. What’s next?
 - a. Where am I moving to?
 - b. When am I moving?
 - c. Will I use a professional mover? If so.....then.....
2. Module 2 – How do I make an informed decision on a mover? What questions do I need to ask?

- a. Are they properly licensed and insured? How/Where can I find that information?
 - b. References? How do I find references on prospective movers?
 - c. Will they provide some form of an in-home estimate?
 - d. Will they provide a written estimate of the cost? Binding or non-binding?
 - e. Do they provide Valuation protection?
 - f. What steps are taken to protect your home?
 - g. What other points should we make?**
3. Module 3 – What to look for and expect on Moving Day.....
- a. Is the crew in a uniform?
 - b. Does the truck have the logo of the mover or the company you were informed would assist in the process?
 - c. Were you provided with a signed copy of the inventory of items picked up in the move?
 - d. Did you agree on a delivery date or spread of dates before the driver leaves your residence?
 - e. Do you have in-transit contact information with the driver/company?
4. Module 4 – What to look for and expect on Delivery Day.....
- a. Were you shown copies of certified weight tickets upon request?
 - b. Is the payment requested no more than 10% of the estimated cost (binding estimate)?
 - c. Was a final home walk through performed?

Thoughts and feedback:

The group liked this approach. The goal is to catch the consumer at the beginning of the process as well as give them assistance at each subsequent stage. It provides them with the right questions to ask at crucial points.

- Suggestion to provide a helpful link with each module for reference at each phase in the moving process (Ex: providing the MoveRescue link).
- For the report, the goal is to initially recommend a modular approach to consumer education and then give examples of what we mean by those modules (using the level of specificity provided in the list above).
- Specify different areas on the website where consumers can go for the tools, depending on what stage they are in. Make the website easier for people to find help.
- Laying out the report with specific examples is a good approach.
 - We could provide a broad list of recommendations with a reference to an appendix with the details.
- One group member suggested that FMCSA provide outreach information in each step of the moving process.

4. Open Discussion

- Suggestion to create two recommendations from “Recommendation 1: *Develop and maintain modern communications tools, platforms, and partnerships, to educate consumers*”:
 - Modernize tools/platforms.
 - Organize material into short, digestible modules.

- Schwarzer and Gunther updated the Education Subgroup on a pending recommendation from the Paperwork Subgroup that the Education group consider the topic of “date spreads” for consumer protection outreach/education.
 - This could fit into Module 2 – making an informed decision could reference spread dates.
 - Ex: Did your mover reference spread dates and do you understand what this means?
- One approach could be to include a list of issues that consumers should be better educated on including valuation (Ex: list of moving terms and issues that movers might face?)
- Monique Riddick, FMCSA, explained that there are no definitions listed on the Protect Your Move website. The only definition provided is the difference between a broker and a carrier. However, the Rights and Responsibilities document does contain definitions.
- If there are specific areas/terms the group thinks are important, the group can include them as suggestions in the recommendation report.

5. Next Steps/Moving Forward

- Any other thoughts on module ideas or different headings?
 - There may be things that should be added, changed, or moved - we can discuss at the onsite meeting.
- Plan for the onsite meeting is to go over the draft report and have everything firmed up when we leave DC on June 29th.
- Group members should brainstorm on their own to bring any additional ideas or recommendations to the group.
- Gunther will be sending out a rough draft of the report a week or two before the June onsite meeting – the group can provide final comments during that meeting after which we will just be implementing small changes.

Adjournment:

The teleconference for the Education Subgroup of the Federal Advisory Committee for Household Goods Consumer Protection was adjourned at 4:00pm on Wednesday May 31, 2017.