

## **Registering as a Household Goods Carrier in Ohio**

**Q. Why must HHG carriers register with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO)?**

A. PUCO regulatory authority extends over a broad spectrum of property, goods, equipment, and passengers in commerce. The state laws that address commercial vehicle regulations are found in the Ohio Revised Code and the specific rules that have been enacted to enforce these laws can be found in the Ohio Administrative Code. These regulations apply to both intrastate operations (only within Ohio) and interstate (between states) operations.

The transportation of residential household goods, such as furniture, clothing, and appliances, in Ohio falls within the PUCO's jurisdiction. You are considered a regulated household goods carrier if you use a motor vehicle to move someone's household goods within, into, through or out of the state of Ohio and perform these services for compensation. As a regulated household goods carrier you must comply with PUCO regulations that address vehicle safety requirements, company registration, insurance, rate schedule, advertising, and pricing/estimates.

**Q. Who must register?**

A. Any household goods carriers that are, will be, or may be compensated (make money or benefit monetarily) for transporting household goods over a public highway in the state of Ohio must register to obtain operating authority from the PUCO.

**Q. What is a tariff and how is it filed with the PUCO?**

A. A tariff is a listing of rates that a HHG carrier charges for the transportation of household goods and associated services that they provide. Initial and subsequent revisions are filed with the PUCO Docketing Division. The Docketing Division can be reached by telephone at 614-644-5308.

**Q. How do we register as an Ohio HHG carrier?**

A. Registering as an Ohio intrastate for-hire household goods carrier is a multi-step process consisting of the following:

1. Apply for a PUCO authority by completing an initial registration application.
2. Provide the PUCO with specific documents as proof of adequate insurance coverage in the following amounts:
  - a. \$350,000 bodily injury and property damage liability insurance.
  - b. \$20,000 cargo insurance for each straight truck or each combination used for the transportation of household goods.

3. Establish and then file a tariff with the PUCO Docketing Division
4. Remit the following registration fees:
  - a. \$30.00 each for each tractor or truck tractor pulling a trailer
  - b. \$20.00 each for each straight truck, van, car
  - c. An annual HHG Carrier Fee based on carrier gross annual revenue:
    - i. \$0 - \$ 74,999 = \$100.00
    - ii. \$75,000 - 149,999 = \$200.00
    - iii. \$150,000 or more = \$300.00
5. Obtain and then maintain Worker's Compensation coverage pursuant to Chapter 4123 of the Ohio Revised Code
6. Obtain and then maintain unemployment compensation coverage pursuant to Chapter 4141 of the Ohio Revised Code
7. Provide the name and phone number of the person to be contacted to handle any questions or problems relative to a household goods move by the carrier.

**Q. Are there special requirements when our rates are based on cargo weight?**

A. Yes, if your fees are based on the weight of the shipment, you must weigh the shipment only at a certified scale. Your customer must be given the opportunity to be present during the weighing.

**Q. What types of documents must be provided to our customers?**

A. State law requires that the following documents and information be provided to each consumer that contracts with your company:

1. You must provide the customer with a written copy of their rights and responsibilities.
2. You must provide the customer with a written copy of a reimbursement statement.
3. You must provide the customer with a clearly written estimate of all fees.
4. You must provide the customer with a receipt or bill of lading.

**Q. What are the advertising restrictions?**

A. The following advertising and truck marking requirements must be adhered to:

1. You must include your company name and PUCO certificate number in all advertisements.
2. You must not use the term "all loads are insured" in any advertisements. Nor can you make any similar statement.
3. You must not use deceptive acts before, during or after a transaction relating to transportation of goods.

**Q. What information must we display on our vehicles?**

A. All motor carriers shall display the following information on both sides of all self-propelled motor vehicles operated within Ohio in intrastate commerce:

1. The legal name or a single trade name of the motor carrier operating the commercial motor vehicle.
2. The identification number issued by the PUCO preceded by the letters PUCO or the identification number issued by the United States department of transportation preceded by the letters USDOT.
3. If the name of any person other than the operating carrier appears on the commercial motor vehicle, the name of the operating carrier must be followed by the above information and be preceded by the words "operated by."
4. The markings must be in letters that contrast sharply in color with the background on which the letters are placed.
5. The markings must be readily legible during daylight hours, from a distance of fifty feet (fifteen point two four meters) while the commercial motor vehicle is stationary.

**Q. How should the shipping papers be maintained?**

A. A copy of the estimate must be attached to the original bill of lading. These items must then be kept with the shipment until delivery.

**Q. What if we cannot meet the scheduled pickup or delivery dates?**

A. If you cannot meet the original assigned date, you must immediately notify the customer of the new pickup/delivery date and time. Furthermore, you must receive approval from the customer before delivering the customer's merchandise on the new date.

**Q. What rules should we be aware of in the event of a claim?**

A. In addition to both state and federal consumer protection laws, you are subject to the following, household goods specific rules:

1. Your estimate, tariff or bill of lading cannot include a time limit of less than 60 days for a customer to file a claim.
2. You cannot be released from any other liability other than what is listed on the original bill of lading/receipt.
3. You must record the date on which you receive a claim on the claim itself.
4. You must acknowledge receipt of a claim for loss or damage within 15 days of the receiving the claim.
5. Within 60 days of receiving the claim, you must submit a resolution (e.g. pay the claim, decline the claim or compromise a settlement).

**Q. What additional items are required by the PUCO?**

A. Listed below are additional rules that you must follow:

1. You must cooperate with the PUCO with efforts to resolve disputes.
2. You must cease operations when your insurance has been cancelled.
3. You must not operate your vehicle(s) if your permit has expired.
4. You must register annually.