

Protect your furs, boats, RV's and furniture when storing away from home

When storing furniture, fur coats, boats and RV's, protection from theft or damage should be your primary concern, says the Bureau of Business Trade Practices, which regulates licensed facilities.

Consumers should ask storage operators if they are licensed by the Bureau of Business Trade Practices as Public Warehouse Keepers. Most movers, furriers, RV dealerships and marinas are licensed and permits are prominently posted. Fenced storage areas and farmers' barns may also be required to be licensed.

Licensed operators offer you the greatest protection because they are bonded and regularly inspected. Ask to see their license.

What about an unlicensed storage facility? Remember they are not bonded or inspected by the Department. Ask the operator of the storage facility, licensed or unlicensed, for a contract in writing. Insist that the contract state the terms and the operator's legal liability. Read the contract before you sign it.

Mini warehouses or facilities—where your goods are under self-storage—are not required to be licensed. These facilities must inform the renter that the owner holds a lien on the property being stored. Operators renting the storage area to you can recover their money by selling your goods if rental payments are not made. You may be considered in default just seven days after the rental payment is due. Usually you, the owner of the property

being stored, are required to carry insurance on your property while it is in storage. Examine your insurance coverage carefully and ask the storage facility about its liability.

In Wisconsin, your boat or RV can spend more time in storage than on lakes or roads. Protect your investment, by using a licensed storage facility.

Questions? For more information or to file a complaint, contact the Bureau of Business Trade Practices at:

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