

Media Release

30 September 2015

Competition Commission raids furniture removal companies for the second time

Today, 30 September 2015, the Commission is conducting a search and seizure (dawn raid) operation at the premises of four furniture removal companies: Stuttaford Van Lines (Pty) Ltd in Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein; Pickfords Removals SA (Pty) Ltd (Pickfords) in Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein; Afriworld 142 (Pty) Ltd (Afriworld) in Bloemfontein and Cape Express Removals (Pty) (Cape Express) Ltd in Cape Town.

The firms are providers of furniture removal services to a wide range of customers including the South African National Defence Force, Government departments, state owned entities, private and public companies and private individuals.

The dawn raid operation forms part of the Commission's new investigation into alleged collusive conduct in the market for provision of furniture removal services. The Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that information relevant to the new investigation is in the premises of the firms.

The Commission is conducting the dawn raid operation with due regard to the rights of the firms and all affected persons. During the search the Commission will seize documents and electronic data, which will be analysed together with other information gathered to determine whether a contravention of the Competition Act has taken place.

In terms of section 48 of the Competition Act, the Commission is authorised to enter and search premises and seize documents which have a bearing on an investigation. The Commission duly obtained warrants authorizing it to search the offices of the firms at the High Courts of South Africa, namely, Eastern Cape Local Division in Port Elizabeth, Free State Division in Bloemfontein and Western Cape Division in Cape Town.

Ends

For more information:

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Background: Commission investigation against furniture removals companies

In 2010, the Commission launched an investigation against furniture removal firms for allegedly colluding when bidding for furniture removal tenders issued mainly by government departments. As part of this investigation, the Commission raided the offices of the major furniture removal companies on 11 November 2010.

The evidence seized in the 2010 dawn raid operation revealed that collusion in the furniture removal industry was endemic. From 2012, the Commission invited the furniture removal firms implicated in collusion to settle - 16 firms accepted the Commission's settlement offer and settled whilst 13 firms did not settle. The Commission has since referred 10 firms to the Tribunal for prosecution out of the 13

firms that did not settle. The Commission has completed the investigation against the remaining 3 firms and is in the process of finalising referrals to the Tribunal for prosecution (see table below).

Companies that have settled	Companies referred to the Tribunal	Companies for which investigations have been completed, but yet referred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cape Express Removals (Pty) Ltd • Propack Removals CC • Patrick Removals (Pty) Ltd • JH Retief Transport CC • Lowe Line CC • Matthee Furniture Removals CC • Transfreight International CC • De Wet Human t/a Viking Transport CC • Joel Transport (Pty) Ltd • Crown Relocations (Pty) Ltd • Reliable Removals CC • DEL Transport CC t/a De Langes Transport • Western Transport Services • A&B Movers CC • Execu Move CC • H&M Removals CC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGS Frasers • J&H Removals • Mini Maxi Movers CC • Langs Removals CC • Stanley's Removals CC • Core Relocations (Pty) Ltd • Majorshelf • Elliot International CC • Pickfords Removals (Pty) Ltd • Afriworld 142 (Pty) Ltd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance Transport • Stuttaford Van Lines • Baxter International Movers CC

Investigation against the four companies

The Commission has previously investigated Stuttaford, Pickfords, Afriworld and Cape Express for collusive tendering for furniture removal tenders. Cape Express settled with the Commission and is being raided for the second time. Pickfords and Afriworld did not settle with the Commission and have been referred to the Tribunal for prosecution. Stuttaford has also not settled with the Commission and is one of the three firms that the Commission has completed investigation against the firm, as launched in 2010.

The Commission obtained information that these firms allegedly resumed/continued collusion after 2013 hence the launching of the new investigation against them.

Previous media statements on referrals to the Tribunal:

[Referrals against Core Relocations and Mini Maxi Movers](#)

[Referrals against J&H Furniture Removals, Langs Removals and Stanley's Removals](#)

[Referrals against AGS Frasers International and JH Retief Transport](#)