

HOW TO PLAN YOUR MOVE

PLAN AHEAD

Summer time is the busiest time of the year for movers. In addition, the beginning and end of each month are traditionally busier than mid-month, regardless of the season. If you are planning to move during one of these times, plan well in advance so your mover's schedule will fit yours.

Now it is time to contact the movers on your list. Inform them of your destination and the timing of your move. Ask movers to provide you with a written estimate, and have them explain the services listed in the estimate in detail. Carefully compare each estimate to see which company best suits your needs and budget.

PACKING

Proper packing by a trained packer using specially designed cartons and materials is crucial to a good move. Schedule packing with the mover a day or two before the moving van is loaded. If you are packing yourself, it is never too soon to start. While packing yourself can save money, movers will not usually accept liability for damage to items packed by owners.

Be present when your goods are packed. An inventory of your goods will be made and it is important to resolve any disagreements prior to signing the inventory. Make sure all copies are legible and all items are numbered. Have valuable items listed separately. Some appliances may require servicing prior to the move. Your mover can schedule these services for you.

There are several options for insuring your goods. All household goods shipments move under limited liability. However, you may purchase additional liability coverage from your mover.

PLANNING YOUR MOVING DAY

Your mover may ask you to select several consecutive days during which your goods can be loaded and a second series of dates during which your goods can be delivered to your new home. A spread of days gives you and your mover the flexibility needed to keep your move on schedule. Remember that summer months are the busiest, and some movers offer lower prices between the months of October and April.

MOVING DAY

- Be on hand when the movers arrive.
- Discuss the delivery arrangements fully with your mover.
- Have beds stripped and ready to be packed.
- Save your energy - let the moving crew disassemble goods.
- Read the Bill of Lading before you sign it.
- Tell your mover how to reach you at your destination.
- Keep in contact with the mover's agent at your destination while you are in transit.

DELIVERY

Generally, your belongings will be transported in a van along with those of other families in the same general direction. This helps to keep your costs down. Delivery is made on any of the several consecutive days agreed upon before the move began. Make sure the mover knows how to contact you to schedule actual delivery. If you cannot be reached at destination, the mover may place your shipment in storage to avoid delaying other shipments. This can mean additional charges for storage and handling.

Upon delivery, check your goods for damage. Do not sign the inventory until you have inspected your furniture and the exterior of the cartons.

CLAIMS

If any of your household goods are damaged or lost, report the facts promptly and in detail on the van driver's copy (original) of the inventory sheet before you sign it. If you notice damage after unpacking, a claim must be filed within nine months after delivery. However, it is to your advantage to report damage as soon as possible. The mover must acknowledge receipt of your claim within 30 days and must deny or make an offer within 120 days of receipt of your claim. When making a claim or considering a settlement offer, keep in mind the amount of liability that you declared on your shipment. For example, if the value declared on your shipment was \$5,000, the mover's maximum liability for loss or damage to the articles in your shipment is \$5,000. Claims for more than this amount will be declined because they are in excess of the mover's liability that you declared on your shipment.

NON-ALLOWABLES

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| • Sterno | • Darkroom Chemicals | • Nail Polish Remover | • Any Paints |
| • Fire Extinguisher | • Gasoline | • Car Batteries | • Propane |
| • Household Batteries | • Ammonia | • Charcoal | • Poisons |
| • Matches | • Pool Chemicals | • Liquid Bleach | • Weed Killer |
| • Aerosols | • Paint Thinner | • Fertilizer | • Ammunition |
| • Chemistry Sets | • Nail Polish | • Charcoal Lighter | • Perishables |
| • Kerosene | • Motor Oil | • Lamp Oils | • Foods |
| • Cleaning Solvents | • Fireworks | • Pesticides | • Plants |

WAYS TO PREPARE FOR A STRESS-FREE MOVE

1. Avoid large down payments.

Be wary of carriers seeking large down payments to hold dates or to reserve service.

2. Ask questions. If you do not understand something, ask.

The moving business is complex and has its own language. If you aren't satisfied with the answers to your questions or if the carrier hesitates when you ask for clarification, talk to another carrier.

3. Plan an Off-Peak Season Move (when possible).

June to September is the high season. If you can avoid moving during those months, you will likely receive better service. If you must move during the high season, move mid-month, mid-week, and avoid the end of the month.

4. Be Reachable by Phone. Make sure the carrier is able to reach you by phone during your move.

This can save time and storage costs if the driver is ready to deliver and you ready to receive the shipment. Be sure to have the driver's full name, id and truck number to allow for fast and easy communication.

5. Take Valuables with You.

Valuables, such as cash, coins, jewelry, photographs, and important papers should be taken with you or sent ahead. Be sure to use a traceable service, such as FedEx and United Parcel Service.

6. Segregate Personal Travel Items.

The items traveling with you, such as clothes and papers, should be put in one place or in the vehicle you are taking with you. Avoid having those items loaded on the truck and having to find them later.

7. Try to Relax. No matter how prepared you are things occasionally go wrong.

Moving is one of the most stressful times in your life. Take a deep breath, be patient, and get a good night's sleep before moving day.

HOW TO TREAT YOUR MOVING CREW

We occasionally hear from consumers who have questions about how to best interact with a moving crew at either end of a relocation. To offer some guidance, we have developed the following top to help make sure the van driver and other crew members can perform safely, efficiently and comfortably.

Provide the essentials.

Consider the crew's needs and comfort: offer access to drinking water, designate a bathroom for their use, and keep hand sanitizer available. Have disposable paper towels handy, to save your linens and other items from the possibility of moving-related grime. And you might want to identify an outside area where smoking would be permitted.

Meet and greet.

Take time to meet your crew members and make them feel welcome. Always have one responsible adult available throughout the move to answer questions, and make sure they know which room you're calling a den and which one is a "family room," etc.

Keep kids and pets busy.

Make arrangements to keep small children and pets occupied so they don't get in the way. If possible, have them stay with friends or relatives at the time of the move.

It's food for thought. Most crews greatly appreciate coffee in the morning and the offer to pick up a fast lunch, since it's time-consuming to close up the truck and cumbersome to maneuver a tractor-trailer around a typical downtown area.

Keep the temperature in check.

If moving during very hot or cold weather, consider providing fans or space heaters, as exterior doors will likely be left open.

Provide feedback.

If you're pleased with your crew, send a nice letter to the carrier as all drivers are ranked by quality scores and comments by customers. As with all hardworking front-line customer service professionals, tips, while not expected, are a great way to show your appreciation for a job well done.

