

A+ Moving & Storage

910-485-4400

Residential Move Tips

Organization:

- Create a binder, notebook, file folder, or other place to keep all information regarding your move. Keep a detailed record of all moving expenses, including receipts. A lot of moving expenses may be tax deductible. Don't forget to obtain and save receipts for items that you've donated to charity.
- Create a "checklist" of tasks for each step of the move as you plan it. Include things not directly related to the move – like shutting off and starting up utilities, phone, cable, and newspaper and magazine deliveries.
- Identify and plan for any "extra stops" like mini-storage facilities, or personal items from an office or business location.
- Check through your files for paperwork specifically related to the home you are leaving – if you're selling your home and the buyer would like the warranty paperwork for the new water heater, you don't want it to be packed away in an inaccessible box.
- Check through your files for any paperwork that may result in identity theft including credit cards, certificates of deposit, stock certificates, social security cards (including the ones for your small children that have usually been filed away and not looked at since birth), birth certificates, etc. Make sure these type documents are secured in an out of the way location and moved by you personally - so that neither you nor the movers need to worry about them.
- Shred - don't just discard - any old bills or other paperwork before moving. Boxes full of old paperwork are not only heavy, adding cost to your move, but they can also be a source for identify theft.
- Check your homeowners insurance to make sure you understand exactly what your policy covers during a move. Your movers can offer advice and suggestions on purchasing additional coverage when needed for the move.
- Check the warranty on electronics, appliances, and even some things like grandfather clocks or large computer systems. Some need to be serviced by a professional before moving – or the warranty may become void. This is particularly important for front-loading washers and very big screen televisions.
- Obtain appraisals from licensed appraisers for all antiques. If it's not officially documented as an antique, it will go on the inventory as "old, scratched, and dented."
- Avoid using oil and wax on wood furniture right before moving, especially if your items are going into storage for any length of time. The surfaces may become sticky or tacky, causing packing materials to adhere, which will mar the finish.
- Schedule appointments with specialists for disassembly and crating of items such as pool tables, shrunks, crystal chandeliers, or hot tubs.
- Don't forget to clean out any personal lockers at the local gym or golf course. Return library books, and collect items you have loaned to friends and neighbors – and return any items you have borrowed.
- Create a moving supplies tote box or bin, where you can store tape, markers, your inventory listing, safety knives, and other moving supplies.

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- Make back-ups of all computer files – especially those irreplaceable family photos.
- Purchase and distribute locking style plastic bags or large sealable envelopes for each room or area. Packaging small items from drawers, desks or cabinets into plastic bags prior to packing in a box will help eliminate loss. This is particularly important for KEYS.
- Use locking style plastic bags that can be written on with permanent marker for hardware from items that have been disassembled. Use the same style bags for picture hangers and drapery hooks or hardware – one for each room.
- Identify and/or gather together all *irreplaceable*, delicate and high-value items. Make decisions for the best packing and transporting. Packers and Movers will be happy to offer suggestions and otherwise help to problem-solve.
- Be prepared to personally move personal items of value or importance, such as jewelry, coin collections, memorabilia, and especially prescription medications.
- Plan to have rugs, draperies, and any upholstered furniture cleaned several weeks before the move. Leave items in the cleaner's wrappings if possible – but only if you can be sure they are completely dry. Dampness will cause mold, especially if your household goods are going into storage.
- Consider “pre” packing items from the garage and storage areas into plastic bins or totes that won't have to be unpacked at the new location. This is an especially good idea for things like holiday decorations – as it will help keep them organized during the move and all year long afterwards. The money spent on the totes and bins is money saved from having the professional movers pack these items for you.
- Remember that the movers will not be responsible for damage or breakage on items that you've packed yourself unless there is visible damage to the outside of the box. If you're not positive you can get it there safely – ask for advice, or even have the professionals just pack the things that you're most nervous about.
- Federal law prohibits the transportation of flammables, cleaning fluids, matches, aerosol cans, ammunition, and other combustibles. Make sure you have a plan to safely and legally dispose of these items at an approved site. Some little known items that are illegal for movers to transport are fire extinguishers, household batteries, nail polish, and children's chemistry sets.
- Discard or clearly identify all items not moving.
- Consolidate any cleaning supplies that will be needed when the house is empty. Keep these in an area that is specifically marked as NOT moving.
- Make a list of items that you will need as soon as you arrive at the new home. Make sure you include things like safety knives to open boxes, a telephone, alarm clock, radio, cleaning supplies, first aid kit, paper plates and disposable silverware, a couple of towels for each family member, bed linens, toilet paper, paper towels, address books, pencil and paper, tools to put things back together, your moving notebook, etc...

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When you're packing yourself:

- Rule number one – the heavier the item, the smaller the box!
- Make sure you've got plenty of packing material available before you start packing. Those really important things that you need all the way up to the last minute – are the ones that will suffer damage or loss if you run out of the right packing materials.
- Try to avoid using newspaper as packing paper – the ink makes a mess on everything and causes extra work rewashing before putting away. Unprinted newsprint is available through your moving company for reasonable prices.
- Use visual management – color coding, signs, tags, labels, etc... To make delivery more efficient, use a different color marker for boxes to be delivered to specific rooms. Tag or label the destination rooms using the same color.
- Avoid using "Misc" or "Stuff" as identification on boxes. The more specific you are, the better chance you won't have to move the box from room to room while you figure out the right place for it.
- Plates, dishes, framed photographs, and glassware should all be packed vertically, keeping the weight of the object on the smallest surface edge.
- Pack similar items together. You don't want to put Grandma's china in the same box with Grandpa's cast iron skillet. Place heavier items like casserole dishes and mixing bowls in the bottom of the box, and drinking glasses and sugar bowls near the top of the box.
- When packing delicate items like figurines and collectibles, make sure to put packing material in and around small empty spaces. For example – put a small piece of wadded up paper or bubble wrap around the spout on a teapot, or around the head, neck, beak, or wings of a animal figurine.
- Place cushioning layers of crushed paper between layers of breakables.
- When packing breakables – make sure that nothing inside shifts if you shake the box. All empty spaces should be filled with cushioning of some sort.
- Don't allow boxes to "bulge" at the top or sides. When they are loaded onto the truck, there will be additional pressure on the top and sides – creating the perfect situation for breakage.
- Use upright wardrobe boxes for tall awkward items like artificial plants, gift wrap, sporting goods, or hanging lamps. Don't put too much weight in them, and make sure that the bottoms are taped securely.
- Place shoes, handbags, sweaters, or other lighter weight closet items into shopping bags or larger tote bags, and pack them into upright wardrobe boxes with hanging clothes.
- Use luggage, laundry hampers, duffel bags, tote bags, and other storage items that you already own to pack bedding, towels, pillows, and other soft items that don't weigh too much. Leave the toys in the toy box – just tape or strap it closed.
- Avoid using tape on polished or painted surfaces – items like toy boxes, chests or trunks, or other furniture items that you want to leave the contents in. The tape can leave a residue that may damage your items. Use straps, or wrap the item in a furniture pad, or old blanket or tarp before taping.
- Make sure that all boxes are sturdy and are completely sealed on the top and the bottom.

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Prior to loading:

- Identify and resolve any loading or unloading challenges – room for trucks, blocking streets or traffic, low wires, low hanging branches, etc...
- Make sure that you or your spouse can be available during the entire duration of the loading process.
- Identify any items that will be needed “soonest” – so that these items can be loaded last – and unloaded first.
- Inventory or work with your professional movers as they inventory all items moving – at a minimum, the irreplaceable and high-value items should be completely documented at both origin and destination.
- Make sure all water is completely drained and dried from washing machines, dishwashers, refrigerators, and freezers before they are loaded onto the truck.
- Completely drain all gas powered equipment like lawn mowers and weed eaters. All fuel and oil should be drained. Remember – any liquid that leaks will be leaking on your household goods!
- Place a sock or nylon stocking filled with a couple of handfuls of fresh coffee grounds, baking soda, or charcoal in each section of refrigerators and freezers to keep them smelling fresh.
- Empty attics, crawl spaces, or any other storage areas that do not have a “finished” floor. Movers are usually not allowed to enter these areas.
- Before you sign the inventory sheets, do a final walk through of each room to make sure that everything you want loaded is actually on the truck. Don't forget the storage shed, back yard, crawl space, and garage. Check all the drawers and cabinets in the kitchens and bathrooms, and on the top shelf of closets.
- Make sure that you can provide all your contact information to the driver and the moving company. Communication is critical to a successful move.

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Prior to delivery:

- Identify and resolve any destination challenges – new carpet to be protected, large or difficult cabinets, overstuffed sofas or double door refrigerators will fit through doorways, etc...
- Make sure that you'll be available all day to answer questions, direct traffic, and direct placement of furniture and boxes.
- Decide if you're going to want the movers to unpack any boxes that they have packed so they can make arrangements to have the right personnel ready.
- Create a "Delivery Floor Map" of the new location, including designated areas for each named and color coded location previously identified. Clearly tag or otherwise identify each delivery location.
- Sketch out a rough map for each room – showing the placement of the larger furniture items. The movers will only want to set things down once, and you don't want to have to move large items around when the boxes and smaller items are in the way – or move boxes and small items out of the way of a large piece that someone is standing there holding.
- Let the movers know which items you want put back together. The movers are responsible for putting together anything that they took apart – but you should let them know if there are any changes. Reassembly is usually done after the truck is empty.
- Check off the inventory. This is the only "sure" way you have to make sure that everything that was loaded has been delivered.
- Check the condition of your items during delivery. The best time to note any loss or damages with the movers, will be during delivery. Contact the claims department as soon as possible so that the paperwork can be provided to you.
- Designate a "Lost & Found" Area for family members to place items that need to be moved to different rooms.

After delivery:

- Let your computer and other electronics acclimate before plugging in and starting up.
- Start the unpacking with the kitchen first, and then the bathrooms. Once these rooms are functional – the others will fall into place.
- Remember to keep your packing materials clean and dry as much as possible, and break them down to reduce clutter.
- Consider advertising your used packing materials on Craigslist, eBay, or in the local newspaper. Even if all you want to do is get them out of the way – you'll have a much better chance of getting them out of your way quickly if they are reusable.
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Moving with children and pets:

- Talk to your kids about moving as early and as often as you can, and let them ask questions and express fears. Consider the stress adults find in moving, and then think about the feelings of children who don't have many methods for handling stress.
- Check for parks, museums, fun centers, and other things that your children can look forward to at the new location.
- Help your children prepare their own address book with phone numbers and email addresses of all the kids they will want to keep in touch with.
- Prepare a list of moving tasks that older children can help with, and then let them – or help them - plan how to get the tasks completed, so that they can truly feel that they are a part of the move.
- Ask a friend or family member to babysit during packing and especially while loading and unloading the truck. You and your very young children will be much more comfortable.
- If the children are at home, have them write their names and new address on the cartons from their rooms to help them become familiar with their new street and town.
- Have plenty of crayons, markers, and paper for your children to be creative during all the upheaval. Draw an outline of their new room at the new house, and let them create the placement map for their furniture and toys. Give them a couple of empty boxes to pretend “pack” their toys and their brothers and sisters.
- Allow your kids to decorate the boxes from their rooms with crayons and markers after the packing has been completed in that room – while waiting for loading to begin.

- Consider boarding your pets at a friend's house, a kennel, or at your veterinarian for the day. You'll need to stop by the vet's anyway to pick up medical and shot records, and a day at the kennel might be less stressful than being confined in an area that they are used to having free access, and will certainly be less stressful for you - knowing that they are being well cared for.
- Make sure to carry plenty of your pet's regular food with you for the trip and for the first several weeks at the new home. The stress of moving can get to our pets too, and addition stress of being forced to change their regular diet if you can't find the right brand might cause some unfortunate digestive upsets.
- Make sure you have a safe and approved carrier for your pets – for whichever method of travel they will use.