

Move Yourself or Hire a Mover?

Moving can be a physically and emotionally exhausting experience. Thus it is tempting to use a moving company to take the backbreaking work and stress out of the equation. But how do you choose a reputable company that will care for your belongings as they deserve to be treated? And what about the cost? Research can best begin with the recommendations of those who have moved before you.

Taking your list of recommended movers, narrow it down to ten moving companies and before asking them to come out to give an estimate, ask a few questions over the phone.

Ask the moving company if they have a registration number with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Using the USDOT number (US Dept. of Transportation Number) it is possible to check out the company online at FMCSA. One side note here is if the company travels within only one state, they may not be registered.

Secondly, ask the company about their rates. Most companies will provide both a rate per pound and a distance rate. If you are moving long distance, the estimate must be based on weight. For short distances, some companies will charge a per hour rate. Estimates must be given in writing and include all charges and of course, be signed by both you and the mover.

Ask your mover if they use subcontractors. Most subcontractors are local movers who use their own trucks and while they may provide great service, it is still important to check out the drivers.

Don't forget to ask about additional charges. Some companies charge extra for awkward items such as a piano or if the destination has stairs or poor street access.

Insurance is an area to ask detailed questions. Standard coverage is 60 cents per pound and often will not cover the cost of a damaged item. Additional insurance is available at a cost so it would be wise to assess the value of your belongings to determine what may be necessary. It is also advisable to check with your homeowner's insurance to see if your policy offers additional coverage for moving.

After conducting the phone interviews, scale the list of ten moving companies down to three and from there invite them to your home for the estimate. Lastly, a few helpful hints include trying not to move the last ten days of the month as that is the busiest time of the month for movers and truck companies. Also, try to move earlier in the week. As the week progresses a mover may have fewer resources from which to pull from causing issues that could have been prevented.

Hiring a company is not for everyone. Many prefer to take the responsibility of moving themselves and enjoy the flexibility of moving on their own schedule. When considering a "do it yourself" option, consideration should be made as to how much are you moving and how far. For a general idea of what it will cost to move your household, use the guide most truck rental agencies use, and count the number of bedrooms. Here's a sample truck-size guide from U-Haul:

- 26' will move 4+ bedrooms
- 24' will move 3-4 bedrooms
- 17' will move 2-3 bedrooms
- 14' will move 1-2 bedrooms
- 10' will move an apartment

Now factor in the price of gas and any mileage charges, plus buying lunch for the friends who have offered to help you, and you will have a clearer idea of what moving yourself will cost. Don't forget to have hand trucks for refrigerators and washer/dryers. If you are moving a short distance or do not have an over abundance of furniture, moving yourself might be your best option.

Whether you are using the service of a professional mover or moving yourself, your preparation is critical to how good your moving experience will be.

About 2 Weeks Ahead

- Reconfirm your moving date with the moving or truck rental company.
 - Plan your packing and loading by writing down what you have to do.
 - Purchase any moving supplies needed, including bubble wrap, boxes, tape and plastic bags.
 - Start packing two weeks in advance, and pack a little every day, concentrating on one room at a time.
 - Take a complete inventory as you pack.
 - Label all boxes and containers, such as by room, contents so you'll know exactly what each contains when you get to the new location.
- [HYPERLINK \l ""](#)
- Empty your freezer and clean it out a week before you move, and start to unplug and pack away remaining appliances.

Packing for moving with the right materials and with care can mean an easier move and less damage. Moving is inconvenient no matter how you look at it, but being prepared can help to ease the pain.

Moving Packing Tips:

Keep the weight of your boxes reasonable. If possible, put heavy items in small boxes to make them easier to carry.

Don't apply tape directly to polished or painted wood finishes. Removing the tape could ruin the surface.

Double-box fragile items and add plenty of cushioning. When in doubt, use more not less.

Use Clean White Packing Paper. This is the cheapest insurance you can get against scratches, breakage, or movement/crushing of your packed items. Don't use newspaper when wrapping glassware, china, or similar products. The black ink can "bleed" into the enamel permanently spoiling these items.

Do use the correct size box and don't use trash bags. Trash bags don't protect your possessions and don't stack very well in moving vans. Label all cartons on more than one side. This simple task can make a big difference in your moving experience as you can see with a glance what room each box goes into.

Pack glass items on their side. Glass has its most significant strength on its edge. Plates, pictures, and pieces of glass should be packed and transported on their edges, not flat.

Make a snug fitting load. Loading a moving van or truck correctly is like building a 3-dimensional jigsaw puzzle using every thing you own. When the load fits tightly, there is less chance of shifting and less chance of damage.

Some last tips to make for a smooth transition:

If moving yourself, make sure that when everything is packed and ready to load, the items you need least are loaded first. Consider what is in the boxes and don't place heavy items on top of fragile ones. Next whether moving yourself or using a company, it is best to prepare for the first night in your new home by packing a few essential items in a separate bag and carrying it with you. For each person in the

household pack a change of clothes, a towel, prescription drugs, a toothbrush, and other personal items. Plastic utensils, paper plates, paper towels, plastic cups, toilet paper, toiletries, trash bags, a flashlight, first aid kit including pain relievers, pencil and paper, snacks, beverages, and re-closable plastic bags are all helpful while awaiting the unpacking process. Keep a small tool kit with you to enable you to easily put together those items that couldn't be moved whole. Once in your new home, unpack your kitchen first. This is the heart and "stomach" of your home. You will feel settled sooner when this room is completed. Another project to complete just before or soon after you move in is changing the locks. The previous owners may have given a key to neighbors, workmen, relatives, or cleaning services. You'll never know how many keys are floating around for your new home unless you get new locks or re-key the existing locks. Completing this task will help offer peace of mind. And finally, take a big breath and pat yourself on the back. You have just endured a move with a minimum of distress due to your diligence in planning. It's time to sit back, relax, and enjoy your new home. Okay, okay, unpacking has to be completed, but finish that cold glass of lemonade first!