

Residential Moving Guide

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Make Your Moving Experience Easier

MOVING CHECKLIST TIPS

The following moving tips are intended to help make the moving experience an easier transition when you are relocating. Careful planning of a move can help reduce the stress and reduce the cost of relocating to a new home, apartment, office, storage, or retirement center. The scope of a move may include moving up to a larger home or downsizing to a smaller home. Downsizing is one of the hardest moves to make because it requires one to divest themselves of treasured possessions. If the downsizing is not properly handled on the move-out phase, the move-in portion can reach gridlock for space and make for a disorganized, costly, time consuming move. The peak moving and relocation season is during the months of May through August each year. Moving capacity in the industry is tightest at this time and requires booking sooner to get desired move dates.

SEVEN WEEKS BEFORE THE MOVE

Establish where you are moving from and to:

- Know both addresses and zip codes.
- Determine if storage requirements are involved on either end.
- Note the potential location of the moving truck for loading, unloading and unload time restrictions.
- Are there stairs or tight turns at the loading and unloading point?
- How many floor levels in each location? Elevators?
- Travel distances for the loaders from the home to the van.
- Contact potential reputable moving companies that will meet your needs.
- Establish method of payment for move day (Cash, Certified check, money order, local check (on local move only) or other methods of payment such as credit card).

Check references to get recommendations on how a mover performed. Remember that the mover has everything you own in his truck. There are approximately sixty regulated and unregulated movers that are available in the Birmingham metropolitan area. Some may not carry any or all of the proper insurances. You should check with the mover on the initial call to verify that they really do have all the insurances. "We are properly insured" doesn't get it for insurance verification. A good way to check to see if they have required insurances is to ask for their Alabama Public Service Commission number (ours APSC C3822) and their Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) MC number (ours MC 468173). These numbers will also be on the side of the truck as required by State and Federal laws. If they have the numbers they may be insured, if they don't have the numbers, most likely they don't have insurances. Check to see if they have insurance.

These insurances include:

- Cargo Insurance
- General Liability
- Worker's Compensation
- Truck Insurance
- Bonding Insurance

There are three types of moves one can make:

TYPE 1

This is a move within a thirty mile radius of the mover's Birmingham area operational base. The move within a thirty mile radius is usually handled on an hourly basis. The time usually starts when the truck leaves its home base until it returns, so there is a drive time component in the cost. There is usually a two to four hour minimum time (ours is two) for charging on a move to be fair to the employees and to control fuel costs. Moving is a business of logistics. It takes as much coordination for a two hour move as it does for a ten hour move. Movers will set the crew size as a function of the job size and conditions. Beware of the mover that sends three or four men for a small move by the hour. These men are spending their time riding in the truck.

Approximate moving hours for a two man crew for the average size home, not including packing (without a lot of boxes, steps, clutter and long walking and driving distances) are:

- 1 Bedroom - 2 to 4 hours.
- 2 Bedrooms - 3 to 6 hours.
- 3 Bedrooms - 6 to 9 hours.
- 4 Bedrooms – most need at least two crews all day.
- 5 Bedrooms and up – may need three crews and possible multiple days.

Stairs, tight turns, long walks and travel distances all come into play and may increase moving time. A rule of thumb, add one hour to a full day move per flight of seven steps.

Not being prepared for the move day will "greatly affect move times" and resulting cost.

Movers will usually send a man to quote the move free of charge, when the scope of work is large enough (more than three bedrooms), or out of the thirty mile radius.

Some movers are charging a fuel surcharge on moves. Ask if they have a fuel surcharge extra charge!

Every mover "specializes" in antiques.

TYPE 2

The second type of move is outside the thirty mile radius of the respective metropolitan area (say Birmingham), but within the state of Alabama. Operating authority for a moving company is granted for intrastate (inside the state) moves by the Alabama Public Service Commission (APSC). The APSC requires cargo and general liability insurance prior to issuing operating authority and numbers for trucks. Move rates are strictly regulated by the APSC based on actual move weights, travel distance, and a multiplier from a moving company filed and approved rate sheet. The way to find out if a company has operating authority in the state is to ask for the APSC number (APSC #C3822). This number, by law must be on the truck door. If someone shows up with a moving van or rental truck, and no numbers on the truck door, you most likely have a mover that has no intrastate or interstate operating authority and proper insurance coverage. Prior to this point you should ask to see insurance coverage certificates. The favorite way for rogue movers to beat the insurance, State and Federal law requirements is to show up in a rental truck.

TYPE 3

The third type of move is outside the state, and is called an interstate move. Interstate moving operating authority is obtained from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The two numbers are issued and by law must also be on the moving van cab doors as well as the company name. They look like: Changing Spaces Moving, Inc., U.S. DOT #1164437, MC #468173. You should check to see that your mover has these operating approved numbers at booking time. A good way to check is to ask for their DOT and MC numbers over the phone. The same strict insurance levels are required by both FMCSA and the APSC (State) mandates.

Common tariff pricing between movers for interstate transportation are no longer mandated, nor allowed by the Federal Government as of January 1, 2008. As of this date all interstate movers were required to develop their own individual tariffs. Some movers have developed tariffs very similar to the old rates. They are quoting highly inflated rates, and then steeply discounting the price by around 63%, a function of the moving season. This over pricing and then steep discounting is not allowed within the state of Alabama by the APSC.

Pricing discount percentages are seasonal related and range from 61% (summer) to 65% (winter). Moving industry capacity is in short supply from May through August. When you move during this summer time frame, expect to pay more for the move.

Changing Spaces Moving, Inc. gives a fixed fee pricing or binding number on long distance moves based on the actual scope of the move.

SIX WEEKS BEFORE THE MOVE

Select the moving company that you feel most comfortable and secure with your worldly possessions. Determine if they are flexible to change move dates if closing doesn't happen as scheduled. One third of the move dates change. Pick a mover that will change with you. Sometimes there will be a cancellation or a change fee:

- Set a target move date and arrival time range.
- Determine if the mover will pack or unpack, if you need this service.
- Set valuation limit guidelines on your furniture.
- Start the purging process by taking an objective look at what you want to keep and what must go, or be left behind. What is your clutter factor? The longer one lives in a home, the more clutter there is to divest.
- Keep only the good stuff.
- Decide which family members will get your treasures and how these items will be moved.
- Conduct a garage sale.
- Label who gets what. Determine if extra stops are required.
- Contact your favorite charity for donation potential.
- Trash or dumpster non-usable items.

The extra weight of items that are thrown out at the unload side costs you money to move. Some people pack unwanted items, and then discard them at the new location. Don't pay to move things you won't use!!

FOUR WEEKS BEFORE THE MOVE

If the mover is packing, make arrangements to have them pack one to two days before the move. This timing is a function of the scope of the pack job and your availability:

- If you are packing yourself, start packing as soon as possible. Start with the little used items, such as good china, crystal, decorative items, art and off-season clothing. There are so many other critical things to do right around moving day.
- China, glassware, and collectibles take the most time to pack.
- Label contents of all boxes and pack carefully.
- Box essential first use items together and write on the box "Load Last, Open First", so when you move you will be able to find your essential items easily.
- NO OPEN TOP BOXES or garbage bags!!! They cannot be stacked in the truck.
- Set up color, name, or number code for rooms at both ends of the move. This will speed up the unload process.
- Organize a garage sale.
- Start a file for the move details. Collect receipts for moving related costs and expenses.
- Some moves are tax deductible.
- Notify the post office, magazine, credit card companies and friends and family of your change of address. The U.S. Postal Service will provide a move kit to help the move process. This kit is available at www.usps.com or at your local post office. Your change of address can also be done on line with the postal service.
- Contact utilities to schedule the disconnection on services on the day following the move. You will want services during the move and clean up.
- Make arrangements to start the utilities the day before the move in date so you have services upon arrival.
- Schedule repair of house and furniture items at both ends.
- If necessary, arrange for storage facilities (get unit number) and storage insurance.

THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE MOVE

- Make travel arrangements and hotel reservations for your trip.
- Apartment and condo dwellers make arrangements to reserve the elevators on both ends for the days of the move. Determine limitation hours of move in and out, if any. Make sure you tell the movers if there are move in restrictions. Arrange for the elevator key or code, if there is one available.
- Obtain medical, dental and veterinarians records.
- Organize car license, registration and insurance records.
- Contact your children's school and arrange for forwarding of records to the new school district.
- Plan food purchases to minimize food transportation during the move. Use up refrigerated and frozen food items. Be prepared to shutdown the refrigerator and clean it out the day before the move and not start it for two to three hours after being unloaded to allow the Freon and oils to settle.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE MOVE

- Take care of bank accounts, bills and stock accounts.
- Arrange for pet and plant handling.
- Make special arrangements for transporting items that movers can not move by law: flammables, liquor, pressurized vessels, like propane tanks, cleaning fluids like bleach, paints, explosives, guns and ammunition.
- Contact your insurance company to cancel current home coverage and set up new home insurance.
- If you do not have the time to clean, hire a cleaning service.

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE MOVE

- Arrange for baby and animal sitters on move day at both ends. This is for their safety and the movers' safety.
- Transfer prescriptions.
- Arrange for delivery (such as newspapers) and yard services to be discontinued.
- Dispose of flammable, hazardous, toxic, liquor, pressurized vessels, or paint items that can not be moved on the truck. Drain gasoline and oil from power tools and equipment such as lawn mowers, edgers, weed eaters, and generators.
- Pack your "trip kit" of essential items that will go in your car. These may include your medications, cash, checkbook, toiletries, flashlight, baby food, child care items, pet food, and your moving file.

THE WEEK OF THE MOVE

- Check your car for gas, tires, and oil.
- Arrange for the movers' method of payment for move day.
- Reconfirm your moving arrangements with your mover. If you are getting behind and need help packing, make arrangements for some packers to come in and help.
- If the movers are packing your home, have them come in a few days before the move.
- Designate a place in the house to put all items that will stay with the house, such as: appliance manuals, warranties, broiler pans, paint, lists of neighbors, babysitters, etc.

ONE DAY BEFORE THE MOVE

- Unplug and defrost the refrigerators and sometimes freezers. Clean them with baking soda and air them out. Put a box of baking soda or charcoal in them to keep them fresh. Freezers may be transported full with some movers.
- Disconnect and label TV's, computer and stereo equipment cables. (This will make reconnecting much easier and faster).
- Label items that are not to be moved.
- If you live in an apartment, park your car at the truck load position the night before to save a good spot for the moving van.
- Pack an "Open Me First" box.

MOVE-OUT DAY

- Have the children and pets out of the house.
- Strip the beds and be ready for the mover to dismantle and load the beds. If you break down the beds, cribs, etc., keep the hardware in a Ziploc bag attached to the bed or put it in a dresser drawer of that bedroom set.
- Be on hand to conduct a pre move walk through the house with the mover so they understand the scope of the move; define what stays and what goes. Answer questions and give directions for the move requirements.
- Minimize your phone calls and outside interferences from friends and neighbors.
- If going into storage unit, don't forget to bring the padlock and key.
- Clean the house, time permitting, or hire a cleaning service for this function in advance.
- Do a final walk through of the house or apartment with the lead mover to make sure everything has been loaded onto the truck. Also make sure doors have been put back on their hinges. This final walk through is completed because it is very costly to return for missing items.
- Read and sign the bill of lading, select your insurance limit on long distance moves.
- Leave forwarding address and phone number for your old home's new occupant.

MOVE-IN DAY

- Know where you want your furniture placed ahead of time if possible.
- Be on hand to tell the movers which room or where the furniture or boxes go so that they don't end up in the wrong room and would have to be handled again.
- Color code, name, or number rooms so they correspond to move out location. This greatly speeds the unloading and gets the boxes in the right locations.
- This is not the time to socialize with the new neighbors.
- Pay your mover on the agreed upon method on move day.

PACKING TIPS

- Use moving boxes (different size whiskey boxes take longer to load on the truck).
- Tape boxes securely on the bottom with 3 strips of tape and at least 1 strip of tape on top. NO OPEN TOP BOXES or plastic bags. Open top boxes and bags won't stack in the truck and contribute to broken contents.
- Use paper without ink, newspaper ink rubs off easy and may damage some items.
- Load books into small boxes (1.5 ft³). Don't load more books into a box than a man can carry (40 to 50 pounds).
- Packing dishes and other items in garbage bags is a formula for breaking.
- Putting pillows in garbage bags may end up in the family member trash pile.
- Utilize large and extra large boxes for light articles such as bedspreads, pillows, lampshades and artificial flowers.
- Utilize dish packs for china and glassware. Plates should be placed in a vertical position in the box and packed tightly with paper.
- Clothes may remain in dressers. Remove valuables, money, coins, rings, breakables, anything that can spill, or items that will fall from drawer to drawer when they are tilted up to go through doors.
- Empty armoires. They are usually very heavy without any contents.
- Vertical file cabinets can be transported with their contents, but lateral file cabinets should be emptied.
- Desks must also be emptied.
- Check with your mover to see if they unhook and reattach your washer and dryer. This may be the time to change out those old rubber washer hoses so you may eliminate a flooding problem in the future. Check your dryer plug at the new house for the same type of prongs.
- Disconnect and label computer, stereo and television wires and connections. Pack the stereo and computer equipment in boxes.
- If you move anything yourself, move the lampshades, lamps, large pictures, oil and water color paintings.

Moving is hard work. The moving crews usually work hard, careful and courteous. If you feel that your movers did a good job, it is customary for them to be tipped. This, of course is, a function of their performance. The amount is up to the customer.