



Moving Guide- Move Yourself Or Hire Movers

Move yourself or hire a mover?

General Tips

For many people anticipating a move, the decision of whether to hire a mover or move themselves is an easy one. The cost could be out of the question for some and for others, a do-it-yourself move, let alone even doing their own packing, is simply out of the questions. But if you are at that point where you might consider hiring a mover, there are some important things to consider.

The cost of a move is based on distance, type of furniture, day of the week or month and access. If you are moving out of state, have lots of huge antiques, live on the fourth floor of a "walk-up" and can only move on Labor Day weekend, plan on paying top dollar and then some!

Get an estimate

Call at least 3 moving companies to come to your home and provide you with moving estimates. The estimates are generally not binding, but some movers will give binding estimates guaranteed to be your final cost. The guaranteed estimate may actually be higher than a non-guaranteed estimate, but there won't be any surprises if your move ends up taking longer than anticipated.

Packing materials can add quite a bit to the cost of moving. Whether the movers are doing your packing or you are doing it yourself, try to get used boxes from the moving company -- they should cost you about half as much as new.

Even when you use a professional mover, there are ways to cut expenses. If possible, avoid the peak summer season. Minimize accessory charges -- hooking up appliances and moving heavy furniture up more than one flight of stairs. Also, do as much of the packing as you can (leave expensive and fragile items to the movers for insurance reasons) and don't take expendable items.

If you pack your possessions and move in a rented truck, your moving bill will be a fraction of the cost. You'll also increase the amount of work and worry for yourself, and there is a financial drawback.

Whichever method you use to move, be sure to save receipts. If you are moving in conjunction with a job, and itemize on your tax returns, you can write off moving expenses at tax time.

Practical tips for moving day include:

- Mark boxes to identify in what rooms they are to be unloaded. This helps the movers be more efficient, and helps you know which boxes to unpack first.
- Pull out a few items upon your arrival at the new destination to provide instant familiarity. Label these boxes "Last in/First out."
- Put children's rooms in order right away to make them feel at home the first night.
- Prepare an easy-to-serve recipe like chili, soup or a casserole ahead. Then take a break from moving for a pleasant meal.
- Designate a room in your new home where you can go to relax. Clear the room of clutter and boxes and set up some of your familiar belongings. Set realistic goals. Give yourself permission not to get all of the unpacking done the first day.