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YOUR ORGANIZED MOVE





FIRST OFF:

Yes, moving can be very stressful. But let's first look at the positives.

Moving is the ideal opportunity to sort your items as the move gives you a deadline and thus urgency to energize your decision making. You don't want to spend the time, money, and energy moving items that you no longer need or want!

Moves are perfect for reevaluating the best "home" for each category of items. There are two basic concepts when determining the best place to store an item. One is "prime real estate." These are the easy to access drawers and shelves at eye level. You only want to store items in prime real estate that are used regularly. Those manuals that the builder or seller left in the drawer in the kitchen do not HAVE to stay in that drawer. The other concept is "point of use." Store regularly used items as close as possible to their point of use. Cutting boards and knives and colanders should be near the sink. Some categories of items should all be stored together such as gift-wrapping supplies. Other items such as scissors may be stored throughout the house at their point of use. My husband and I have reading glasses in every room of the house... The move provides the perfect opportunity to reevaluate the best home for items!

Moving is also a great time to improve your project management skills. You can use the tips and checklists to manage your move like a professional. When anything doesn't go as planned, you have the opportunity to practice patience, kindness, and flexibility. Items may get damaged and while there may be reparations, the experience can remind us that it's all just stuff and, in the end, not as important as our higher values, such as relationships with loved ones.

My #1 advice is to start the process far sooner than you think is necessary. I've never known anyone who didn't have some last-minute scrambling before or even on moved date.



PRIORITIZE:

You and your family need clarity on your priorities. Here are some priorities people have regarding a move.

1. Spend the least amount of money
2. Invest the least amount of your time & energy
3. Have the highest quality move with no breakage or timed to exact dates best for you

You can pick two but you cannot have all three! This is a variation on the Project Management Triangle of Time / Cost / Scope or Quality. Again, I emphasize that you and your family discuss which two are most important and let those values drive your decisions. Decide which aspects of the move you will do yourself, and what parts you will turn over to professionals. Professionals, such as I, can help with any or all aspects of an organized move





PLAN NEW HOME:

Using a floor plan for your new home and the measurements of the furniture and larger items, determine location and room for each piece being moved. For some clients, they will invest in an interior designer to do this for them. You can take photos of furniture and on move day use painters' tape to tape the photo to the wall where the furniture will go.

Close to move day, use painter's tape, and write the room each piece of furniture will go in and label it ("green couch", Ann's dresser", etc). When the movers wrap the item in moving blankets or plastic, have them move the labeled tape from the item to the outside of it when wrapped.

PRE-MOVE ORGANIZING:

Delete – Starting with the largest items that are not going with you, come up with a plan for discarding, donating, giving away to friends/family, or selling. Purge clothing closets of clothing you no longer want. Again, start with the biggest items first, and execute the plan.

Organize – If you have items of the same category spread throughout the house, gather them, and make a home for them in one spot. (The exception are items like scissors that you want in multiple rooms.) If you are ready to pack them, be sure to pack everything of the same category together.



SELLING YOUR HOME

Stage – Staged homes sell faster and for more. But that doesn't necessarily mean you cannot follow a DIY approach. Consult with several realtors asking what staging you can do. This may mean replacing outdated drapes, painting, using white- or neutral-colored linens and bedding, and clearing the clutter off counters.

Photo day – You only get one chance with photos to make a great first impression. You want nothing to detract from the highlights of your home. Conversely, you can use fresh flowers and expensive looking accessories to improve the look of rooms that aren't as competitive. Photo day can be different than showings. Change out your children's bright comforter for a white quilt and use white towels in bathrooms. Hide everything that visually distracts from the room. Sometimes a chair needs to be pulled out of the photo, so the focus is the view from the kitchen table not the back of a chair. Counters and tops of furniture, in most cases, should be totally clear. Remove throw rugs and bathmats. Pull back the shower curtain or remove it if it is distracting. Again, this is mostly for photo day. When a prospective buyer is in your home, the throw rug isn't as distracting because they are taking in the entire room.

Showings Plan – Create a checklist of tasks to be done before showings. When I organize a home to prepare to be put on the market, I recommend that my clients create easy systems. For example, if you like to have regularly used items out on your bathroom counter, you can put them in a bin on your counter and then move the bin to under the sink for showings. You also need routines for keeping the clutter at bay and making it easier to accept last minute showings. This means keeping up with dishes, laundry and tidying daily.



MOVERS AND PACKING

Gentle Giant Moving Company is the moving company that professional organizers across the country tend to recommend. Before packing, I recommend watching their packing videos so that you can pack like a pro: <https://www.gentlegiant.com/moving-resources/>.

Contact at least two to three moving companies including Gentle Giant. Keep in mind that estimates and actuals are based on hours and number of movers. Gentle Giant may seem more expensive, but experienced movers who are organized, can shave many man hours off a move. I've seen less experienced and cheaper moving crews stand around because they weren't as efficient. Hour estimates for every move I've been involved in have been low. So sometimes fixed rates are better than a low-balled estimate based on too few hours. If you can, set a move date for mid-week and mid-month. Rates are higher for weekends and Fridays and the beginning/end of months.

Be sure to sign up for the extra insurance to cover the value of a damaged item (after deductible). The moving company's insurance typically covers 60 cents per pound.





QUESTIONS TO ASK A MOVING COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE:

1. Are there restrictions on what I can pack or items that void the insurance? (Ask about items below marked self-move)
2. How can I contact you or the driver during the move?
3. How do your teams work with stairwells, elevators, and narrow hallways to minimize movers standing around because of bottleneck?
4. Do you do any type of inventory?
5. How do you protect furniture, rugs, art, and large TV's?
6. If I label furniture with painter's tape indicating what it is and room it is going in, will your movers put the label on the outside after wrapping?
7. What types of floor /carpet coverings do you use and to what extent do you use them?
8. Will your movers pack the truck and unload such that furniture is placed in correct position first before bringing in the boxes? Alternatively, can I designate spots for the boxes in each room?
9. Do your movers set up beds? Install washers/dryers?
10. Do I need to label boxes on the top and both sides? What is best way to label so that movers to know which room to put them in?
11. Will your movers place boxes such that the label on side can be seen?
12. What kind of liability coverage do you provide, and does it cover boxes I packed?
13. How do you handle missing or damaged items?
14. How do you determine the number of movers to schedule for my move?
15. If a mover doesn't show up, do you offer discounts for having fewer people than planned?
16. How much will my move cost and what tips do you have for bringing these costs down?
17. Do you offer binding or "not to exceed" estimates?
18. What additional fees am I not aware of? What services are not included?
19. Can you provide references from former customers with similar type moves?



SUGGESTED TO-DO LIST:

1. Save plastic air-filled pouches. These are ideal to line bottom and top of boxes as bumpers to cushion and save on cost and time using paper to build bumpers. Also save bubble wrap envelopes as they are free bubble wrap.
2. Try to stop shopping for groceries, etc. Make meals around what you have in pantry and refrigerator. Use up surplus of paper goods.
3. Have a plan for moving contents of refrigerator and freezer.
4. Confirm dates/times with movers and cleaners (new home as well as current)
5. If self-packing, watch the videos at <https://www.gentlegiant.com/moving-resources/videos/>
6. Schedule last minute packers for kitchen & bathroom or plan time to do it
7. Arrange to turn on utilities day before move-in
8. Arrange to turn off utilities day after move/house cleaned
9. Start a change of address log and as you get mail, notify of new address. File change of address with USPS.
10. Pack everything you won't need until at least a month after the move and label these boxes "open last". Décor, fine china and crystal, books, for example.
11. ASAP list furniture to sell on Apps like Offer Up or Facebook Marketplace but make it clear that pick up date is _____. For example, list your dining room set two months before your move but say that pick up date is after the last date you need it. Furniture is tough to sell so give yourself as much time as possible in hopes of finding the right buyer willing to pay what you want for it. It took me six months to find a buyer for my mom's 4 antique tables.
12. Have cash to tip movers



PACKING TIPS:

1. When removing art from walls, use masking or painters' tape to tape the hook and nail set to the back.
2. Label cords. Take photos of tech set-ups.
3. When packing organizing bins & their contents – tightly wrap paper around the entire package to secure the contents in the bins and tape.
4. Label boxes on top with room it is going to. Movers look at boxes from top. Label end & side of box with room it is going to along with list of contents.
5. Pack the boxes fully and such that contents won't shift. Use linens to pack contents to the tops. Items break when contents shift. Be especially careful with tall & thin items. Tall candlesticks, for example, are the most common item I find broken when unpacking. Pack them in a box that fits them well so that they won't shift and put the box in the moving box.
6. Heavy items on bottom, lighter on top.
7. Secure all liquids in plastic bags. Something will leak!
8. Moving boxes. Used –Nextdoor or a neighborhood Facebook group. If used, ask if they are moving boxes and not an odd assortment of cardboard. For new, I recommend U-Haul because you can return unused boxes. I recommend using official moving boxes or reusing identical sized boxes. Some of Amazon boxes are a good size for moving, but not all. You want to only use strong boxes and nothing that has dents.
9. Packing paper. My experience is that I can pack three times faster if I'm using a new stack of packing paper. It takes time to smooth out used/crumpled packing paper. If someone has smoothed it out already and it is reasonably stacked, that is great. Having said that, the bunched up used packing paper makes great bumpers on the bottom of boxes. But you still need the flat pieces for wrapping items. For small items, always tape the packing paper shut to designate that something is inside it so that it won't be discarded by mistake and perhaps label.
10. Packing tape. I find that Scotch Heavy Duty Shipping Tape with the built-in dispenser is the fastest product to use. The smaller size fits your hand and the dispenser is easy to use and the thicker product is less likely to wrinkle or catch on itself. It is well worth the extra dollars. Amazon sells a 6 pack for \$14. If you are attaching moving labels to plastic bins, put tape on first so that you can easily remove the label by removing the tape. Trust me, moving labels are challenging to remove! When wrapping items in bubble wrap, do NOT use more than a small amount of tape. Even better, put an overwrap of paper and tape the paper. When unpacking it is faster to tear the paper to extract the item than to remove or cut lots of tape from bubblewrap.
11. Specialty moving supplies. Foam pouches for dishes/china make for faster packing and unpacking as do specialty boxes for dishes and glasses. I've had mixed experience with expensive wardrobe boxes. You must tape the rod to secure it to the box!
12. Pack items you rarely use first and start as early as possible. When packing items you use at least once a month, label the box "frequent use". When packing items you use daily, label the box "daily use". When unpacking, unpack daily use boxes first and find them the most convenient homes. Same with frequent use. Unpack the items rarely used last.



SELF-MOVE ITEMS:

With a local move, you have less risk of loss, so I listed some as optional. If you are comfortable with small risk, you can have movers move them. I strongly advise not trying to get by with packing hazardous items though because it voids insurance companies covering loss or damage. There is another category of self-move items.

These are items that take more time/money to pack and unpack than it would for you to move them carefully yourself.

- o Pets (and litter boxes, leash, water)
- o Plants
- o Combustibles like lighters, fireworks, matches, gasoline, candles, nail polish, nail polish remover
- o Yard equipment containing fuel (I recommend draining it so they will take them), motor oil, antifreeze, paint
- o Certain chemicals and cleaning supplies – ammonia, acids, bleach
- o Guns and ammunition
- o Fire extinguishers
- o Bathroom and garage items in aerosol cans
- o Coolers of food
- o Jewelry and valuables (optional)
- o Safes (optional – unless they hold guns/amm.- in that case you must self-move
- o Dishes and glasses that you will need right away can be self-moved carefully in laundry baskets eliminating last minute packing and need to unpack them right away.
- o Bulky fragile items – TVs, computers, monitors, art, lamps.



OPEN FIRST BOXES:

Mark special boxes with bright red markers "OPEN 1st". If you can, stack these boxes together in one area and ask movers to load them on the truck as close to last as possible. That means they come off first and whoever is helping you with unpacking can start on them first.

Kitchen:

- o Coffee maker, filters, coffee or kettle and tea bags
- o Pet food & bowls
- o Dishwashing Liquid (in plastic bag)
- o Sponge or scrubber
- o Scissors
- o Can opener
- o Disinfectant Wipes
- o Aluminum foil
- o Disposable flatware, cups, plates
- o Bottle openers
- o Essential beverages (water bottles, wine/beer, sodas, etc.)

Mudroom/Laundry Room:

- o Utility knives
- o Batteries
- o Duct tape
- o Flashlight
- o Screwdrivers (flat-head and Phillips-head)
- o Hammer
- o Picture hangers and level
- o Tape Measure
- o First aid kit

Bathrooms:

- o Bath mat and towels
- o Hair dryer
- o Shampoo / conditioner (in plastic bag)
- o Shower curtains & rings
- o Soap / body wash / Liquid Hand lotion (in plastic bag)



PERSONAL BAGS-

1 per person for long distance moves

1. Phone chargers
2. Eyeglasses or contact lenses
3. Favorite toys and books for the kids
4. Prescriptions
5. Clothing – change of clothes (more if long distance)
6. Personal toiletry bag (toothbrush, toothpaste, razor, cosmetics, etc)

