

## Guide to a Good Move

Whether you're planning your first move or haven't moved for many years, a long-distance relocation can be an exciting, and sometimes unsettling experience. You've probably already realized that there's so much to do and so little time!

There are personal considerations: family ties, old friendships, and for many of us--what to do about the children's schooling. At the same time, though, your move is most likely associated with an opportunity: a promotion; perhaps a new company; the chance to assume greater responsibility; a new location with a brand new lifestyle.

If you happen to be a novice mover, there are probably many questions that you need answered. Even the most experienced transferees have questions, as an ever-changing way of life poses moving problems that didn't exist 10 years ago.

We want to help you plan your move properly and make your relocation as exciting, rewarding and stress-free as possible. Whether you're moving across town or across the country, you'll find this information useful. Of course, no two moves are exactly the same. No two families have exactly the same moving needs--just as no two families have exactly the same furniture. Therefore, if you have any specific questions not covered here, the moving counselors at your local Schick agency will be happy to provide you with answers without cost or obligation. There are no moving questions or problems that they haven't tackled before.

It's really never too soon to begin planning for a move, and veteran movers have found that a comprehensive timetable and checklist is the best strategy to ensure a smooth relocation. It's also a great way to involve the entire family in the move and to spread some of the responsibilities to each person, including your children. You'll feel a sense of accomplishment as items are checked off. Moreover, as the weeks roll by, your checklist will help ensure that nothing has been overlooked or omitted from your planning, and that alone will go a long way toward relieving some of your anxiety.

### Choosing Your Moving Company

Selecting a moving company is one of the most important decisions you'll make. Knowing how a specific moving company operates not only will help you in selecting a mover but also will be useful when you're in the midst of the move.

Generally speaking, more than one van line agency is involved in an interstate (from one state to another) move. While it might appear somewhat confusing to a newcomer, this very tight and carefully coordinated agency network provides flexibility and efficiency to both the moving public and the moving industry.

Your first contact with a van line will be with a moving counselor. This is often the title associated with a salesperson for a local moving company or agency. Advising the family on every aspect of a well-planned move is the primary responsibility of this professional.

The moving counselor will come to your home to explain to you and your family the many services that his or her company offers. Having done that, the moving counselor will perform a survey of everything in your home that will be moved. This survey allows the counselor to provide you with an estimate of costs and various pricing, as well as pointing out things along the way:

- Things that can't be moved (flammables such as cans of paint, for example)
- Items that may require special attention (crating for a slate-top pool table, perhaps)
- Items that must be prepared for the move by you or a third party (maybe disconnecting a gas dryer or draining a waterbed)

### The Moving Begins

Once you've selected a mover, you'll be asked to sign an Order for Service, at which point your moving counselor will register your move with the van line. If you ordered packing, a team of specially-trained packers will be sent to your home either on the morning of your scheduled loading day or the day before, depending on how much packing needs to be done.

The Van Foreman is in charge of the physical moving process. He's responsible for loading your goods at origin, driving the van, and delivering your belongings safe and sound into your new home. Generally, he'll be assisted by one to three helpers in the loading and unloading processes.

Before loading begins, the driver will take special precautions to protect your home, as well as its contents. This may include laying down "floor runners" to protect carpets and flooring in entry ways, hallways, and other high-traffic areas, as well as padding bannisters and doorways to avoid marring walls and woodwork.

Your driver also will prepare a detailed Inventory & Condition Report of the items to be moved. In addition to tagging every individual carton or piece of furniture with numbered and color-coded labels, he'll record each item-and a description of any existing damage-on the inventory form. You should accompany the driver as he prepares the inventory, pointing out any special concerns or handling considerations along the way.

You'll be asked to sign the inventory, as your acknowledgement that the pieces indicated were loaded and as verification of their condition prior to the move. Then, the driver will sign the form as well and present you with a copy. Keep inventory with you for use at destination.

The driver also will ask you to sign a bill of lading This is the contract by which you authorize the van line to transport your possessions and agree to pay for those services. The bill of lading serves to confirm the services performed, pickup and delivery schedules, and the valuation and protection plan that you've selected. If you cannot be present at the time of loading, you'll need to arrange for a responsible person to act as your agent in signing both the bill of lading and the inventory.

### **Loading Your Belongings**

Most furniture is wrapped with specially constructed cloth pads or "blankets" to protect it from scratches, dents, dirt, etc. Even items such as gardening tools are padded to prevent them from scratching or soiling other items in the shipment. Tightly loaded tiers with heavy articles loaded on the bottom will be constructed inside the van to avoid jarring or shifting while on the road. Also, the vans themselves, in addition to being quite spacious, are specially designed and equipped to accommodate the safe transportation of household goods. Specifically, trailer walls and doors are lined with logistical tracks, enabling shipments to be secured further with heavy nylon straps.

After everything has been loaded in the van, it's a good idea for you and the van foreman to take one last walk through your house to make sure that nothing has been overlooked.

### **Arriving at Your Destination**

It's extremely important for you to contact your destination agent as soon as you arrive in your new hometown so that final delivery arrangements can be made. The driver will contact the destination agent 24 hours prior to his expected arrival time to allow the destination agent to notify you. (If you cannot be reached, it may be necessary to unload your shipment into storage at an additional cost to you.)

Unless approved billing or credit arrangements have been made in advance, the driver is required by law to collect payment for your move before your shipment can be unloaded. If your shipment is placed in storage, charges up to that point are due at that time. Payment must be made in cash or by certified or cashier's check, travelers' checks, or money order payable to the van line. Personal checks cannot be accepted. A copy of the bill of lading signed by the driver will be your receipt.

When your shipment arrives at destination, you can help expedite the unloading process by having a room setting floor plan in mind, and by letting the driver know where you want things placed as they're unloaded and brought into your home.

The driver and crew also will re-assemble any items which they disassembled at origin. Check off items from the inventory as they're brought in, noting their condition. If an item appears to have been damaged during the move or is missing, make a note on the inventory-including the driver's copies-and notify your destination agent.

If you have requested and paid for unpacking services, your destination agent will arrange to unpack cartons at the time of delivery and will remove the used packing materials. Should you choose to unpack your cartons yourself, you'll be responsible for disposing of empty cartons and used materials.

### **Cost of Moving**

Determining the cost of an interstate move was much simpler a decade ago. Back then, all moving companies charged the same rate based on the total weight of the shipment and the distance of the move. These rates, or tariffs, were set by the federal government. Shipment tonnage was determined by weighing the truck before and after the goods were loaded. This amount was multiplied by a predetermined rate. Upon delivery, the driver was paid by cash or cashier's check. No matter who moved you, your cost was the same. Van lines competed on service quality alone.

Today, however, van lines have some flexibility in determining charges, depending on the specific needs of the customer. While tariffs still are determined by an industry organization called the Household Goods Carriers' Bureau and must meet the approval of the Interstate Commerce Commission, moving companies can relate their charges more closely to their actual costs and prevailing market conditions. Prices, determined locally, can vary between different movers. Price, however, is only one factor to be considered by a prudent consumer.

As mentioned earlier to determine a price that is fair, the moving counselor must take a full and complete inventory of your possessions that you want moved. He or she will inspect your attic, basement, and garage, as well as anything you have in storage. (You'll be responsible for removing items from attics, crawlspaces, and other hard-to-get-at storage areas.)

On a local move, your cost will most likely be based on an hourly rate and the amount of time it actually takes the movers to handle your shipment. On an interstate shipment, however, the cost still will be largely dependent on the weight of your shipment and the distance between origin and destination. In either case, you should determine which items have outlived their usefulness so that you don't pay for moving something that you don't really need. (There's no better time to clean out closets, drawers, attics, crawlspaces, etc., and get rid of those things that you no longer use.) Also make sure that the moving counselor is fully aware of what's not being moved.

After taking into account everything that needs to be moved, as well as any special services that you may need (packing, for instance), the moving counselor will prepare your estimate. Your final cost will be based on the actual weight of your shipment (plus the charges for any extra services); however, if the estimate was too low, you'll be expected to pay the estimated cost and up to 10 percent of the overage upon delivery. The balance will be due within 30 days.

On an interstate shipment, you also might be offered a binding estimate. This price is guaranteed, regardless of the actual weight of the items estimated. If, after receiving a binding estimate, you have any changes regarding special services needed or additional items to be moved, be sure to advise your moving counselor of those changes prior to your moving day. Such changes are likely to affect the final cost of your move, and the van line has the right to void the binding estimate.

Again, in addition to shipping costs, you'll be charged for additional services such as packing, unpacking, appliance servicing (detachment and hook-up), etc. Also, if the van foreman and his crew have to contend with an especially long distance or several flights of stairs when carrying your goods from your origin residence to the van or from the van into your new home at destination, there will be an additional labor fee for the extra effort required.

One final note regarding the price of your professional move: Remember that, as is the case with any product or service that you buy, you usually get what you pay for--and the lowest price doesn't always mean the best value. In selecting a professional mover, also consider such factors as reputation, reliability, performance record, claims settlement process and overall commitment to customer satisfaction.

By the way, some moving expenses are tax-deductible, so save receipts and check with your tax advisor for details.

### **Coverage of Your Possessions**

While van lines have the expertise, equipment, and materials to safely transport your household goods to your new home, on occasion, some items do get damaged or lost. Realistically, if you were to examine the construction of today's furniture, you'd quickly realize that furniture is not built to be moved. Rather, it's designed to be functional and/or decorative, to be utilized and admired. Accordingly, it's important that you select the proper coverage for your shipment. To best suit your particular situation, most movers offer three types of protection.

Basic liability protection is just that--basic. Your household goods are released at the rate of \$.60 per pound per item at no extra charge, regardless of their actual value. If your new 40-pound portable color TV is damaged for example, you'll be paid up to \$24 toward its repair. For most families, of course, this level of protection is not adequate, and you might consider purchasing additional protection.

A "middle" level of protection provides coverage for the replacement value of the item, minus depreciation. Your cost for this declared value protection (DVP) coverage is based on the weight of your shipment and/or the lump-sum or per-pound value that you declare, subject to certain minimums.

Replacement-value coverage offers the most protection. Under this plan, if an item is lost or damaged beyond repair, you'll receive full replacement cost without regard to depreciation. Customers can select this option at full value or with a deductible option. As with DVP, your cost and maximum protection level are dependent on the value that you declare for your shipment.

Regardless of which plan is most appropriate for your circumstances, remember to ask your moving counselor to explain each alternative carefully. It is also a good idea to review your homeowner's insurance policy to determine whether or not it provides coverage during a move for any especially valuable items such as crystal, antiques, and collectibles during a move.

It's not likely that you'll have to file a claim, but if you do, make sure that any losses or damages have been clearly noted on the van foreman's inventory sheet before you sign it. (Another reminder: Be sure to safeguard your copy of all paperwork for future reference. Also, if you have items of unusual nature or value, have them professionally appraised before your move.)

Your destination agent or the van line's home office will provide you with the necessary claim forms. These forms provide explicit instructions; however, don't hesitate to call your destination agent if you have any questions.

It's not necessary to unpack every box immediately, but do look for obvious damage to carton exteriors. Also, for your protection, maintain damaged items in their shipping boxes and do not dispose of any broken or chipped pieces until after your claim has been settled. And remember that all claims must be in writing within a specified period of time following delivery. If you're one of the relatively few customers with a claim, file promptly; while you have up to nine months to do so, the more quickly you submit your claim, the faster the van line will be able to resolve the matter.

One last note: If your delivery is late because of the van line's delay, you should inquire about inconvenience claims for any reasonable out-of-pocket living expenses that you might have incurred as a result.

### **Garage Sale**

Having a garage sale prior to your move can save you money—two ways! You'll not only have some extra money in your pocket, but you'll also be getting rid of some of the things you own, thereby having fewer items to move. Have your sale on the weekend and when the weather is mild. To catch all interested buyers, hold a two-day sale. Place a classified ad in local papers the week beforehand, featuring your best or most unusual items. Take advantage of any free advertising in your community-bulletin boards in your supermarket, church, school or club. Consider putting up signs in your front lawn and at nearby street corners a day or two before your sale.

The golden rule of garage sales is "anything goes." If you have doubts whether something will sell, put it out anyway. Remember that your junk just may be another person's treasure. When pricing items for sale, be realistic. Put yourself in the buyer's shoes: How much would you be willing to pay for clothing that went out of style 10 years ago? Think about where you're moving and what items might be obsolete there (that snow blower will go unused in Miami).

Keep the set-up simple and organized. Arrange tables for your goods so that browsers have room to walk. If possible, make an electrical outlet available to test appliances.

Secure all cash that you receive in a strongbox or piggybank. Keep out only enough money to make change, and put the rest in the house. Don't accept checks unless you're well-acquainted with the buyer.

Consider donating items that don't sell to charitable organizations. Some will send a truck to your home to pick up the goods. And be sure to get a receipt, as your donation may be tax-deductible.

If an item has no resale value, if it has no practical or sentimental value, and if it's inappropriate as a charitable donation, simplify your life and just throw it out. It'll reduce the cost of your move and make settling into your new home much easier.

### **Preparing Your Children**

There are a number of things that you can do to make your relocation an exciting and rewarding experience for your children. Be sensitive to their feelings and concerns and make them feel a part of the process. "Children of different ages will have different reactions to a move," says Dr. Joseph B. Keegan, a certified clinical psychologist. "What is important to understand is that different age groups tend to miss different things.

Younger children tend to miss familiar people--a favorite teacher, for example, and safe and secure environments such as church, school, even their bedrooms.

Older children especially teenagers--tend to miss their friends and others in the community with whom they've developed relationships."

First and foremost, you should tell your children about the move as soon as possible. A child shouldn't overhear the news by accident. "For a child," notes Dr. Keegan, "much of the stress associated with moving relates to dealing with the unknown. Given this, it's important for you to talk to your children about the move. Share the details that you think they can understand, encourage their questions, and listen to what they have to say." Allow your children to participate in planning the move. "When possible," suggests Dr. Keegan, "ask your children to perform small jobs that are age-appropriate and that can often be made enjoyable."

Also, involve your children in all aspects of your relocation. If possible, bring them with you on house-hunting trips; if you are unable to bring them, photograph or videotape the house that you select, as well as the neighborhood and their new school.

Dr. Keegan also advises that you encourage your children to take the time to say good-bye to their friends and maintain ties by having them exchange addresses and telephone numbers. A letter or phone call to or from an old friend can go a long way toward boosting the spirits of anyone--especially a child in a strange, new community.

Provide your children with a sense of continuity. For example, if they're in the scouts, little league, or a school band or choir, enroll them in the same or similar activities in the new community as soon as possible.

With respect to the quality of your children's education in the new community, don't be afraid to contact teachers and principals at prospective schools. You have every right to inquire about average test scores, attendance rates, special programs, teacher/student ratio, extracurricular activities, etc. For high schools, ask about accreditation and the percentage of students continuing on to college.

While many parents consider the summer months to be the best time to relocate to avoid disrupting their children's education, many families who've moved before have learned that there are definite advantages to moving during the school year.

If you arrive in a new community during the summer, you're likely to find that organized activities are already under way, and it may be too late for your children to participate. Often, too, neighborhood kids are on vacation or away at camp during the summer, making it difficult to make new friends immediately. And at the beginning of the school year, teachers may not have extra time to pay special attention to the needs of the "new kid at school."

When a child transfers during the school year, however, teachers and students have already overcome those "back to school" transitions, and teachers have more time to spend to help orient the transferred child to his or her new school. Transferring during the school year also provides your child with a much better means of meeting other children. Finally, your child benefits by getting into a daily routine of school and related activities.

Dr. Keegan notes that, although a move can be stressful, most children adjust quite well within a very short period of time. "However," he warns, "don't overlook some of the warning signs that may indicate that a child is having difficulty adjusting. If your child has difficulty sleeping, is irritable or has outbursts of anger, or avoids making new friends, it may be useful to seek the advice of your pediatrician or other professional."

Overall, the single most important factor that determines how well a child copes with a move is the parents' attitude. If Mom and Dad position the relocation as an exciting adventure by focusing on the opportunities for the entire family, children will be far more likely to accept the situation in a positive manner.

### **Moving Pets**

Before transporting any pet, schedule an examination by a veterinarian. The veterinarian may suggest a tranquilizer or some other precautionary measure for the duration of the trip. Obtain copies of your pet's health and rabies vaccination records and update identification tags.

If you decide to ship your pet by air, contact the airline well in advance to check regulations and services and to make reservations. If possible, it's probably best to book a weekday flight during slack periods when there's more room in the plane's cargo compartment. Also try to book a direct flight to reduce the amount of time your pet will be confined.

Select a portable air-transport kennel that's large enough for your pet to stand and move around a bit. Most airlines sell or rent these special carriers. Let your animal get accustomed to the kennel well in advance of the trip. Mark the container "Live Animal," and affix a label that includes your pet's name, your new address and phone number, and special handling instructions.

If you'll be traveling to your new home by car, acquaint your pet with car travel by taking it for short drives around the neighborhood. Don't feed your pet for several hours prior to your trip. Do, however, pack a canteen of fresh, cool water and stop frequently for drinks and walks. Birds and small pets such as hamsters can travel by car in their cages-provided the cage is stable and properly ventilated and protected from drafts. Covering the cage will often help to keep your pet calm.

If you plan an overnight stay in a hotel, determine in advance whether or not pets are welcome.

Finally, never leave an animal in an enclosed, locked car. Even in moderately warm weather, the temperature inside a car can reach 120 degrees in just a few minutes. Conversely, in winter months, the temperature can drop well below freezing before you realize it.

### **Cars and Boats**

Moving companies can transport bulky items such as cars, mini-vans, pickup trucks, and boats on an auto transport carrier-or, depending on the size of the rest of your shipment, aboard the moving van. If you're moving a boat drain all fuel and oil from the motor. If you're moving an auto, it should have as little fuel in the gas tank as possible, and make sure to check for any oil, battery acid, or radiator fluid leaks that might damage the other contents of your shipment. Don't forget to give your vehicle's keys to the driver.

### **Plants**

Unless you simply cannot part with the plant that's lived forever in your living room, it's advisable not to transport plants in a moving van. Also, states have rules prohibiting the transport of certain plants across state lines, so it's wise to consider giving plants to friends before you move.

If you must take plants with you, remember that vans are not designed to transport them, and moving companies generally will not accept liability for their well-being. For short moves, plants are relatively safe inside a moving van-that is, of course, if the temperature outside is not extremely hot or cold. For moves over 150 miles, though, it's best to personally transport them in your car.

Prepare your plant for a long move by following these directions:

- Provide it with extra sunlight for several weeks to let it store the extra energy that it will need for an extended trip.
- Prune back overgrown leaves and branches about a month before moving, and curtail feeding to minimize growth.
- Thoroughly water the plant the day before you move, and cover it with a plastic bag to retain moisture and warmth.
- Place the plant in a sturdy carton to keep it from tipping over.

For more suggestions on moving your plants, contact a local florist or greenhouse.

### **Computers and Other Electronics**

The original carton and packing materials are always best for safeguarding any type of computer or home electronics equipment. However, if you're like most people and have long since thrown away the original packaging, you can wrap components (e.g., receiver, compact disc player, videocassette recorder) separately inside clean plastic garbage bags to protect them against dust and dirt, and then pad them with newsprint or bubble-wrap. For turntables, secure the tone arm, remove the needle and tighten the turntable screws. Carefully pack the item(s) in a sturdy carton that has been lined with newsprint or styrofoam "peanuts." Securely seal the carton, and mark the outside of the box to indicate that the item inside is "Extremely Fragile."

Likewise, your personal computer (PC) and printer require special attention. Disconnect wires attached to movable hardware such as a modem or mouse and "park" your PC by inserting a blank floppy disk into the disk drive. Detach paper holders/ feeders from printers and wrap monitors and other hardware as you would other home electronics.

It's a good idea to "back up" all files on your hard drive by copying them onto a floppy disk, and keep them in your possession en route to your new residence. Next, look for a command to retract, or "park," the disk heads on your hard drive. If you have a floppy drive, cut out a square of cardboard the size of your floppy disks, slide it into the drive slot, and close the drive.

Be sure not to pack disks or cassettes near magnets, such as those on your stereo speakers.

## Moving Checklist

Countdown to Moving Day

- Contact your mover to make arrangements for moving day.
- Remove items from your attic, basement, storage shed, etc.
- Start to use up things you can't move, such as frozen foods and cleaning supplies.
- Contact the chamber of commerce or visitor's and tourism bureaus in your new community for information on your new city.
- If you're moving at an employer's request, verify what expenses and responsibilities are theirs and which are yours.
- Contact the IRS and/or your accountant for information on what moving expenses may be tax-deductible.
- Begin to inventory and evaluate your possessions. What can be sold or donated to a charitable organization? What haven't you used within the last year?
- Make a list of everyone you need to notify about your move: friends, professionals, creditors, subscriptions, etc.
- Obtain a mail subscription to the local paper in your new community to familiarize yourself with local government, community, and social news and activities.
- Locate all auto licensing and registration documents.
- If some of your goods are to be stored, make the necessary arrangements now. (Your moving counselor should be able to help.)
- Contact schools, doctors, dentists, lawyers and accountants and obtain copies of your personal records.
- Obtain a change-of-address kit from the post office and begin filling out cards.
- Arrange special transport for your pets and plants. Take pets to the veterinarian for any needed immunizations and get copies of pets' records.
- Contact utility and related companies (gas, electric, oil, water, telephone, cable TV, and trash collection) for service disconnect/connect at your old and new addresses. However, remember to keep phone and utilities connected at your current home throughout moving day.
- Contact insurance companies (auto, homeowner's or renter's, medical, and life) to arrange for coverage in your new home.
- If you're packing yourself, purchase packing boxes from your local mover.
- Pack items that you won't be needing in the next month.
- Plan a garage sale to sell unneeded items or arrange to donate them to charity.
- Make travel arrangements and reservations for your moving trip. However, don't make plane reservations for the same day that you're moving out. House closings are often delayed, and other unexpected situations often arise.
- Collect important papers (insurance, will, deeds, stock, etc.)
- Arrange to close accounts in your local bank and open accounts in your new locale.
- Have your car checked and serviced for the trip. Also, make sure that your automobile is prepared (filled with the necessary antifreeze/coolant, for example) for the type of weather conditions you'll be traveling in.
- If you're moving out of or into a building with elevators, contact the building management to schedule use of the elevators.
- Contact your moving counselor to review and confirm all arrangements for your move.
- Settle any outstanding bills with local merchants.
- Don't forget to withdraw the contents of your safety deposit box, pick up any dry cleaning, return library books and rented videotapes, etc.
- Drain gas and oil from power equipment (lawn mowers, snow blowers, etc.)
- Prepare specific directions to your new home for your moving company. (Include your itinerary, emergency numbers, etc.)
- Defrost your freezer and refrigerator. Block doors open so they can't accidentally close on pets or children.
- Have your major appliances disconnected and prepared for the move.
- Pack a box of personal items that will be needed immediately at your new home. Have this box loaded last or carry it with you in your car.
- Organize and set aside those things that you're taking with you so that they don't get loaded on the van in error.
- Contact your moving counselor to confirm arrival time of the moving van, as well as to notify him/her of any lastminute details.
- Make sure that someone is at home to answer the van foreman's questions.
- Record all utility meter readings (gas, electric, water).
- Read your bill of lading and inventory carefully before you sign them. Keep these-and all related papers-in a safe location until all charges have been paid and all claims, if any, have been settled.