

Finding a Moving Service

We recommend that you select a carrier five to eight weeks before you move. When talking with a potential moving company, keep in mind whether you are moving locally, intrastate (within a single state), or interstate (from one state to another). The type of move you are planning is important; it will determine what regulations, licenses, and pricing structures under which the van line must operate.

- Ask friends, your employer, and co-workers for recommendations, and check with the Better Business Bureau about the company's standing.
- If one or more of your items requires special handling, like a piano, make sure that the mover has the experience and equipment to do the job. Find out what they will not move, generally high value items like coin collections, jewelry, or stocks and bonds. Movers also will not move dangerous items such as corrosives, explosives and other flammables.
- Get several written estimates. The only way to get an accurate estimate is for the mover to come to your home and see everything you want moved. Be sure to ask if there is a charge for an estimate. Remember, unless you get a binding estimate, the final cost may be higher than the original quoted price.
- When comparing estimates, remember the cheapest company won't necessarily do the best job. If one firm's estimate is lower than the others, then find out why. Are the services and the mover's experience equivalent? Are all the estimates binding?
- To keep down the cost, dispose of unnecessary or hard-to-move items before you get an estimate. Reconsider taking appliances, motor vehicles (boats, campers, motorcycles, etc.). If you have been wanting a new refrigerator, now may be the time to sell.
- Be sure you understand the moving contract. Write "subject to further inspection for concealed loss or damage" on the contract when you sign it to protect yourself in case you find damage while unpacking.
- There are three types of insurance coverage that are industry standards. Be sure to ask movers to price out all the options so you can make an informed decision. Make sure you understand claims procedures.
 1. *Basic Liability*, generally 60 cents per pound per item, is often included at no additional charge, but does not cover the full repair or replacement of a damaged article.
 2. *Depreciated Value* (or standard protection), an additional charge, insures your shipment based on the weight and value of your possessions; however, with this type of insurance, the mover is only responsible for the determined depreciated value of each item.
 3. *Full Value Replacement* provides the most comprehensive coverage (replacement or full repair) but requires a larger additional fee. Some movers offer special deductible options that cost less but may leave you paying for small losses outright.
- Ask to see a copy of the mover's ICC (Interstate Commerce Commission) Annual Performance Report. Interstate movers are required to provide information about past performance and complaint handling procedures. They are also required to provide you with a copy of an ICC publication about your moving rights and responsibilities.
- Make an inventory list and label the contents of all boxes.
- When the van arrives at your new location, be ready to pay the charges so the crew can unload your shipment. Carefully check your inventory list and mark any discrepancies on the driver's inventory list before you sign it. Note any damage to the outside of cartons.
- Unpack any items of high value, such as silver or works of art, immediately.
- If you want the movers to unpack for you, be sure to inform them prior to delivery. Ask if they will dispose of empty cartons, etc.

Do-it-Yourself Packing

If you choose to use a moving company, you can save hundreds of dollars by packing some things yourself; however, the mover probably will not accept liability if the items you packed are damaged during the move when there is no visible damage to the exterior of boxes.

- Pack heavy items in small boxes.
- Protect mirrors, glass-framed pictures and artwork with a protective glass tape and bubble wrap.
- Label all boxes clearly. Mark breakable items "Fragile."
- Pack glassware in a carton specifically designed for that purpose. Pack plates on their edges, not flat

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