

The Essential Moving Checklist



Moving can be exciting and overwhelming. Breaking the process into manageable steps can help reduce stress and keep you organized. Use this checklist to stay on track at every stage.

Immediately After You Find a New Home

Set a Moving Budget

Estimate costs for movers, supplies, deposits, travel, storage, and cleaning. Keep in mind that pricing varies by distance, weight, timing, and season. Moves during peak months (May–September), weekends, and month-end are typically more expensive.

Give Notice to Your Landlord

Review your lease and give written notice within the required timeframe (often 30–60 days).

Start a Home Inventory

Identify what you will bring, donate, sell, or discard. Decluttering early reduces moving costs and packing time.

Purchase renters or homeowners insurance

Some landlords and buildings require proof of coverage before move-in.

Create a moving binder or digital folder

Keep contracts, estimates, receipts, insurance documents, and important contacts in one place.

Plan for cleaning

Schedule move-out cleaning (if required) and consider a deep clean of the new home before moving in.

Start gathering packing supplies

Boxes, tape, labels, bubble wrap.

Book elevator or loading dock reservations (if applicable)

Many buildings require advance booking.

8 Weeks Before Moving

Research and Compare Moving Companies

Request at least three quotes. Check reviews and confirm proper licensing (look for a U.S. DOT number for interstate moves). Confirm whether your new building requires a certificate of insurance.

Complete Moving Estimate

Submit your inventory list to receive a binding or non-binding estimate. Clarify any additional fees (stairs, elevators, long carry, storage).

Review your lease or closing documents

If you are renting, your landlord may require advance notice to reserve the service elevator, loading dock, or stairwells.

Schedule time off work (if needed)

If your move falls on a weekday or requires travel, request PTO early.

Research your new area

Locate nearby grocery stores, pharmacies, medical providers, schools, and essential services.

Collect important documents

Gather birth certificates, passports, financial records, medical records, school transcripts, and insurance documents in one secure folder.

Plan for specialty items

If you have:

- Pianos
- Fine art
- Antiques
- Wine collections
- Large safes
- Gym equipment

Confirm whether movers handle these or if specialty transport is required.

Measure large furniture

Confirm that large pieces will fit through doorways, stairwells, and elevators in your new home.

Evaluate storage needs

If there is a gap between move-out and move-in, reserve a storage unit early.

Notify schools or childcare providers (if applicable)

Request transfer records.

Review insurance coverage

Confirm renters or homeowners insurance coverage during the move. Ask movers about valuation protection options.



Four Weeks Before Your Move

Notify your landlord or building management of your move date

If you are renting, your landlord may require you to notify them when the moving company is coming as you will need advanced notice to use the service elevator, loading dock, or certain stairwells.

Schedule utility transfers or cancellations

Arrange electricity, gas, water, internet, trash, cable, and security services. Update delivery subscriptions (e.g., meal kits, pet supplies).

Begin packing non-essential items

Start with out-of-season clothing, décor, files, and infrequently used items to pace yourself.

Submit a change of address with USPS

Complete online or in person to help ensure mail forwarding.

Two Weeks Before Your Move

Confirm moving company details

Reconfirm your move date, arrival window, services included, and payment method. Ask about tipping guidelines and any final paperwork.

Arrange parking permits (if required)

Secure any permits needed for the moving truck at both your current and new residence.

Begin move-out cleaning

Deep clean and repair minor damage (patch nail holes, touch up scuffs) to help secure your deposit.

Finalize decluttering

Donate, sell, or dispose of items you no longer want to move.

Use up household supplies

Finish frozen food, pantry items, cleaning products, and toiletries.

Arrange childcare or pet care for moving day

If you have children and/or pets, you may need to schedule someone to watch them as you move.

Schedule professional disconnection for appliances (if needed)

Schedule a plumber or electrician to safely disconnect washers, dryers, refrigerators, or gas appliances.

Back up important digital files

Save copies of important documents, photos, and records to a secure cloud service or external drive.

One Week Before You Move

Transfer prescriptions to a new pharmacy

If you use a local pharmacy, arrange to transfer prescriptions to a convenient location near your new home. If you use mail order, update your address and confirm delivery timing to avoid interruptions.

Finish packing all non-essential items

Leave out only daily essentials such as toiletries, clothes, dishes, and bedding.

Label boxes by room and priority

Clearly mark destination rooms and fragile items to streamline unloading.

Prepare a moving day essentials bag

Include medications, chargers, important documents, snacks, water, toiletries, and a change of clothes.

Confirm utilities are active at your new home

Double-check activation dates for electricity, water, gas, internet, and security systems.

Prepare payment and tip for movers

Have cash, check, or confirmed payment method ready for moving day.

Disassemble furniture (if not handled by movers)

Take apart beds, tables, and shelving units in advance to save time.

Do your final walkthrough

Schedule time to inspect your current home after everything is removed.

A Day Before You Move

Defrost your refrigerator

If you are taking your refrigerator, you will want to unplug it, remove any food, and begin the process of defrosting it at least 24 hours before your move.

Finish packing all remaining items

Pack toiletries, dishes, and last-use items, leaving only what you need overnight.

Prepare your essentials bag

Keep medications, chargers, important documents, snacks, water, and a change of clothes easily accessible.

Confirm moving day logistics

Double-check arrival time, parking arrangements, building access, and contact numbers.

Charge phones and electronic devices

Ensure all devices are fully charged for communication during the move.

Set aside important documents and valuables

Keep passports, financial documents, jewelry, and small valuables with you — not on the moving truck.

Take photos of your current home

Document the condition of the property for deposit or insurance purposes.

Dispose of trash and hazardous items

Safely discard paint, chemicals, or items movers will not transport.

Withdraw cash or prepare payment for movers

Have payment and tip ready to avoid scrambling the next day.

Do a final walkthrough plan

Plan to check closets, cabinets, drawers, garage, and storage spaces after everything is removed.

Day of Your Move

Be present when movers arrive

Walk them through your home, identify fragile or high-value items, and review any special instructions.

Protect floors and walls (if needed)

Lay down protective coverings in high-traffic areas to prevent damage.

Keep essentials and valuables with you

Carry medications, important documents, jewelry, chargers, and your essentials bag personally.

Supervise loading and answer questions

Remain available to clarify box placement and ensure nothing is overlooked.

Conduct a final walkthrough

Check closets, cabinets, drawers, storage areas, garage, and outdoor spaces before leaving.

Take photos of the property after it's empty

Document the condition of the home for deposit or insurance purposes.

Turn off lights and secure the property

Close windows, lock doors, and return keys as required.

Confirm delivery address and contact information

Make sure that movers have the correct destination details and your phone number.

Inspect items upon arrival

Check for visible damage before signing paperwork.

Provide payment and tip (if applicable)

Have payment ready and retain copies of all documents.