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Realty Billings

Moving Checklist

Want to see your friends get real busy real fast? Tell them you need help packing and moving – it's amazing the assortment of “Oh-I'm-sorry-but-I-have-to's” that will come up. So, plan on minimal help, unless you hire someone. Even then, there's a lot more to do than merely hiring a moving company, so sit down and create a timeline of events and tasks that need to be done within the two months before the move.

Yup, the moving process can be downright overwhelming, unless you use Realty Billings' handy Moving Checklist.

Bins and Purge

You don't necessarily need to run out and purchase a bunch of bins for this part of the process; big boxes will suffice. You'll need three boxes, and if you have a lot of stuff, you'll need three boxes for each room in the house. One box will be for items you wish to donate to charity, another for items you want to sell and a final box for items to give away to family, friends or even strangers – anything not suited, for one reason or another, to give to charity.

What to do with your Stuff

- **Donate:** While [Goodwill Industries](#) will pick up large furniture and appliances, [Vietnam Veterans of America](#) (VVA) likes the smaller items, especially clothing. The local chapters of VVA don't pick up items; the pickup must be coordinated through the national chapter. Just follow the link above and you'll get to the right place.
- **Sell:** If you've decided a garage sale is just too much work but have items that you want to sell, consider [Craigslist](#), [ebay](#) or [Amazon](#).

- **Give Away:** Many people and places will take items you no longer need. Consider giving linens, such as blankets, sheets and towels to [Help for Homeless Pets](#) or the [Yellowstone Valley Animal Shelter](#). [Hospitals](#) may take old books and magazines off your hands. Homeless shelters and [food banks](#) may take your extra food. Place a “curb alert” ad on Craigslist. Typically listed in the “For Sale” category, in the “Free” sub-category, curb alerts let folks know that you’ve placed free items at your curb, to be picked up on a first-come, first-serve basis.

TIP: Don’t list your phone number in your curb alert or you’ll have people phoning you to find out if the items are still on the curb.

Hire Movers or Do it Yourself?

Typically, the distance between where you are now and where you need to be will determine if you need to hire a moving company, a truck and driver, just a truck or merely someone to load and unload the truck. The further away you are moving, the more services you’ll require.

DIY Moving

By far, the least expensive way to move your belongings from one point to another is by packing your own belongings, renting a truck, loading, and unloading it yourself.

Variations on this theme abound: rent the truck and hire people to load it, drive and unload it at your destination; hire someone to drive the truck; hire someone to help you pack your belongings or hire a crew to help you load the truck. You can find moving labor online at sites such as Craigslist, [MovingHelp](#) and U-Haul’s [Moving Helpers](#)[®] service.

TIP: Keep in mind that many of the laborers you’ll encounter on Craigslist and other sites may not have Worker’s Compensation Insurance coverage and you may be liable if they are injured on your property. Talk to your homeowner’s insurance agent to determine if your policy covers this circumstance. If not, hire laborers that carry their own policies.

Hiring a Moving Company

Hiring someone to do all the packing and heavy lifting is expensive but necessary for a long-distance move. Finding the right moving company to fit your needs and budget may be the most time-consuming and challenging aspect of the entire move. It also happens to be the most important step, so plan on devoting all the time necessary to ensure that your belongings get to their destination on time and in one piece.

Ask for referrals: Ask everyone you know, including family members, colleagues, neighbors and folks you do personal business with on a daily basis for a referral to a good moving company. The consumer advocates at MovingScam.com claim that most of the complaints they receive are from consumers who used the Internet to find the mover. They also suggest:

- Choosing a company that has been in business, locally, for at least 10 years
- Disregarding any company that won't give an in-person estimate
- Avoiding moving companies that will sub-contract your job to other movers
- Not hiring movers that give you a quote based on cubic feet
- Avoiding any company that does not supply you with the "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move" booklet. It is a law that they do so.
- That you ask each company for their Department of Transportation (DOT) and MC (Motor Carrier Authority) license numbers – these numbers can be used to research the company at SaferSys.org

Request a Quote: Request that the representative come to your home for the most accurate moving quote. Ask the representative about any conditions that may cause the cost to escalate, such as additional mileage, weight restrictions, charges for homes with stairs and add-on costs for items such as bubble wrap and dollies. Find out how the mover deals with repairing, replacing or compensating for damaged items. Finally, ask for all of the information to be provided to you in writing.

TIP: Thursday through Monday moves, and those between June 15 and July 31, are typically more expensive.

Find references online: When you've settled on two or three moving companies, it's time to do some detective work. Many sites offer reviews of local businesses written by people that have actually used the service. Yelp and Angie's List (there is a fee to use this service) are the two most popular review sites. Also check to see if the business is listed in good standing with the Better Business Bureau and if it is blacklisted at MovingScam or RipOffReport.

Don't neglect checking the mover's licenses at SaferSys.org. You can even check the insurance each mover carries. MovingScam offers a handy walkthrough guide to help you do this research.

Sign the Contract: Ensure that the contract clearly spells out the price you were quoted, pick-up and delivery dates and all policies you discussed with the representative, including insurance, and that the contract is signed. Ask if they offer a tracking service and find out how to track your belongings as they are transported.

Tip: Most professional movers don't ask for a deposit upfront. Never pay in full until you've received and checked all of your belongings.

Details

Tasks such as remembering to ask for time off from work to help facilitate the move, notifying magazines to forward your subscriptions and gathering school, veterinary and medical records for the new location while important, have a tendency to fall through the cracks during a major move. Keep a pad of paper handy and jot down these tasks as you think of them so they aren't forgotten while you tend to other moving details.

Don't forget the essentials you'll need at the new house when you first arrive. This might include toilet paper, the coffee maker and coffee, pet food, snacks for the kids, toiletries, a complete place setting for each family member, towels, a shower curtain, the mover's written estimate and the lockbox you purchased for your valuables. This box should remain with you, not the movers.

Now that you know the basics, read on for Amber's handy checklist to keep you on track and survive your move.

Two Months Before the Move:

- ❑ Create a timeline of tasks to do to prepare for the move.
- ❑ Sort through all of your belongings, room-by-room, discarding, giving away or selling anything you won't be taking with you.
- ❑ Call the charity to pick up items you will be donating.
- ❑ Place ads for items you'll be selling or giving away.
- ❑ Hold a garage sale
- ❑ Research moving companies and set appointments for them to visit and provide estimates. If you'll be doing the move yourself, reserve a truck and dollies and purchase boxes, tape and protective wrapping.

One Month Before the Move:

- ❑ Start using up perishable food.
- ❑ Confirm the details with your mover
- ❑ Pack items that you don't use all the time, clearly labeling each box. Number each box and keep a separate written inventory of the contents of each one.
- ❑ File an official change of address with the post office.
- ❑ Ask your physician for copies of all medical records to give to your new health care provider.
- ❑ Arrange for your children's school records to be transferred to the new district.
- ❑ Ask your veterinarian to forward your pet's records to your new veterinarian or ask for copies to take with you.
- ❑ Call your current utility companies to have the services shut off the day after you move. Don't forget the cable company, newspaper delivery, gardener, pool person and home security company.
- ❑ Call the utility companies at your new destination to have utilities turned on the day before you arrive.

Two Weeks Before the Move:

- ❑ Purchase a box with a lock in which to keep your valuables, such as jewelry, prescription medications and the contents of your bank safety deposit box, during the move. Keep this box with you at all times – do not allow the movers to pack it.
- ❑ Notify your bank, employer, insurance company and any others who need to know, of your new address and its effective date.
- ❑ Ensure that your pet is ready to travel. Will it need a crate? Gather up a leash, collar and food and water dishes if traveling by car.
- ❑ Start packing the items you won't need until you reach your new home.

Two Days Ahead

- ❑ Defrost and clean the refrigerator/freezer if it's making the move with you.
- ❑ Assemble all the tools you'll need to take apart furniture.

The Day Before the Move:

- ❑ Pack suitcases with clothing for the first two to three days in the new location.
- ❑ Pack a box with the essentials you'll need immediately upon arrival at the new home.
- ❑ Unplug electronics so they're ready to pack. Tape each component's cords to the component so they aren't lost in the move.
- ❑ Disassemble furniture.
- ❑ Pack any remaining items.
- ❑ Purchase bottles of water for the movers and yourself and family members.

Moving Day

- ❑ Verify that the movers are the ones you contracted to hire and that they have the correct address for delivery. Verify delivery time.
- ❑ If you are driving, give a friend or family member a copy of your itinerary.
- ❑ Arrive at the destination before the movers.

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