

## How to Move: A Checklist

Executing a successful move requires proper planning. No matter how many times you move, the same idea comes to mind: “how can I keep it simple?”

While packing isn't the most exciting thing to do, a change of scenery and discovering a new city can rekindle our love of the unknown and spontaneity. Some people like moving more than others, but the reality is humans are good at adapting to change.

The trick to enjoying change is to give yourself plenty of time to prepare. Moving is an enormous task and can feel overwhelming at times. Like all large tasks, the secret to success is breaking it down into several smaller tasks. Take a deep breath and relax if you feel like you're coming unglued. How to Move: A Checklist will keep you together at the seams so you can move from apartment A to apartment B!

### Six to Eight Weeks Out

- Make a list** of everything you must do, like laundry, cleaning, and packing. Write down or type up each task and check it off as you complete it. Seeing your task list will keep you composed and organized.
- Request time off work.** Give your employer a written request *at least* two weeks before your moving date. It would be wise to request time off work as soon as you confirm the moving date.
- Let your landlord know** you're moving out. Most apartments have a 30 or 60-day notification policy, and some may require more. Read over your lease and ensure you provide the stated notice time and fulfill all your expected duties.
- Make a moving budget.** Moving isn't cheap, and you will need to spend money. Overspending while moving is an easy mistake, but you can avoid it with a budget. A budget will show what to sell and what to pack. Likewise, a budget will decide if you hire professional movers or your friends and family.
- Throw stuff out.** All broken belongings must be trashed. Sell whatever you don't use or don't want to move. Instagram and Depop make selling clothes and other items incredibly easy. Facebook Marketplace is also an excellent spot to sell online.
- Organize everything** and divvy up what you're packing up. Your possessions should be separated into four groups: non-essential, essential, valuables, and delicate. Keep all your important documents together and classify them as valuables.
- Learn your new neighborhood.** Locate the essential establishments, like grocery stores, banks, and hospitals. If you have children, you will need to know where the daycares, schools, and parks are.
- Lodging** between apartments. Can you sleep in your new apartment on move-in day, or will you need to reserve a hotel? Staying with family or friends is a luxurious way to cut moving costs but isn't always possible.
- If you're moving out of state, you may need a new driver's license and license plate. Check with the [Department of Motor Vehicles](#) if you're unsure what you should do. If

you don't drive, it would be wise to acquire a new identification card with your updated address and state of residency.

#### Four to Five Weeks Out

By now, your apartment should have more space after throwing out junk and selling unwanted belongings. Hopefully, you have some more cash in your pocket, too. Now is the time to **gather moving materials**, such as:

- Boxes
- Bubble wrap/newspaper
- Tape
- Markers to label boxes

You will need to [change your address](#). Tell your:

- Family
- Friends
- Bank
- Credit unions
- Insurance providers
- Health care
- Property management
- Utility Providers

You don't want to get stuck paying for the utilities of your former apartment, so contact all your service providers and tell them you're moving. Sometimes, utility providers can transfer your existing account(s) to your new apartment community. It's worth asking, and it will save you time if you can. Likewise, you will want to:

- Cancel subscriptions** you don't use. Newspapers, magazines, and streaming services add up. If you're aren't using them, quit paying for them and increase your moving budget.
- Fix your car before you move.** Your life's possessions in your vehicle will add to its daily wear-and-tear. Don't neglect routine maintenance like an oil change or tire rotation. Ensure your vehicle is functioning well before you load it up and trek to your new apartment. You don't want to end up broke down roadside.
- Eat all your food.** Empty your refrigerator and freezer as moving food is a bad idea, especially perishables. Fruits and vegetables are likely to get bruised and damaged in transport. Don't roll the dice; you risk damaging other belongings if food packaging breaks.

#### Two to Three Weeks Out

- Prepare your pets for moving.** Pets need time to adjust to change, so give them a head start. You should have toured your new apartment in person, which means you have a layout idea. Arrange your current apartment to resemble your new apartment's layout. This will help your pets adapt to the change. Additionally, set up a meet-and-greet if someone will be taking care of your pet while you move. The first time your pet meets their temporary caretaker should not be when you drop them off to move.

- ❑ **Update your renter's insurance.** Call your renter's insurance provider and tell them you're moving. They will be able to **transfer your policy** to your new address, so your belongings are protected the day you move in.
- ❑ **Pack documents, valuables, and fragile belongings separately.** These possessions must stay in your vehicle throughout the move.
- ❑ **Keep laundry light.** Your essentials bag should have seven to ten days worth of fresh clothes to avoid excessive laundry. Keep an overnight bag in your vehicle if you intend to spend the night at a hotel or with family or friends.
- ❑ **Pack up all non-essentials** and label the box with the belongings inside. Items you use every day can remain unpacked.
- ❑ **Slow and steady wins the race.** Poor planning leads to hasty packing, which increases stress and compromises the quality of your packing. Glass, plates, lampshades, mirrors, and speakers suffer the most from speed-packing. Following this checklist will give you plenty of time to complete all your tasks and pack appropriately.
- ❑ **Clean your apartment** now that it's almost empty. Don't procrastinate! The sooner you start, the sooner you finish.
- ❑ **Take a break** and take your mind off the move. Grab a beer with some friends, meet them at the park, or go to the beach. Do something spontaneous to break up the monotony.

#### One Week Away from Moving Day

- ❑ **Write down where each box belongs.** You should have already written what each box holds on the outside. Now, write which room the box should be placed in on move-in day. This will allow you to lift each box once, decreasing the strain on your back and body.
- ❑ **Protect your precious possessions.** Remember, keep all your valuables and delicate items under your supervision. Don't make anyone responsible for your important documents and irreplaceable belongings.
- ❑ **Verify your arrangements.** Whether it's a hotel reservation, childcare, pet care, or utility installation, you need to confirm all your plans. A few days gives you a safety buffer to react to any last-minute changes or implement a backup plan.
- ❑ **Coordinate your final walk-through** with your landlord to receive your security deposit. You must be present, and your apartment needs to be as clean (if not cleaner) as when you moved in.

#### Moving Day

- ❑ **Place all boxes near the door** to expedite load out and keep your apartment clean. Shoes are dirty, and you don't want footprints and debris in the apartment after you move out.
- ❑ **Take out the trash** and double-check nothing has been forgotten. If your landlord has to clean up after moving out, you might not see your security deposit.

- ❑ **Exchange phone numbers** with everyone in your moving party. Whether it's your family, friends, or professional movers, this will allow you to communicate a change of plans while on the road. Likewise, tell your moving party where and when you will meet them *before* you get in the car to avoid distracted driving.
- ❑ **Return the apartment key** to the landlord or property manager. It may have sentimental value, but your security deposit is worth more.
- ❑ **Load up your vehicle evenly** and carefully. It's like a puzzle; all the pieces need to fit right. If your vehicle is off-balance or if belongings are packed dangerously, you risk a breakdown or a projectile. An off-balanced, top-heavy car is more likely to flip on a sharp curve. Keep objects on the floor and secure loose items so they don't shift during transport.

#### When You Arrive at Your New Apartment

- ❑ **Greet the property manager** and have them open your apartment unit. If you arrive long before your moving party, perform a walk-through with the landlord. Take this time to discuss any damage and photograph it for your records. Taking the time now will save you money later.
- ❑ **Ask where your moving party should park.** If the community has designated move-in/move-out spaces, communicate them to your moving party.
- ❑ **Remove all your valuables from your car** and put them in your bedroom closet. Your valuables are safest out of sight.
- ❑ **Be present and direct** your moving party. Having the rooms labeled on the box will give them an idea, but you still need to assist them. Purchase a few cases of water to keep everyone hydrated as moving exerts a lot of energy. After paying and tipping your movers, shut and lock any open doors or gates.
- ❑ **Take a break** and catch your breath. You may even want to stretch. The heavy lifting is over, and now it's time to arrange your apartment. Here's where the fun begins!