

Step by Step: A relocation checklist

By Erin K. Witt

Most consumers make a list before making a simple trip to the grocery store. Therefore, it stands to reason that using a checklist when moving is also a good idea. There are many details to coordinate in a short period of time. Use the following checklist to help you plan your time, organize your belongings and save your sanity.

8 Weeks Before Moving

- ❑ Create a "move file" to keep track of estimates, receipts and other important information.
- ❑ Check with the IRS to see what expenses can be deducted on your next tax return.
- ❑ Budget for moving expenses and start collecting estimates.
- ❑ Start researching your new community. The Internet is a great resource for finding online chambers-of-commerce and community guides.

7 Weeks Before Moving

- ❑ Start pulling together medical and dental records, including prescriptions and immunization records. Ask your existing doctors if they can refer you to a care provider in your new city.
- ❑ Arrange to have school records transferred to your children's new school district and/or daycare.
- ❑ Call your insurance agent to see what changes to expect in your policies. Ask if moving is covered and arrange for insurance for your new home.
- ❑ Contact health clubs or other organizations you have joined. Ask how you can end, sell or transfer your membership.

6 Weeks Before Moving

- ❑ Make a list of things that are valuable or difficult to replace. Plan on shipping these by certified mail or carrying them with you.
- ❑ Make a list of friends, relatives and businesses that need to be notified of your move.
- ❑ Start working your way through each room taking inventory and deciding what to get rid of. Start planning a yard sale or contact your local charities.
- ❑ Plan to use up things that can't be moved, such as frozen foods, bleach and aerosol cleaners.

5 Weeks Before Moving

- ❑ Start collecting boxes and other packing supplies.

- ❑ Pinpoint a date for your move and schedule a professional moving service, or reserve a self-move rental truck. Try to take advantage of the lower rates offered Tuesdays through Thursdays and during the first three weeks of the month.

4 Weeks Before Moving

- ❑ File a change of address. If you don't know what your new address will be, ask the postal service to hold your mail in their office in your new city.
- ❑ Contact utility companies to disconnect, transfer or connect services. Plan on keeping current services through your move date and having new ones available prior to your move-in date.
- ❑ Call your newspaper courier and set a date to cancel your subscription.

3 Weeks Before Moving

- ❑ Make sure all library books have been returned and that all dry cleaning or items out for repair have been picked up.
- ❑ Start packing items you don't use often. Also start disposing of the items you've designated for a yard sale, donation or the junkyard. If you donate, be sure to get a receipt for income tax purposes.
- ❑ Decide if you will keep your plants or give them away. Remember, most professional moving companies do not allow plants to be loaded with your other household goods
- ❑ Dispose of flammables, corrosives and poisons.
- ❑ Have your automobile serviced.

2 Weeks Before Moving

- ❑ Contact your bank and/or credit union to transfer or close accounts. Clear out safety deposit boxes. Pick up traveler's checks or cash for "on the road" expenses.
- ❑ Confirm travel arrangements.

1 Week Before Moving

- ❑ Finish packing and prepare an "essentials" box, including medication, toiletries, important documents, cash, etc. Designate several boxes and items as "last load" items. Pack your suitcases and valuables separately.
- ❑ Drain all gas and oil from your mower and other motors. Gas grills, kerosene heaters, etc. need to be emptied as well.
- ❑ Empty, defrost and clean your refrigerator at least 24 hours before moving day. Prepare all appliances for loading.

- ❑ One or two business days before your move, confirm the arrival/pickup time of the moving van.

Moving Out

- ❑ If you are not moving yourself, make a point to be present when the delivery truck arrives. Show the driver where you want the truck parked and sign for delivery.
- ❑ Inspect your truck for cleanliness and leaks before signing for delivery.
- ❑ Load your goods in a pre-designated order, saving "last load" items for the rear of your shipment. This might include your vacuum cleaner or bed sheets.
- ❑ Check every room, closet and cabinet one last time before deciding everything is loaded.
- ❑ Look the bill of lading (BOL) document over carefully and contact your moving coordinator with any questions or concerns.
- ❑ Make sure the destination address and contact information on your BOL is correct and write in the number of feet taken by your shipment. This is very important, as an accurate BOL ensures an accurate rate.
- ❑ Leave a note with your new address in the house so that future residents can forward any stray mail.
- ❑ Keep a friend or family member informed of your plans and "whereabouts" in case of an emergency or unforeseen event.

Moving In

- ❑ If you are using a professional moving service, you are likely to arrive at your new home ahead of your belongings. Take this time to look things over and to ensure your new utilities have been connected.
- ❑ Check appliances and systems to ensure all are working properly, and arrange for repairs if necessary.
- ❑ Check to see if your mail is making it to your new address or pick up any mail being held.
- ❑ Consider drawing out your new floor plan and decide where you want furniture and appliances placed.
- ❑ Make a point to be present when your truck arrives. Show the driver where you want the truck parked and sign for delivery. If you are unable to do this, work closely with a friend or representative to accept your shipment.