



The Ultimate Moving Guide

Brought to you by:

Sebastian "Seb" Frey, REALTOR®

CRS, GRI, CIPS

Lic. 01369847

408.548.7348

SebFrey.com



Moving all of your earthly belongings from one house to another is like eating an elephant. You must take it one bite at a time. As for me, I've moved more than twenty-five times in my life. Plus, as a real estate agent, I've witnessed plenty of stressed out clients digging madly through boxes after moving (sometimes weeks later), trying to unearth a bath towel, sheets to make the bed, or their favorite dress shoes. It seemed like crazy making to me.

And so, I developed my "Save Your Sanity" Moving System. Whether you choose to employ my entire step-by-step system or pick a few of the tips that resonate with you, my hope is that this system will make your move smoother, less stressful, and more efficient. Leaving you to begin enjoying your new home right away.

Planning

- If possible, ask for moving company referrals from a friend, neighbor or coworker. It's always best to work with a pre-vetted company.
- I suggest calling two or three companies to gather competitive estimates. They will usually want to visit your home and make note of the items to be moved before providing you with a written estimate.

If you don't know anyone to give you recommendations for moving companies, you can always go online. You can also visit moving.com to get multiple quotes from several movers, [using this link](#).

Questions/comments for the moving company representative

- Is the firm bonded and insured?
- Is the truck large enough to move all of my items in one trip?
- What is the charge structure? Hourly? Per man? Any travel, truck or fuel charges? How many men will be there?
- Approximately how many hours will it take to load the truck, travel to the new house, and unload the truck?
- What type of insurance is included should anything be lost or damaged? Who is the insurer? What is the coverage? Is there a deductible?
- Will furniture pieces be shrink wrapped? (prevents damage)
- I suggest requesting an early morning move time, rather than being their second or third stop of the day. There's nothing more frustrating than sitting in an entirely packed house, waiting hours for the movers to arrive.
- Ensure that you will not have to pay the mover until all of your belongings have been unloaded and assembled at your new home to your satisfaction.
- You may want to pay by credit card so you have recourse should you find that items are damaged or missing in the coming days.
- Make sure that your entire agreement with the moving company is documented in writing, including all fees, dates and times.
- Obtain a change of address kit from your post office. Be sure to change the address for each family member. You'll need your old address, new address, and effective date of change.

When you've completed the card, it can be placed in your mailbox. If you prefer, this step can also be completed online at usps.com.

- Notify any service providers of your moving date, including (if applicable): cleaning service, pest control, landscapers, pool service, oil or propane delivery.
- If necessary, schedule a cleaning service, carpet cleaners and window cleaners to clean your new home before you move in.
- Schedule any requisite cleaning at your old home for after you've moved out.
- Arrange for utilities at your new home, including (if applicable): electric, gas, water, sewer, trash collection, telephone, cable or satellite TV, fire protection, irrigation. Try to schedule any technician appointments all in the same day.
- You may be able to arrange for a "switch over" of service at the old home from your name to the new occupant, avoiding interruption of service.
- Arrange for service providers at your new home.
- Arrange for utilities to be turned on or switched over to your name at your new home.
- Make certain you've obtained homeowner's or renter's insurance at your new home prior to the move. Cancel your existing policy only after escrow has closed.
- Notify family, neighbors, your place of business, children's school and others of your new address.

Clean Your Room

Before you pack a single box, take the time to assess the items in every room, closet, and drawer. It makes no sense to move outdated or unwanted items. Anything you no longer want or need should fall into one of three categories:

Throw out

- **Give away or donate** – These things can be gifted to family, friends or a worthwhile charity. Clothing in good condition is always appreciated by homeless and battered women's shelters, as well as charitable thrift stores. Many charities will pick up your clothing and household items and distribute them to those in need. Items can also be left at your curb with a Curb Alert ad on craigslist.com. (e.g., Curb Alert Free Dinette Set. Be sure to include your address.)
- **Sell** – If you have the time, run ads in your local newspaper or on craigslist.com. Local eBay stores will sell your items for you, handle the shipping, and send you a check.

Visualize

If possible, plan a walkthrough at the new house to decide where you'd like to place your furniture. If you're the organized type, you may want to sketch a layout of each room, noting where the furniture will be placed. If you've got the space, select a guest room or less used area to store lamps, photos, plants and accessories until you're ready to decorate (more on that later).

Pack It Up

A few weeks before your move, start packing items you will not need before the moving date (china, crystal, seasonal items, out of season clothing, extra linens). If you're packing everything on your own, procure enough boxes or order them from your moving company. You will need a variety of sizes. You will also need packing paper, tape, a tape gun, a black felt tip pen and a red felt tip marker. (I also buy a box of disposable latex gloves; handling all that paper and cardboard is rough on your hands. I "lotion up" and then wear the gloves while packing and unpacking.) As you pack each box, make certain it's not too heavy. Each box should be labeled with your last name, the name of the room where it belongs in your new house, and the contents of the box. You may want to use initials or code names for valuable items (you wouldn't want to label a box *diamonds and heirloom jewelry*, for obvious reasons). Mark any breakable or fragile items by writing FRAGILE on the sides of the box.

Affix labels to the left-hand top corner on the SIDE of each box. That way, the labels are visible when your boxes are stacked. Select a location to neatly stack packed boxes to avoid a cluttered house (i.e., garage or guest room).

THE WEEK BEFORE YOU MOVE

Hand Carry

The week before your move, pack everything besides the essential items you will need until moving day. Label the boxes containing essential items that you'll want to unpack first with a big red dot on the top right-hand corner of the label with your red marker.

If you have the luxury of access to your new home before moving day – lucky you! I recommend hand carrying any fragile items or things you'd prefer to move yourself in advance. You can also make sure that each bathroom has toilet tissue and hand soap. In the past, I've moved and set up my entire kitchen using laundry baskets and clean bath towels. This way, you don't have to individually wrap your dishes and glassware in paper, then wash them before storing in the cabinets at your new home. Just pile your dishes into the basket, cushion with clean towels, and pop them right into the clean cabinets when you arrive.

Laundry Baskets & Trash Bags

A few days before your move, provide each family member with a laundry basket and a large trash bag. The laundry basket should be packed with any items they will need for the few days following the move: clothing, underwear, shoes, socks, pajamas, soap, shampoo, toothbrush and paste, deodorant, medications, brush or comb, hair dryer, other toiletries, backpacks for school, books, toys, special "blankie" or stuffed animals, and any extracurricular items they may need (baseball glove, ballet shoes, etc.).

Each family member's trash bag should contain a mattress cover, sheets, blanket, pillowcases and pillows to make up their bed at the new house, along with two bath towels and a washcloth (optional).

You will also want to pack a "general" laundry basket with paper towels, toilet paper and hand soap for each bath, scissors, a sharp knife, plastic cups, paper plates and bowls, plastic cutlery, dishwasher soap, hand soap for the kitchen, hand lotion, multipurpose cleaner, window cleaner, cleaning rags, a mini vac, a few zip loc bags, trash bags, a tablet and pens, scotch tape,

bottled water and snacks, pain reliever, band aids, first aid cream, pet bowls and pet food, a hammer, and a few different screwdrivers.

Room Labels

Handwrite or print out TWO 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper, labeled for each room in your new house (i.e., Master Bedroom, Master Bath, Dining Room, Study, Garage, Basement). I'll explain those a little later.

THE DAY BEFORE THE MOVE

The Home Stretch

- Finish packing. You do not want to be madly stuffing your belongings into boxes after the movers have arrived.
- Clean out the refrigerator and freezer. Have a cooler ready to pack any items on moving day that will be transported to your new home.
- Stock up on cold bottled water.
- Empty all trashcans and waste baskets. When I was a little girl, our movers loaded a kitchen trashcan into the moving van and hauled our trash across the country!
- Make sure every family member has their laundry basket and trash bag packed and ready. These should be transported in your own vehicle and placed in each person's closet in the new home.
- Pack your vehicle with fragile and valuable items that you don't want the mover to handle.
- Your hanging clothes can be hand carried in your vehicle or packed in garment boxes, as you prefer.
- Organize any bicycles, large toys, hoses, large tools, etc. in the garage.
- Make copies of your new house keys and give one to any relevant family members or employees.
- Prepare a large envelope with all of your *old* house keys (including those collected from all family members), along with garage door openers, mailbox keys and keys to gates, guest houses, sprinkler boxes, storage rooms, and sheds. This should be left in a kitchen drawer for the new owners.
- Make sure you have cash on hand to buy lunch and tip the movers.
- Put a case of bottled water in the refrigerator to cool.

The Whole Family

If you have children, include them in the moving process. Explain exactly what will happen in advance. I once sold a house to a family with a darling little girl. She loved to look at houses with her Mommy and Daddy. When they finally decided on a new home and pointed out her new bedroom, she burst into tears. When asked what was the matter, she sobbed, "But it doesn't have any toys!" Although they'd talked about moving for weeks and she understood she would have a new bedroom, she didn't realize that her own bed and toys would be brought to the new house.

If you're fortunate enough to have a friend or family member willing to help, arrange for young children and pets to have somewhere to go on moving day. It will be safer and more fun for them and far more efficient for you. If you don't have anyone to help out, hire a sitter for the day. Doors and gates are usually propped open on moving day, so pets can wander outside and wind up hurt or lost.

MOVING DAY

Dress the Part

Dress comfortably and wear supportive shoes. You'll thank me for this one – remember, you'll be on your feet all day long. If it gets cool in the evening, keep out a jacket or sweatshirt to stay warm.

Stuff You'll Need Right Away

Don't place your car keys or cell phone on the counter; they might end up getting packed or lost. Put them in your pocket or in a drawer (and remember where you've placed them). Ladies, before the movers arrive, lock your purse in your car.

Be sure that all family members' laundry baskets and trash bags have been loaded in your vehicle(s).

Your Moving Crew

This one is important. When your movers arrive, call a meeting. Not just with the supervisor, but with the entire crew.

- **Introduce yourself.** Ask each crew member their name and shake their hand. I've found that if you treat all crew members respectfully, they'll return the favor by treating your belongings with respect.
- Take a walk through the house, pointing out any fragile items, anything that is not to be moved, and give any special instructions.
- Ask that all furniture be shrink wrapped before it's loaded into the moving van. This prevents damage and keeps upholstered pieces clean.

- Explain that all boxes have been labeled and that you have a system dictating where they will go at the new house.
- Keep your moving crew supplied with cold water throughout the day. At lunchtime, make a run for sandwiches/tacos/pizza. The expense is minimal, you'll be a hero, and your crew will be revived and ready to roll through the afternoon.
- Walk through each room and remove all picture hangers from the walls. Store in a zip loc bag for easy hanging at the new house.

Finishing Up at The Old House

- When the van is loaded, take a walk through the house in case any items have been forgotten. Check all closets, cabinets, and drawers. Go through the attic, any storage rooms or storage sheds, and walk around the outside of the home.
- Provide the van driver with the address and directions to the new house (or have them follow you).

Unloading the Moving Van

(You won't just thank me for this one; you'll want to give me a big hug later.)

- Walk through the new house and tape up the signs labeling each room to the respective doors. If you made sketches of the furniture placement in each room, they should be taped below the room name on the door.
- Tape the second set of signs on the garage floor, designating where boxes should go, sorted by room name (now you know why you made TWO copies of each sign). The rooms you'll want to unpack first should be closest for easy access.
- If the mover asks you to pay before the truck is unloaded at the new house, maintain that you have arranged to pay after the move is complete.
- Call a quick meeting of the movers. Explain that all furniture will go in the house, but that none of the boxes will. (I learned this one from my Mom. It is THE key to this system.) Let them know that you'll remain by the front door to direct the configuration of furniture pieces in each room.
- Walk the movers to the garage and show them the signs you have taped on the garage floor designating rooms in the house. Ask them to place ALL boxes in the garage, by room. Explain that any boxes noted with a red dot should be placed in front (or on top) for easy access, so those can be unpacked first.
- Ask that all lamps, pictures, plants, and accessories be placed in a designated room or area.

After the Van Has Been Unloaded

- Ask that all beds be assembled and that anything that has been disassembled (mirrors on dressers, etc.) be reassembled.
- Take a walk through the house, ensuring that all furniture pieces are in place and appear undamaged. If you'd like anything adjusted or moved to another room, now is the time to ask for help from the movers and save your back.
- Be sure the washer and dryer are hooked up and the lint hose has been attached.
- Ensure that any freestanding appliances have been plugged in and water and gas lines, if any, are attached.
- If any items have been damaged, document the damage on any paperwork you sign. Obtain a copy for your records.
- You'll be asked for payment and to sign paperwork stating that all items have been moved to your satisfaction. If possible, pay by credit card to give you future recourse should you discover that any items are missing or damaged.
- Call all the movers together, thank each one individually, and give them a generous tip. I am hesitant to give the entire tip to one crew member, as it may not be distributed evenly to the other crew members.

Immediately

- Take the time to eat. If your stomach is grumbling, you'll feel terrible and probably won't be thinking very clearly.
- Place each family member's laundry basket and trash bag in their room.
- Make all beds that need to be slept in that night. Don't wait until midnight when you're out of gas.
- Stock each bathroom with toilet paper and hand soap.
- Place the "general" laundry basket in the kitchen or laundry room.
- Put out food and water for your pets and show them where to find their bowls.

Unpacking the Boxes

- **Bring only one box into the house at a time**, starting with key rooms and boxes you have marked with a red dot first.
- As you unpack each box, place the contents where you want them to go.
- Kitchen items may need to go through the dishwasher before putting them away.
- I find it easiest to place a post-it note on each kitchen cabinet and drawer, noting what will be placed inside. This is especially helpful if anyone is assisting you in unpacking.
- After each box is unpacked, flatten out any wrapping paper and break down the box.
- Place all wrapping paper and broken-down boxes in a designated location in the garage, then bring in the next box.

Your Own Décor Store

After all of your boxes have been unpacked, it's time to decorate; this may be the next day or in several weeks. Here's the good news: whatever the timeframe, your house has remained orderly as you've unpacked because only one box has entered the house at a time.

Now it's time to "go shopping" in your accessory area. Think of it as your very own décor store. Remember, just because you placed a lamp or a picture in the living room at the old house, you're not tied to the same placement at your new house. As you accessorize each room, keep an open mind, be creative, and *have fun!*

Most importantly, enjoy your new home!



[Book a Call Today!](#)

Seb Frey
408.458.7348

sebfrey@sebfrey.com

Lic. 01369847

