

HOME TRENDS

Moving 101: What to know in preparation for the big day

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Moving into a new residence can be a stressful burden, or an exhausting chore. But it doesn't have to be. With the right planning and preparation, you can all but assure yourself of an easy transition into that new place.

One way to lighten the load is by hiring professional movers. Movers who are licensed, bonded and insured offer the most protection for you and your valuables.

"It's always wise to ask for a couple of referrals if you call a mover out of the blue," said Meghan Duffy of Compass. "You should know if they are insured, what their COVID protocol is if that's a concern, and get a written estimate before the move so you are not hit with unexpected charges. I would also ask for a detailed cost list for additional materials."

In addition to that, Kathleen Daly of Coldwell Banker suggests asking how long they expect the move to take and if there are any restrictions on what they will or will not move. Also, ask specifics about the estimate.

"Will they provide a binding quote, or a not to exceed estimate? The binding estimate should include add-ons and any potential charges along the way," Daly said.

The moving industry isn't without its scam artists, said Linnette Edwards of Abio Properties.

"Consumer complaints against movers are up a whopping 74%, according to the California Bureau of Household Goods and Services. While most movers are reputable, I tell my clients to watch for red flags — like the mover who demands a large cash deposit upfront, as legit movers generally request a small de-



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Label and group moving boxes. This makes it easier to shuttle containers to their correct room once at the destination.

posit and full payment after delivery," she said.

Edwards advised to get multiple in-person or virtual estimates, and have the estimate be based on weight, not cubic feet.

"Volume is easier to manipulate if the mover packs loosely to take up space," Edwards said.

When moving out of state, Compass Realtor Val Steele suggests finding out if the moving company you're contracting with will be the moving company from start to finish.

"If not, have they worked at the end destination with that company before? Is the mover experienced with your particular type of move?" Steele said.

Getting rid of clutter and unwanted items is another important aspect of moving, Steele said.

"Moving is expensive and timely, but you can cut your costs by doing a serious editing before the day of your move," she said. "If in doubt, do not move it, but donate it instead."

Grant Beggs of Sotheby's

International Realty echoes Steele's statements about decluttering before a move.

"Moving is a great time to make decisions on items that you no longer need or want," he said. "Donate, giveaway, recycle unwanted items before the movers come to give their estimate. On move day, the less you have, the faster it will go, and the less it will cost you."

Moving companies routinely offer to pack for you, but that means more expenses and hours on the job.

For those who prefer to pack themselves, NorthStar Moving has some suggestions:

► Tape the bottom of every box. When full, tape the top of the box tightly. Use two strips of tape on the sides, accompanied by a single strip of tape down the center. Apply more tape to the sides if the box isn't strong enough.

► Pack heavy items in small boxes. This makes them easier to carry. For lightweight and bulky items, use larger boxes.

► Wrap fragile items individu-

ally. Use bubble wrap or newspaper to provide a layer of protection for glassware, ornaments and knick knacks.

► Label and group boxes. This makes it easier to shuttle boxes to their correct room once at the destination.

Knowing what *not* to pack is equally important, according to NorthStar Moving.

The Los Angeles-based company advised against putting money, valuable papers or jewelry in moving boxes. Flammable and perishable items should also not be packed, as well as soaps and medicines. It's best to keep these items with you during the move.

Wardrobe boxes come in handy when packing hanging clothes. Medium-sized boxes are perfect for shoes and folded clothing and linens.

Carting electronics from one location to another can be a headache. Pack electronics in their original boxes, if possible. Wrap the electronics in bubble wrap or moving paper if you don't have the original packag-

ing. Using colored stickers or colored cord wraps makes for easy reinstallation.

Moving picture frames is another thing to consider. NorthStar Moving recommends using picture boxes, containers specifically designed for holding frames. They suggest placing the picture in the box, then stuffing paper around the front, back and along the top.

Scheduling is vitally important for a stress-free move. A month before moving, NorthStar Moving suggests mailing change of address cards to the post office, insurance companies, your employer, department of motor vehicles and friends and relatives.

With three weeks to go, the company recommends notifying your utility providers and other services about your impending move.

Two weeks before your move should be devoted to making arrangements to move pets and returning items you've borrowed. Request medical records if you're moving out of the area.

A week before the move should be spent packing away essentials that you'll need immediately upon moving, like linens and towels, tool kits and cleaning items. Write "Load Last" on the boxes so they'll be the last things put in the truck and first to come off.

On moving day, dedicate the entire day to the task. Have the payment ready to avoid a last-minute and inconvenient trip to the bank. Thoroughly check each room and closet before locking windows and doors upon departure.

Supervise the movers and check items for any damage. If breakage occurs, tell the moving foreman and go over the claims procedure. Don't forget to give the moving truck a final once-over to make sure everything has been gathered.