

The Practical Sort's Moving Guide Checklist

Once you have decided to move:

- ☐ Create a binder or computer file folder to gather all of your move documents, decorating ideas, Pinterest links, paint and fabric swatches, contractor information, this checklist, etc. Label sections or folders for each topic for easy locating.
- ☐ Keep a tax file in your notebook or scan receipts into your computer for any repairs made on the current home, relocation travel expenses, closing cost documents, etc.
- ☐ Keep an emergency escape pack in your car filled with snacks, water bottles, magazines, books, toys, pet supplies, diaper bag, baby food and spoon, pacifier, etc. for when you need to vacate your house for prospective buyers.

Research and Contract

- ☐ Research and enlist the services of a real estate agent. Get referrals from colleagues, friends, family, etc. Watch for realtor signs in your neighborhood, note time on market, and sales price. Check credentials, sales history, your compatibility, etc.
- ☐ Research and initiate mortgage process. Submit all required documentation. Get notarizations as needed.
- ☐ Get estimates for moving company and packers. Inquire about insurance, license, damage and missing item policy, inventory procedures, estimating time and rates,, etc. Check reviews and obtain recommendations from others. Make reservations once selected.
- ☐ Get estimates for specialty movers for large musical instruments, grandfather clocks, antique autos, etc. Inquire about insurance, license, damage and missing item policy, inventory procedures, estimating time and rates,, etc. Check reviews and obtain recommendations from others. Make reservations once selected.
- ☐ Make arrangements to ship your vehicles if necessary. Many moving companies will move your car or connect you with a company who can assist. Check with your auto insurance company regarding coverage for your vehicle during transit. Verify credentials, insurance, etc. of the shipper. Be sure to inspect your car before loading onto the carrier. Note any current dents, scratches, etc. Take photos of the vehicle. Once the car arrives at your destination, thoroughly inspect it again. If damage is noted post move, take photos as well.
- ☐ Make provisions for transferring any valuables, documents, etc. that you have stored in safety deposit boxes. Have all antiques, fine art, jewelry and other valuables appraised for insurance records.
- ☐ Consider contracting with cleaning services for your current home to keep it in "show-ready" shape and a one-time cleaning for your new home so it is clean and sanitized for your move in.
- ☐ Engage contractors to make any necessary home repairs. Keep receipts in your binder for tax records.

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- ☐ If you are too busy to handle the move details, consider hiring a professional organizer. For more information visit: www.thepracticalsort.com. The National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) offers a national database of organizers at <http://www.napo.net/search/custom.asp?id=3767>

Service Connections, Cancellations & Changes

- ☐ Schedule utility connection and services at your new home. You may need to budget for deposits.
 - ☐ Electric
 - ☐ Water
 - ☐ Gas
 - ☐ Cable/Satellite Dish/Internet
 - ☐ Trash
 - ☐ Security System
 - ☐ Landline Phone
- ☐ Schedule utility disconnection and discontinue service at your current home or transfer services. Be sure to check any contract terms. If you cancel prior to term end, you may be charged a cancellation fee unless you transfer the service if permitted. **Choose a disconnection date carefully** to avoid paying for unneeded services. Pad the shut off date for a few days after the move to allow for cleaning, moves that take longer than expected, etc. Check with the water company or plumber about draining your plumbing to prevent freezing and bursting pipes.
 - ☐ Electric
 - ☐ Water
 - ☐ Gas
 - ☐ Cable/Satellite Dish/Internet
 - ☐ Trash
 - ☐ Security System
 - ☐ Landline Phone
- ☐ Arrange a plumber to disconnect gas dryer or any other gas appliances that will be moved. Moving companies do not disconnect household appliances.
- ☐ Cancel yard, pool, or pest management services. Carefully select cancellation date. Contact your insurance company about coverage for your home furnishings and cars in transit, home and car coverage in the new location, and cancelling your existing policy. Be especially mindful about moving high value items and those that need special provisions during a move such as grand pianos, grandfather clocks, etc.

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- ☐ Contact your pharmacy to transfer any prescriptions to a pharmacy near your new home. If you shop at a statewide or nationwide chain pharmacy, their computer systems are typically accessible at their other store locations.
- ☐ Contact medical professionals (including veterinarian) to gather records or sign release forms. If they use a nationwide medical database that may simplify transfers; however, your new doctors, dentists, hospitals might not have access to the same database. Some doctors suggest waiting until you get established with your new providers and then request that the records be sent electronically.

Change of Address

- ☐ File a change of address with the US Postal Service. The USPS offers a moving guide with valuable tips.
- ☐ Create a spreadsheet file of all vendors where you have accounts and begin to notify each. Department stores, fuel companies, major credit cards, frequent flyer programs, brokerages, etc. Check off each as you complete the contact.
- ☐ Contact your bank. Determine if they have branches in your new location or consider continuing your relationship online. If not, begin to research banking options in your new location.
- ☐ Order new bank checks if you are staying with the same bank or if you have established a relationship with another bank.
- ☐ Process change of address for taxes (local property, state and federal).
- ☐ Send a change of address notice via US mail or email to friends and family.
- ☐ Notify your employer's human resource department of address change.
- ☐ Notify gyms, clubs, etc. where you have memberships to make address changes and find comparable facilities in your new location.
- ☐ Moving out of state? Vehicle registrations will need to be updated. Some states require a driver's license test to apply for new license. Research your new state's requirements.
- ☐ Notify your Homeowner's Association and provide them with your new address if appropriate. Be sure to find out all you can about your new HOA including their covenants and reserves.
- ☐ Create some address labels on the computer to leave behind with some forever stamps so the new owner can forward mail to you.

Children

- ☐ If you have children, notify schools or day care that you will be moving and take necessary steps to complete their requirements.

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- ☐ Research school and day care options in your new location. Enroll your child when you have found those that best suit your needs or at least where they can enroll temporarily until you move to permanent quarters or locate more suitable options. Most public schools will need proof of address and may require social security numbers. Be sure to have necessary documents handy.
- ☐ Ask friends or family to be available to mind your children during the move. Moves can be very traumatic for young children particularly as they see their bedrooms or playrooms be disassembled. Best to avoid this stress if at all possible.

Pets

- ☐ Make arrangements for any pets to be located away from moving zones. Sometimes it is best to board an animal for a day or two while the moving is in process. Stressed animals might attempt to run away from home if a door is accidentally left open or they could be stepped on while heavy furniture is being moved.
- ☐ Consult with veterinarian about sedatives for pet during transport. Pick up any prescriptions for your pet.

Make purchases for travel pack to include:

- ☐ Pet food
- ☐ Leash or harness
- ☐ Pet medicine
- ☐ Litter box
- ☐ Bowls for water and food
- ☐ Toys
- ☐ Travel case or crate

Travel Arrangements

- ☐ Plan your travel arrangements for the move. Will you be needing a hotel room for a night or two in town after you leave your home, before you occupy your new home in the new city before you close or along your travel route? Book hotel flights? Do you need to make temporary living arrangements if you have yet to find a new home or the home will be unavailable for move in for quite some time.

After house sale, prior to the move:

- ☐ Hotel reservations including along move route if needed
- ☐ Rental car
- ☐ Airline reservations

Prior to move-in

- ☐ Hotel reservations, apartment rental or guest arrangements if staying with others
- ☐ Rental car

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Move Preparation

- ☐ Begin to properly dispose of any household hazardous waste (HHW). Most moving companies will not permit HHW on their trucks. This includes paints, varnishes and chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Check with your municipality to see what the best options are for HHW disposal near you.
- ☐ Set aside a staging area if possible and set aside non-essentials. Pack little by little each day or if you are moving nearby, begin to take possessions to your new home if available for move in.
- ☐ Begin paring down. It's time to take a good look at all of your possessions and determine if they are worth moving and whether there will be room in your new location. Find suitable locations to donate, sell, recycle, or dispose of any purged items. Host a garage sale or sell items on Amazon or Ebay. For a list of donation and recycling resources visit: <http://www.thepracticalsort.com/disposal-and-waste-reduction-resources/>
- ☐ Consider gifting your old treasures to someone you treasure. Check with them first to respect their personal and physical space.

One to Two Weeks Prior to Your Move

Services

- ☐ Confirm reservations with moving company.
- ☐ Contact a locksmith in your new location to have new locks installed on all of your doors or purchase locks for self-installation. Place the locks in a priority box.

Change of Address

- ☐ Send any remaining change of address notifications.

Children/Pets/Personal

- ☐ Confirm child care and/or pet care arrangements.
- ☐ Visit your child's school or daycare to gather belongings & school records, clear out cubbies/lockers, check lost & found
- ☐ Pickup any medications, syringes, etc. needed for travel.

Move Preparation

- ☐ Take photos around your home for memories. This will also help if you wish to decorate your new home in a similar style with art arrangements. It can also be used for documentation in the event of loss or damage to personal property.

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- ☐ Cart off any items for purging or arrange for pickup.
- ☐ If you are not using professional packers, begin gathering **boxes, packing tape, labels, scissors, box cutter, packing paper and bubble wrap**. Liquor stores are great resources for boxes particularly those with dividers. Dividers are ideal for packing glassware and bottles. Avoid boxes from food stores. These may harbor mold, insects, insect eggs, etc.
- ☐ Pickup a variety of packing and washi tape colors and labels for easy identification of boxes (more about this later). Packing paper can be purchased at moving supply stores, craft stores, etc. Newspapers may leave print on objects. Try wrapping paper, scrap paper, cloth napkins, towels, clothing and other linens to provide cushioning. These options may be a way to forego bubble wrap to avoid use of plastic, but do what you think is best to protect your breakables.
- ☐ Create computer generated room identification labels for your boxes. **Use the guide at the end of the document for gauging number of boxes per room.** Each box should have a label on 4-5 sides so regardless of which way the box is facing you will quickly identify its destination. Another alternative is to write the information when packing so as not to waste labels. Use large fonts and permanent markers. Avery makes removable color-coded moving labels. *They recommend one pack for a small one-to three-room apartment, two packs for a four- to six-room condo or apartment, and three packs for a seven- to nine-room home.* Some are preprinted for specific rooms, others are blank for personalization. http://www.avery.com/avery/en_us/Products/Labels/Home-Organization-Labels/White-Moving-Labels-Assorted-Number-of-Sheets-and-Labels-per-Sheet-218_Count_40219.htm?N=0&refchannel=c042fd03ab30a110VgnVCM1000002118140aRCRD
- ☐ See guide at the end of this document for estimating professional packing hours.
- ☐ Return/retrieve any borrowed items from friends, libraries, schools, etc.
- ☐ Update your phone contact list with realtor info., mover info., friends, accommodation info., or anyone else you might need to be in touch with during the move process.
- ☐ Obtain notarization for any move documents as necessary.
- ☐ Determine method of payment for movers. If cashier's check, obtain from your bank. If personal check, be sure to set checks aside.
- ☐ Get cashier's checks if needed for move settlement.
- ☐ Empty safety deposit box.
- ☐ Make room signs for your new home and store in a priority tool box along with **painter's tape and extra paper**, (for additional signage if needed). At your new home adhere signs in a visible location next to each room so that mover's can easily match box labels with room labels. For example, girl#1 room, powder room, family room, playroom, etc. Not having to play traffic director will help you focus attention elsewhere.

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Move Date is Approaching & Your House is Still on the Market

- ☐ Engage a friend or neighbor or consult your realtor for referrals for someone to keep an eye on your home, collect any flyers or packages at the door, etc.
- ☐ Keep your lawn service or hire a lawn service to maintain the lawn until the house sells.
- ☐ Contact your insurance company to see how long they will continue to cover your home. Sometimes insurance companies have limitations on covering vacant homes.
- ☐ Put faucet covers over all outside faucets in the event of freezes.
- ☐ Shut off sprinkler lines during the winter or make arrangements for someone do so if the house is still vacant after watering season.

One to Two Days Prior to Your Move

- ☐ Back up computer(s) onto an external drive or cloud before packing. Remove any disks.
- ☐ Obtain spare cash for mover tips, snacks, etc.
- ☐ Lay aside personal items for travel into a suitcase, box, or other container that is clearly labeled "Do Not Move"
 - ☐ Clothing, underwear, outerwear, pjs, socks, shoes, rain gear
 - ☐ Overnight personal hygiene and first aid kits
 - ☐ Medicines/prescriptions, syringes
 - ☐ Toys, dvds, and electronics for children and pets
 - ☐ Electronic chargers
 - ☐ Keys
- ☐ Leave new owner the address labels you created and stamps along with house and mailbox keys.
- ☐ Assemble snacks and water bottles
- ☐ Set aside time for last minute goodbyes with friends and family.
- ☐ Give perishables to friends, neighbors or donate.
- ☐ Do last minute laundry.
- ☐ 24 hours prior to move clean refrigerator and freezer with a mild detergent and defrost. Coffee grinds or baking soda can help to keep them fresh smelling during the move. Place these in a stapled paper bag.

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Pack glass shelves separately with well cushioned padding. Disconnect ice maker and water dispenser lines and empty reservoirs. Check manual for instructions.

- ☐ Drain water beds 48 hours prior to move so that they have time to dry out. Check manuals.
- ☐ Mow the lawn if needed then drain the gas into a suitable container. Give the residual gas to a neighbor or take to a HHW facility. Drain garden hoses as well.
- ☐ Return propane tanks for gas grills or other.
- ☐ Perform any last minute pool maintenance.
- ☐ Grab anything out of cars that you will need for the trip such as sunglasses, registration, etc. before shipping.
- ☐ Return cable and internet equipment to provider. Be sure to get a receipt for proof of return.

Packing Day/Move Day

- ☐ Pack suitcases, diaper bags, and pet supplies, and assemble in one area, place a sign on each for movers not to touch.
- ☐ Place several room destination labels on each box in the same location on each side such as the top left hand corner. Color coding with washi tape or duct tape for each room also facilitates the process along with a master chart of corresponding colors to rooms. Label each box with the main items contained. Add a number 1,2,or 3 or A,B,C to indicate level of priority for opening. Gather all highest priority boxes (the things you cannot live without once you reach your destination) and let the movers know these items will be loaded last so they will be unloaded first. This includes all cleaning supplies, rags, vacuum, mop, etc.
- ☐ If working without professional movers, work one room at a time or assign family members to take a room. Young children and teens might need assistance with packing efficiently, making the most of each box yet light enough to lift.
- ☐ Take a photo of utility meter readings for your final bill to ensure they are accurate.

Last In/First Out Area

- ☐ Create a last on/first off area and instruct movers that these items shall be loaded last to ensure they are unloaded immediately upon your arrival.
- ☐ Pack your priority tools box. Include: **room signs, painter's tape, hammer, screwdrivers, nails, screws, electronic cables, rags, cleaner. Toss in scrap paper and marker** (for extra signage if needed). Include anything else you think might be needed immediately. Be sure to clearly label the box "Move-In Tools #1" on several sides of the box.

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- ☐ Pack a box of household essentials such as tissues, toilet paper, paper towels, soap, dish detergent, laundry detergent, napkins, a few dishes and utensils, bath towels and hand towels that will be needed immediately after moving in. **Label Household Essentials #1** on several sides of the box.
- ☐ If you have an infant or young child, set aside the playpen for last on/first off.
- ☐ Pack some toys, stuffed animals, small electronics in an essentials box to keep children busy. Throw in a few extra clothes, diapers, wipes, baby formula, bottles and caps, baby food jars and spoon, etc.
- ☐ Any immediate needs for a pet such as food, litter box, food bowls, etc. should also be in the last on/first off area.

Electronics

- ☐ Secure refrigerator doors, cords and hose lines.
- ☐ Disconnect tvs, cable, entertainment boxes, etc. Wrap and clearly label any cables that are removed. Color code cables with washi tape to delineate which electronic they correspond with and number them to indicate which slot they will be inserted into.
- ☐ Check all nooks and crannies, attic spaces, sheds, gardens, etc. to ensure that you have not missed anything.
- ☐ Leave house key for new owner and mailbox key. Return rented postal box key, neighbor's key, etc.
- ☐ Clearly mark **FRAGILE** on each side of the boxes with breakables. Check with an art gallery or dealer about methods to protect art and glass frames.
- ☐ If you did not opt for cleaning services, set aside cleaning supplies, vacuum, mops, etc. for last minute loading. These will also be available immediately to give your new house a quick freshening before unpacking.
- ☐ If you are packing, here is a quick guide for box usage. Remember as you pack them, you will need to lift them so keep them light enough.
 - ☐ Large boxes should contain the lightest items so that you can pack them densely but still be able to lift them. These are great for linens, clothing, etc.
 - ☐ Medium boxes: dishes, cookware, small appliances, toys, office supplies, etc.
 - ☐ Small boxes: books, cds, breakables, and other small heavy items.
 - ☐ Customized boxes for odd shaped items can be made by combining 2 similarly sized boxes. Leave enough room for packing material when sizing the boxes and be sure to tape the boxes securely together.
 - ☐ Use old shoe boxes for keeping tools, screws, nails, etc. together that you might need immediately.

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The screws and nails should be in sealed containers so that they do not get loose during the move. Again, be sure to clearly label.

- ☐ Count your boxes when you are finished packing.
- ☐ Note any damage to possessions by movers on both ends of the move. **TAKE PHOTOS of any damage!**
- ☐ Read mover's bill of lading carefully before signing.

Upon Arrival

- ☐ Be sure to have all necessary documents, identification, cashier's checks, etc. before heading off to closing with the Title company.
- ☐ Grab some non-perishable snack and drinks for breaks.
- ☐ Locate box of move-in tools and household essentials.
- ☐ Place room signs around the home to assist movers.
- ☐ Unpack boxes with child's and pet's supplies to keep them safely out of the way. Set up a safe zone for them. If available, enlist an older sibling to mind younger children or pets to ensure they do not get injured or escape during the unloading.
- ☐ Choose one room to set up first. This will give you a sense of accomplishment and a respite for the family when breaks are needed.
- ☐ We hope this step by step guide made your move run smoothly.

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NOTES:

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Estimate of Time to Pack a Residence Using Professional Movers

Apartment or House Size in Sq. Ft.	Packing hours for 2 people	Packing hours for 3 people	Packing hours for 4 people	Packing hours for 5 people	Packing hours for 6 people
Under 1,000 Sq. Ft.	4 – 6 Hours	3 – 4 hours	2 – 3 Hours	-	-
1,000-1,500 Sq. Ft.	7 – 12 Hours	5 – 10 Hours	4 – 6 Hours	3 – 4 Hours	-
1,500-2,000 Sq. Ft.	13 – 16 Hours	10 – 14 Hours	7 – 9 Hours	5 – 7 Hours	4 – 5 Hours
2,000-2,500 Sq. Ft.	17 – 20 Hours	12 – 18 Hours	9 – 12 Hours	7 – 10 Hours	5 – 7 Hours
2,500-3,000 Sq. Ft.	21 - 25 Hours	18 – 23 Hours	11 – 14 Hours	9 – 12 Hours	7 – 9 Hours
3,000-3,500 Sq. Ft.	26 - 29 Hours	22 – 27 Hours	14 – 17 Hours	12 – 15 Hours	9 – 12 Hours
3,500-4,000 Sq. Ft.	30 - 35 Hours	28 – 33 Hours	17 – 19 Hours	15 – 17 Hours	10 – 14 Hours
Over 4,000 Sq. Ft.	36 - 40 Hours	33 – 36 Hours	19 – 22 Hours	17 – 20 Hours	12 – 16 Hours

	Small Moving Box 16½" x 12½" x 12½"	Medium Moving Box 18½" x 18" x 16"	Large Moving Box 24" x 18" x 18"	Dish Barrel and Dividers	Stand-Up Wardrobe and Bar
Dining Room	3	2	1	2	
Living Room	5	6	2		
Kitchen	3	4	2	2	
Bedroom (ea.)	3	4	3		2
Bathroom (ea.)	4	2	1		
Garage/Storage	2	4	2		
TOTAL	20	22	11	4	2

- ☐ One roll of Large Bubble Wrap
- ☐ One roll of Mini Bubble Wrap
- ☐ One 12 cu. ft. bag of Pellets
- ☐ Five to six rolls of tape
- ☐ One (or more) Permanent Markers

The Container Store Guide to Moving

Please note: This checklist is provided solely as a guide to help you organize a step-by-step, smooth, less stressful move. The Practical Sort LLC assumes no responsibility for errors, omissions, property damage, timeline hiccups, etc.