

ON THE MOVE

There's little doubt that Canadians are on the move. Whether moving from an apartment to a home, apartment to apartment or home to home, moving is no simple matter. With careful planning, however, your transition can be facilitated in an organized and efficient manner, allowing you the peace of mind you need to settle into your home. The following moving tips are provided by the Ontario Real Estate Association.

Advance Planning

Planning should begin at least two months in advance. Confirm with your REALTOR® your closing date before scheduling your moving date. If you are renting, confirm your move-in date. Make a list of all records that must be transferred to a new location, such as children's school records, and financial and medical records.

Whether moving two blocks or 2,000 miles, decide what must go with you. This may be a good time for a serious cleaning of the closets or the basement where you've been storing your "valuables." It can be expensive and time consuming to move things you really don't need, or worse, to find that there's no place to put them in your new home.

If you are disposing of a large number of items, consider holding a garage or moving sale to offset some of your moving expenses. If you're donating items to charitable organizations, ask for a receipt for tax purposes.

New Address

Send change of address cards to magazine publishers and organizations who you are affiliated. Most magazines request 4 to 6 weeks notice. Provide change of address notice on credit card bills and leave forwarding instructions with the post office. Let your friends and neighbours know your new address. This also is a good time to request help you may need with packing and moving. If you are moving yourself, schedule a moving party providing pizza and beverages for anyone who can help.

Take inventory of borrowed or lent items. Return what is not yours and retrieve your items. Mailing that hedge trimmer across the miles to its owner will be expensive as well as a nightmare to package. Dispose of flammable liquids, such as gasoline or oil. Is there gasoline in your lawn mower?

Two weeks before you move, contact local utility companies to advise of a date to disconnect service. Arrange for utility service in your new home. Clear up outstanding accounts, particularly if you are leaving the area. Plan carefully for the transfer of checking and savings accounts. Open an account in advance in your new community so you have access to money, but make sure your old account stays open until all checks have cleared.

If you are driving any distance, service your car before you move. Car problems in an unfamiliar community can be troublesome. This is also a good time to make appointments with doctors and dentists arranging for a final check-up and discussion of potential problems of which to advise a new doctor.

Packing up

Begin packing early, particularly those items seldom used. If you have hired a moving company, request boxes and packing paper. A local grocery store is a good source for boxes and packing paper. Ask for boxes in advance. Smaller stores may receive shipments only once a week and will only give away boxes if you are there at a specified time to pick them up. Collect both large and small boxes, keeping in mind that filling a large box with books or records will make moving them difficult at best.

Have plenty of packing supplies handy. Save old newspapers for packing material. For delicate items, you may want to purchase special packing boxes or materials to ensure safe moving.

Be creative in your packing particularly with odd-sized or fragile items. For example, move mattresses with old sheets on them as a protection from dirt. An antique floor lamp rolled up in a rug, or a crystal decanter packed in the middle of bath towels adds increased protection.

Of course, creative packing can lead to confusion when unpacking. Make sure all boxes are clearly labeled with their contents. Mark boxes "fragile" which have breakable items. For those items too precious to risk damaging move by hand.

Make a list of items to pack separately; items needed on the road (maps, prescription medicines, toys for children); items needed to settle in (cleaning supplies, light bulbs, tools); and those items you will need within the first few days of arrival (food and utensils for the first meals). Pack a suitcase which you could live out of if it should become necessary. Keep important papers such as medical records and insurance policies in one place where they can be retrieved quickly if needed.

Moving Day

When the moving day has finally arrived, make sure someone is home to meet the mover and point out items to be loaded onto the truck. If you are handling your own move, organize loading to maximize space in the truck and to ensure that the heavy box of books does not get loaded on top of the china box.

Before leaving, make a final check of all rooms, closet shelves and other spots where items may have been overlooked. Have an empty box handy for those "found items," or items which didn't seem to fit in anywhere else. Turn off all lights and close and lock all windows and doors. Leave your keys with the REALTOR[®], Landlord or new owner.

Make sure you are there to meet the movers to avoid possible additional charges. During warm weather, have cold beverages available for movers--professionals or volunteers. Finally, don't try to unpack everything at once. Unpacking carefully and in an organized manner, keeping in mind which boxes can be stored as they are, will save time in the long run.

The Ontario Real Estate Association suggests that by following these tips, your move into a new home or apartment will be a smooth and enjoyable experience.

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