

The moving checklist, week by week

Seven groups counted backwards from the truck, eight weeks out to the first week in, then the three lists that belong to no single week: who to tell about the new address, what to buy before packing starts, and what never goes in the truck. Tick what is done. The unticked boxes are the plan for the week you are in.

MOVING FROM

MOVING TO

MOVE DATE

Eight weeks out

Everything with a lead time starts here: estimates, permits, records and the decision about how the load actually travels.

- ☐ Fix the move date, and the date the current place has to be empty
- ☐ Decide in principle between a full-service mover, a portable container and a rented truck
- ☐ Get three written estimates, each off an in-home or video survey rather than a phone quote
- ☐ Check every interstate mover's USDOT number and complaint record on the FMCSA site
- ☐ Read each estimate for whether it is binding, non-binding or binding not-to-exceed
- ☐ Book the elevator, the loading dock or a street permit at either end that needs one
- ☐ Start one folder for estimates, inventories, receipts and photographs, and keep everything in it
- ☐ Ask an employer who is paying for any of this what they reimburse and what they need to see
- ☐ Request school records and ask the new district what it wants for enrollment
- ☐ Ask the vet for records and for any prescription that has to travel with the animal

NOTES

Six weeks out

The sorting pass. What you do not move is the cheapest weight on the truck, and this is the last point at which selling something is worth the effort.

- ☐ Walk every room and decide what is not making the trip, because weight and volume are the price
- ☐ List the furniture that will not fit or will not work in the new rooms, and sell or donate it now
- ☐ Measure the doorways, the stairs and the lift at the new place against anything large
- ☐ Book any specialty move separately: piano, safe, gun cabinet, aquarium, pool table, hot tub
- ☐ Photograph anything worth insuring and write down its serial number
- ☐ Ask in writing what valuation coverage the estimate includes, since released value is the minimum
- ☐ Check whether your renters or homeowners policy covers goods in transit and goods in storage
- ☐ Order packing supplies, or arrange the mover's cartons, so packing is never held up by a box run
- ☐ Start eating the freezer and the pantry down, and stop buying anything in bulk
- ☐ Give notice at the current place, in writing, on the notice period the lease actually states

NOTES

Four weeks out

The utilities and the address, which are the two things that fail quietly, plus the start of real packing in the rooms nobody is using.

- ☐ Schedule the disconnect at the old address for the day after you leave, not the day you leave
- ☐ Schedule the connect at the new address for the day before you arrive
- ☐ Book internet installation first: it has the longest lead time of anything on this list
- ☐ File the change of address with the post office, dated for the move
- ☐ Work the change-of-address list below, one line at a time, and tick what is done
- ☐ Pack the rooms you are not living in: storage, the guest room, the garage, off-season clothes
- ☐ Label every carton on two sides and the top with its destination room and a short list of contents
- ☐ Number the cartons and keep the count, so the far end tells you whether anything is missing
- ☐ Book time off for the move day and the day after it
- ☐ Arrange storage if the two dates do not meet, and price it before you need it

NOTES

Two weeks out

Confirmations, and the errands that need somebody else's calendar. Nothing here takes long, and all of it takes longer if it slips.

- ☐ Confirm the mover, the arrival window and both addresses in writing
- ☐ Confirm the elevator or dock booking and the parking permit at both ends
- ☐ Arrange care for children and pets on the day, somewhere away from the open doors
- ☐ Service the car if you are driving any distance, and check the tires and the spare
- ☐ Arrange transport for a second vehicle that is not being driven
- ☐ Cancel or transfer the standing services: lawn, pool, pest, cleaning, deliveries
- ☐ Refill prescriptions so nothing runs out while the boxes are in motion
- ☐ Return library books, rented equipment and anything borrowed from a neighbor
- ☐ Empty a safe deposit box if you are leaving the area
- ☐ Book a cleaner for the old place, or the day to do it yourself

NOTES

The last week

Pack everything except the do-not-pack list, drain the appliances, and build the box that never goes in the truck.

- ☐ Pack everything but the do-not-pack list and one week of clothes
- ☐ Defrost and dry the freezer and drain the water lines at least 24 hours before the truck comes
- ☐ Disconnect the washer and dryer, and book the trade for anything on a gas line
- ☐ Empty the mower, the trimmer and every can of fuel, because no mover will load any of it
- ☐ Take down curtains, brackets, mounted televisions and shelves, and bag the hardware to the piece
- ☐ Build the first-night box and mark it so nobody carries it out to the truck
- ☐ Confirm what the mover takes as payment and have it ready in that form
- ☐ Clean each room as it empties instead of saving all of it for the last morning
- ☐ Photograph the empty rooms, the meters and any existing damage, for the deposit
- ☐ Set aside the keys, remotes, openers, gate fobs and manuals for whoever takes the place

NOTES

Moving day

The day is about paperwork and the last walk. If the planning worked, the lifting is the part that needs the least of your attention.

- ☐ Be there when the crew arrives and walk the house with the lead before anything is loaded
- ☐ Read the inventory as it is written, and note existing damage on it before signing
- ☐ Keep the bill of lading, the inventory and the estimate together, and never packed
- ☐ Put everything that is not going into one room and shut the door
- ☐ Keep phones, chargers, keys, wallets, medication and documents on your person
- ☐ Read the meters at the old address and photograph them with the date visible
- ☐ Do the last walk: every closet, every cabinet, the attic, the garage, behind every door
- ☐ Leave the keys, remotes and openers where they were agreed to go
- ☐ Confirm the delivery window and the phone number that actually reaches the driver
- ☐ Take the pets and the plants in your own vehicle, last, after the noise has stopped

NOTES

The first week in

Two clocks start the day the truck arrives: the mover's claim window and the new state's deadlines. Both are shorter than people expect.

- ☐ Check the inventory against the cartons as they come off, and note damage before you sign
- ☐ File any loss or damage claim in writing inside the window the paperwork names
- ☐ Change the locks, and rekey or reprogram every opener, code and keypad
- ☐ Find the water shutoff, the electrical panel and the gas meter before you need any of them
- ☐ Test the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and put fresh batteries in all of them
- ☐ Read the meters at the new address on the first day and photograph them
- ☐ Unpack the kitchen and one bedroom completely, then work outward one room at a time
- ☐ Break down and return the cartons, or list them, before they fill the garage for a year
- ☐ Find the closest urgent care, pharmacy and vet, and register with a doctor
- ☐ Walk the block, and note the trash day, the parking rules and where the mail actually lands

NOTES

The change-of-address list: who to tell

The forwarding order buys about a year of grace and covers almost nothing that matters. Work down this list instead, and tick each line as it is confirmed rather than sent.

- ☐ The post office, with the order dated for the move
- ☐ Employer, payroll and benefits
- ☐ Bank, credit union and every card issuer
- ☐ Mortgage servicer, or the old and new landlord
- ☐ Every insurer: auto, health, life, renters or homeowners
- ☐ Retirement, brokerage and pension accounts
- ☐ The IRS and the state tax agency
- ☐ Social Security, Medicare, VA or any other benefit paid to an address
- ☐ The motor vehicle agency, for the license and for each registration
- ☐ Voter registration
- ☐ Doctor, dentist, vet, pharmacy and every specialist
- ☐ Schools, colleges and student loan servicers
- ☐ Subscriptions, deliveries and anything on a repeating order
- ☐ Loyalty, airline and warranty programs
- ☐ Alarm monitoring, and any account that verifies you by your address
- ☐ Friends and family, last, once everything else is confirmed

NOTES

The packing and moving supplies list

Buy for the size of the home rather than for the room in front of you, and buy the tape twice. Running out at nine on a weeknight costs more than the surplus.

- ☐ Small cartons for books, tools, tinned food and anything dense
- ☐ Medium cartons for most of the house
- ☐ Large cartons for bedding, pillows and lampshades only
- ☐ Wardrobe cartons for hanging clothes, which save an afternoon each
- ☐ Dish barrels or cell dividers for glass and stemware
- ☐ Picture and mirror cartons for anything framed
- ☐ Packing tape, more rolls than you think, and at least two dispensers
- ☐ Packing paper, which does not print itself onto your dishes the way newspaper does
- ☐ Bubble wrap or foam pouches for glass and electronics
- ☐ Stretch wrap for drawers, cables and upholstered arms
- ☐ Furniture pads or blankets for anything with a finish on it
- ☐ Markers in two colors, plus colored tape or labels, one color per destination room
- ☐ Mattress bags, which stop being optional the moment the truck carries anything dusty
- ☐ A basic tool kit and a box cutter, kept out until the last carton is closed
- ☐ Zip bags for screws and fittings, each taped to the piece it came out of
- ☐ Floor runners and door jamb protectors for both ends

NOTES

What never goes in the truck

Two categories in one list: what a mover is not permitted to carry, and what you cannot be without for the days the load is on the road. The second half is the first-night box.

- ☐ Passports, birth certificates, social security cards, titles, deeds, wills and the moving paperwork
- ☐ Cash, jewelry, precious metals and anything you would not replace
- ☐ Medication, plus a written list of what everyone in the house takes
- ☐ Laptops, hard drives, backups and the chargers for all of it
- ☐ Keys, remotes, openers and the new set for the new place
- ☐ Photographs and anything with no value to anyone else and total value to you
- ☐ Flammables: gasoline, propane, lighter fluid, aerosols, paint, charcoal, fireworks
- ☐ Corrosives, pesticides and pool chemicals, none of which a mover may load
- ☐ Firearms and ammunition, which carry their own rules in every state
- ☐ Plants, which most interstate movers will not carry and some states will not admit
- ☐ Perishable food, unless the trip is short and the truck is yours
- ☐ First night: bedding, towels, a shower curtain, toilet paper, soap and a change of clothes
- ☐ First night: chargers, a lamp, a power strip, a flashlight and a roll of tape
- ☐ First night: a kettle or pot, coffee, a few plates, cutlery, a knife and a can opener
- ☐ First night: trash bags, paper towels, hand soap and one cleaning spray
- ☐ First night: pet food, bowls, litter, a leash and the animal's own bed

NOTES

Moving to another state

An out-of-state move adds a set of deadlines that start the day you arrive, and every one of them is set by the state you moved to rather than the one you left.

- ☐ Check the new state's deadline for a driver's license, which commonly runs from establishing residency
- ☐ Check the separate deadline for registering each vehicle, which is often the shorter of the two
- ☐ Find out whether a safety inspection, an emissions test or a VIN verification comes first
- ☐ Take what the DMV lists: proof of identity, proof of the new address, the title, the registration
- ☐ Tell the auto insurer before you cross, since required coverages and minimums are set by state
- ☐ Re-shop homeowners or renters insurance, because the perils that matter change with the geography
- ☐ Register to vote, and note the registration cutoff before the next election rather than after it
- ☐ Give the IRS the new address, and expect a part-year return in each state for the year of the move
- ☐ Read what domicile means in each state if either taxes income, because leaving is a question of fact
- ☐ Check whether professional licenses transfer, and whether the two states have a reciprocity agreement
- ☐ Enroll the children with the district's own proof of residency and immunization requirements
- ☐ Move health coverage: a permanent move is commonly a qualifying event with a short window to use it
- ☐ Transfer prescriptions to a pharmacy that exists in the new state before the last refill runs out
- ☐ Check whether pets need a health certificate or a current rabies record to cross the state line
- ☐ Close the old bank account last, after every automatic payment has been re-pointed and cleared once

NOTES

A general checklist for a household move, not legal, tax or insurance advice. Notice periods, possession dates and deposit rules are set by your lease, your purchase agreement and your state; license, registration, voter and tax deadlines are set by the state you move to and change. Interstate household moves are regulated under 49 CFR part 375, which is amended, and the current text at [ecfr.gov](https://www.ecfr.gov) governs. Only a written estimate from the carrier you hire is a price. Kouzr Inc. is a research platform, not a brokerage, a moving company or a law firm.