

Packing Advice

Tips for Moving & Packing Yourself

When moving, most damage comes from vibration in transit. Think of a stack of dishes in a box on the bed of a bouncing truck. No matter how well the sides are padded, a firm up-and-down jolt could crack the entire stack. On the other hand, dishes packed on edge and surrounded by bubble wrap have a better chance of surviving the trip unharmed.

It is essential that you have the right packing materials in order to minimize the effect of this eventual vibration. Sturdy boxes, packing tape, bubble wrap, and packing paper are worth the money. A tape dispenser may help you move along quicker. A box cutter can also be used to “cut the tape” and will also be very handy when unpacking.

With a little care and planning, you and your belongings can arrive in perfect condition. These packing tips will give you some helpful information to make this goal a reality.

General Household Packing Tips

Pad everything - eliminate empty space

Supplement with copious amounts of blankets and pillows; even clothing can serve as a buffer between breakable objects. There should be no empty space in a box, however don't over pack the box either.

Select the right box for each specific need.

- o A good packing job starts with strong, sturdy boxes.
- o Get smaller boxes for books. Use bigger boxes for lighter items.
- o Boxes have a seal on the bottom that gives their strength and capacity. That seal will indicate a weight limit and an “Edge Crush Test” rating. 32” is standard for most moving boxes.
- o 44” is standard for most wardrobe boxes and larger specialty boxes.

Get more boxes than you think you will need.

You may not be able to get the boxes you need if you are finishing up last minute preparations.

Use heavy-duty packing tape (not masking tape)

- o Reinforce the bottom of boxes with at least one strip of packing tape.

Don't scrimp on heavy-duty packing tape for the boxes as well as for taping things together (like broom handles).

Packing Techniques to Organize & Protect Your Belongings

Pack one room at a time, labeling each box with a description of its contents and its destination (e.g., kitchen, bathroom).

- o Be as specific as possible as this will make unpacking much easier.
- o Don't overload boxes, making them too heavy to handle.
- o When possible, put heavy items in small boxes to make them easier to carry.
- o Don't apply packing tape directly to polished or painted wood finishes. Removing the tape could ruin the surface.
- o Double-box fragile items and add plenty of cushioning.
- o When everything is packed and ready to load, make sure the items you need least are loaded first.

o Common sense is essential when loading the truck.

o Place the box containing your best china on top of the box of encyclopedias and not vice versa.

Prepare for the first night in your new home.

Packing essential items in a separate bag and carry it with you. You may even want to prepare a simple meal that you can heat and serve on your first night.

o Each person should have a change of clothes, towel, prescription drugs, toothbrush, and other personal items.

o For everyone: plastic utensils, paper plates, paper towels, plastic cups, toilet paper, toiletries, trash bags, a flashlight, first aid kit including pain relievers, pencil and paper, snacks, beverages, and re-closable plastic bags. Small tool kit for re-assembling items that couldn't be moved whole.

Make a box of essentials and label it "Open Me First."

Put this box to the side to be loaded last (so it's unloaded first) or move it yourself. Your Essentials Box may include:

Basic tools: flashlights, pocket knife, hammer, screwdrivers, nails, masking tape, tape measure, and light bulbs.

Bathroom essentials: hand towel, soap, toilet paper, shampoo, and shower curtains.

Kitchen goodies: paper towels, coffeemaker and filters, paper plates and cups, plastic utensils, dish detergent, a sponge, pet foods, dishes, and trash bags.

Pack rugs last: they should be the first items unloaded and placed at your new location.

Packing Appliances

Pack small appliances in original container or a box cushioned with Packing Paper.

Do not use shredded paper - it can clog the appliance.

With major appliances, check with the appliance dealer for any special moving instructions.

For all large appliances, remove loose fittings and accessories and pack separately. Tie down, tape or wedge all movable parts and doors.

Gas Dryer

Contact your gas company for disconnection.

Dishwasher/Washing Machine

Stuff towels between machine sides and tub to keep tub from rotating. Pad exterior well. Disconnect hoses, put in plastic bag, place in tub.

Freezer/Refrigerator

Defrost and dry interiors well. Fill interior spaces with lightweight linens, clothing or stuffed toys. If you want to lay your refrigerator down for moving, check first with the local dealer to determine if your brand can be moved like this. If so, make sure refrigerator stands upright for at least 24 hours before plugging in.

Packing Household Items

Beds

Disassemble the bed frame. Tie rails and cross-pieces together with packing tape. Be sure to mark on tape to show where pieces fit together for reassembly. You can protect your mattress and boxspring with a Mattress

Cover or large sheets of plastic. You may want to cover them just before you walk out the door - the plastic may make it difficult to move downstairs or around awkward corners in your home.

Bicycles, Tricycles, Baby Carriages

Loosen, lower and turn handlebars at right angles to save space. Clean and cover chains and pedals to protect other items from being snagged or soiled.

Books

They're heavy, so use Small Boxes. Don't mix books with other items. Pack books flat, alternating bindings, and fill empty spaces with packing paper or bubble wrap.

Bureaus, Dressers

Fill drawers with small breakable items and cushion well with loose clothes. Secure drawers with pad or blanket and tape. Do not overload drawers with heavy items.

Chairs

Wrap arms and legs to prevent scratches. Bundle armless chairs in pairs, seat to seat, with a folded blanket or other padding between and tie seats together.

Clothes

Dresses, coats, suits - anything hanging in closets - travel best in reusable Wardrobe Boxes, which can be used seasonally as "extra closets" for wardrobe storage. Other clothes can remain folded in their regular dresser drawers. Also, Large Boxes can hold a lot of clothes without making the box too heavy.

Comforters, Pillows, Large/Light Items

Extra Large Boxes will be best for packing light bulky items. If you have small fragile items, you can pack a few in between the pillows for extra protection - just don't forget they are there!

Curtain Rod Hardware

Put the hardware in a plastic bag and tape to rod or pack in dresser drawers.

Dishes

Individually wrap each piece. Medium Boxes will fit most kitchenware without making the box too heavy. Place saucers, plates and platters on edge - DO NOT STACK FLAT. Cups and bowls may be placed inside each other and wrapped three or four in a bundle.

Kitchenware

Pots, pans, etc. can be stacked in a box with packing paper between them. For bulky items, Large Boxes will do best. Remember not to make the box too heavy - someone has to carry it!

Glasses

Wrap each glass separately in packing paper or bubble wrap (you can wrap first in a plastic bag to save washing later).

Fine Furniture

You may want to wrap your best furniture in bubble wrap, not only to protect it from scratching, but to keep dust and dirt off the upholstery. Stretch Wrap can also help to prevent small scratches and dust from damaging your furniture. Make sure to wrap the item very tight to prevent snags while you are moving.

Lamps

After disassembling lamps, pack small bases in dresser drawers surrounded by loose clothing, and large bases in boxes stuffed with packing paper or bubble wrap. Box shades individually in boxes with plenty of packing paper for stuffing. Don't use newspaper because it smudges.

Lawn Mowers

Drain fuel and oil before loading. Remove handle from hand mowers and place blade end in sturdy box. Mark properly.

Mirrors, Paintings, Prints

Small mirrors can be well wrapped in paper and packed in boxes. For a larger mirrors and large picture frames, Frame Boxes work best. Mark GLASS on the outside to prevent mishandling. Always pack and store on end.

Paint and Flammables

Don't move! The same goes for other flammables such as alcohol, solvents, lighter fluid, ammunition and greasy mops or rags.

Radios, TVs

Box upright and make sure items are well padded on all sides. For console-size equipment, surround with furniture pads, and then move and load upright. Rugs and Pads - After vacuuming rugs and pads, sprinkle with moth flakes. Roll up and tape.

Stereos, Compact Discs and Cassettes

Separately pack components and pack in well-padded box marked FRAGILE. Pack CDs upright in their cases in a sturdy box with tape-reinforced bottom. Tie CDs in small bundles before packing, then fill air space with packing paper. Mark FRAGILE. Cassettes can be packed in a similar manner, although you can group them in larger bundles.

Tables

For large tables, remove legs and tie together. Put hardware in small sealed envelope taped to underside of table top. Pad tops. Pad and tie spare table leaves. For smaller tables, pad top and wrap legs to prevent scratching.

Tools and Gardening Equipment

Drain hoses, coil and pack in boxes. Fill remaining space with lawn sprinklers, small garden hand tools, etc. Combine rakes, shovels, and other long-handled tools together with tape.

Valuables

Set aside jewelry, important papers and safe deposit box contents to be packed in a small container you can keep with you throughout the move.