

Service Types Guide

How to understand the different kinds of moving services before you hire a mover

Short Description: A plain-English guide to moving service types, explaining what each service includes, who it is best for, how local, long-distance, van-line, direct, statewide, interstate, and container moves differ, and how customers can choose the right level of help for their move.

Meta Title: Moving Service Types Explained | Local, Long Distance & Containers

Meta Description: Compare moving service types including local moving, long distance moving, packing, loading, senior moving, office moves, storage, crating, specialty items, PODS, U-Pack, van lines, and direct movers.

A consumer-friendly guide from Moving Buddies Tucson AZ.

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Not every move needs the same kind of service.

Some customers need a full crew, truck, packing help, furniture protection, loading, transportation, and unloading. Others only need labor to load a rental truck or portable storage container. Some moves are local and can be handled in one day. Others are long distance, interstate, staged through storage, or coordinated through a national van line.

The problem is that moving services are often described with overlapping terms.

A customer may hear:

- Local moving
- Long distance moving
- Interstate moving
- Intrastate moving
- Statewide moving
- Van-line service
- Direct service
- Labor-only service
- Container moving
- Portable storage
- Packing service
- Specialty item moving
- Commercial moving
- Residential moving

Those terms sound simple, but they can mean very different things depending on the company.

This guide explains the major moving service types in plain English so you can understand what you are actually buying, what questions to ask, and which service model fits your move best.

The big picture: moving service models

Before breaking down individual services, it helps to understand the larger service models.

Most moves fall into one of these categories:

- Local moving
- Direct moving service
- Van-line moving service
- Interstate moving
- Statewide or intrastate long-distance moving

- Portable container moving
- Labor-only moving
- Specialty moving services
- Storage-supported moving

Each model has a different responsibility structure.

That matters because the most important question is not just, "How much does it cost?"

The better question is:

Who is responsible for the move from start to finish?

Local moving

Local moving usually refers to a move handled within the same city, metro area, or nearby region.

For a Tucson customer, this might mean moving from one home to another within Tucson, Oro Valley, Marana, Vail, Sahuarita, Green Valley, Catalina Foothills, or another nearby community.

Local moves are often priced by time. That may include:

- Crew size
- Truck size
- Hourly rate
- Minimum hours
- Travel time
- Packing materials
- Specialty item charges
- Stairs or access complications
- Additional stops
- Heavy items
- Disassembly and reassembly

What local moving usually includes

A local moving service may include loading your furniture and boxes, protecting furniture with moving blankets, transporting everything to the new address, unloading, placing furniture where it belongs, and basic reassembly when included.

A full-service local move may also include packing, unpacking, boxes, supplies, and specialty handling.

A basic local move may only include labor, truck, and transportation.

Best for

Local moving is best for customers moving within the same general service area who want a professional crew to handle the physical work and transportation.

It is especially useful for:

- Apartment moves
- House-to-house moves
- Condo moves
- Senior moves
- Same-day moves
- Short-distance moves
- Local office moves
- Furniture-only moves
- Moves with stairs or heavy items
- Customers who do not want to rent or drive a truck

What to ask

Before booking a local mover, ask:

- Is this priced hourly or flat-rate?
- Is travel time included?
- What is the minimum charge?
- How many movers are included?
- What truck size will be used?
- Are furniture blankets included?
- Are supplies included or extra?
- Are stairs, elevators, or long carries extra?
- What happens if the move takes longer than expected?

A good local mover should be able to explain the pricing before moving day.

Direct moving service

Direct moving service means the same company handles the move directly instead of passing the job through a broker, van-line network, or multiple carriers.

In a direct-service move, the company you hire is typically the company that sends the crew, truck, equipment, and supervisor.

For local moves, most reputable independent movers operate this way.

For long-distance moves, direct service can mean the mover loads your shipment, drives it directly or mostly directly to the destination, and unloads it without transferring your belongings through a large van-line system.

Why direct service matters

Direct service can create clearer accountability.

The customer knows:

- Who is showing up
- Who employs the crew
- Who owns or controls the truck
- Who is responsible for communication
- Who handles claims
- Who controls scheduling
- Who to call if there is a problem

Direct service can also reduce confusion because there are fewer handoffs.

Best for

Direct service is best for customers who want a clear relationship with one moving company.

It is especially helpful for:

- Local moves
- Regional moves
- Statewide moves
- Small long-distance moves
- High-trust residential moves
- Customers who want fewer handoffs
- Customers who want clearer accountability

Potential limitations

Direct service may be less available for very long cross-country moves, very large shipments, or moves outside the company's service region.

A smaller direct mover may also have fewer trucks, fewer long-distance routes, or tighter scheduling capacity than a national van line.

What to ask

Ask:

- Are you the company physically performing my move?
- Will your employees handle the move?
- Will my belongings stay on the same truck?
- Will the shipment be transferred?
- Who drives the shipment?
- Who handles communication during transit?
- Who handles damage claims?

The goal is to understand whether the service is truly direct or simply being sold as direct.

Van-line service

Van-line service usually refers to a national or large regional moving network.

A van line may have many agents in different cities. One local agent may book or origin-service the move, another may provide the driver or linehaul, and another may handle delivery at the destination.

Well-known van-line systems can be useful for large interstate moves because they have broader geographic coverage, established long-haul networks, and coordination across multiple markets.

How van-line moves usually work

A van-line move may involve:

- A local booking agent
- An origin crew
- A long-haul driver
- A destination agent
- Warehouse handling
- Shipment consolidation
- Delivery scheduling windows
- A tariff-based pricing structure
- Different crews at pickup and delivery

This can be efficient for interstate moving, but it also means the customer should understand who is responsible for each stage.

Best for

Van-line service can be a good fit for:

- Large interstate moves
- Cross-country moves

- Corporate relocations
- Military-style relocation needs
- Moves requiring national coverage
- Moves that need origin and destination agents
- Customers who want a larger network

Potential drawbacks

Van-line moves can involve more handoffs than a direct move.

Possible issues include:

- Wider pickup and delivery windows
- Shipment consolidation
- Multiple crews handling the shipment
- Communication through several parties
- Less personal continuity
- Potential storage-in-transit
- More complex paperwork

That does not mean van-line service is bad. It means the customer needs to understand the structure.

What to ask

Ask:

- Which van line is involved?
- Which local agent is booking the move?
- Who is the carrier of record?
- Who loads the shipment?
- Who drives the shipment?
- Will the shipment be consolidated with other shipments?
- Will my belongings be transferred?
- What is the delivery spread?
- Who handles claims?
- Who is my single point of contact?

For interstate moves, FMCSA explains that household goods movers and brokers have different roles, and that brokers are not authorized to transport household goods themselves.

Brokered moving service

A broker arranges a move with another company. A broker may not own trucks, employ the moving crew, or physically transport household goods.

This is important because a customer may think they are hiring a mover when they are actually hiring a sales company that will assign the job to a carrier later.

For interstate moves, FMCSA states that both interstate movers and brokers must be registered, but brokers act as middlemen and are not authorized to transport household goods themselves.

When brokered service can become a problem

Brokered service can become risky when:

- The broker does not clearly disclose its role
- The customer does not know who will show up
- The quote is based on weak inventory information
- The carrier changes the price later
- The broker becomes hard to reach after booking
- The customer is passed between companies
- The paperwork names a company the customer does not recognize

What to ask

Ask directly:

"Are you the mover, the carrier, or a broker?"

Then ask:

- Who will physically perform the move?
- What is that company's legal name?
- Will I receive their information before moving day?
- Who is responsible if the price changes?
- Who handles claims?
- Who do I call on moving day?

This question alone can prevent a lot of confusion.

Interstate moving

An interstate move crosses state lines.

For example:

- Arizona to California
- Arizona to Texas
- Arizona to Colorado
- Arizona to New Mexico
- Arizona to Nevada
- Arizona to Washington

Even if the move starts locally and ends in a nearby state, it is still interstate if it crosses a state line.

Interstate moves are subject to federal household goods moving rules. FMCSA provides consumer resources for interstate moves, including the "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move" booklet and "Ready to Move" brochure.

What makes interstate moving different

Interstate moving usually involves more planning than local moving.

Important differences may include:

- Federal registration requirements
- Different estimate types
- Bill of lading requirements
- Valuation options
- Delivery windows
- Longer scheduling timelines
- Possible shipment consolidation
- Greater risk of delay
- More complex claims processes
- Different paperwork than local moves

Best for

Interstate moving service is needed when your shipment crosses state lines and you want a professional mover to transport your belongings.

What to ask

Ask:

- Are you registered for interstate household goods moves?
- Are you the carrier or a broker?
- Will you provide required consumer documents?

- Is the estimate binding or non-binding?
- What valuation options are available?
- What is the delivery window?
- Will my shipment be transferred or consolidated?
- Who handles claims?

For interstate moves, do not treat paperwork as a formality. The paperwork defines your rights, responsibilities, pricing structure, and claims process.

Statewide long-distance moving

Statewide long-distance moving usually refers to a move that stays within the same state but travels a longer distance.

For example, in Arizona:

- Tucson to Phoenix
- Tucson to Flagstaff
- Tucson to Prescott
- Tucson to Sedona
- Tucson to Yuma
- Tucson to Lake Havasu
- Tucson to Show Low

This may also be called an intrastate move because it stays inside one state.

How statewide long-distance differs from interstate moving

A statewide move may feel similar to an interstate move because the truck travels a long distance, but it does not cross a state line.

That distinction matters because state-level rules may apply instead of federal interstate moving rules.

From a customer's perspective, statewide long-distance moves often require:

- More detailed scheduling
- Accurate inventory
- Clear pickup and delivery timing
- Drive-time planning
- Fuel and travel cost clarity
- Possible overnight planning
- Crew availability at destination

- Clear expectations for same-day versus next-day delivery

Best for

Statewide long-distance moving is best for customers moving from one city to another within the same state who want direct transportation without renting a truck or container.

What to ask

Ask:

- Is this move priced hourly, flat-rate, or by another method?
- Is drive time included?
- Will delivery happen the same day?
- Will the same crew load and unload?
- Will the shipment stay on the same truck?
- Are overnight charges possible?
- Are fuel, mileage, and travel charges included?

Statewide long-distance moves can be very smooth when the schedule and pricing method are clear.

Long-distance moving

Long-distance moving is a broad term.

It may mean interstate moving, statewide moving, regional moving, or cross-country moving depending on the company.

That is why customers should not rely on the phrase alone.

A "long-distance move" might be:

- A 120-mile move within the same state
- A 400-mile move across state lines
- A cross-country van-line move
- A direct truckload move
- A container move
- A freight trailer move
- A labor-only load into a customer-rented truck

Best for

Long-distance moving is best for customers relocating beyond their local metro area who want help transporting household goods to another city or state.

What to clarify

Ask:

- Does this cross state lines?
- Is this considered interstate or intrastate?
- Who transports the shipment?
- Will it be direct or consolidated?
- Will my items stay on one truck?
- What is the delivery window?
- How are delays handled?
- What documents apply?
- What valuation options apply?

The term "long distance" is useful for marketing, but the actual service structure matters more.

Portable container moving

Portable container moving is a hybrid between DIY moving, storage, and transportation.

Instead of a full moving truck and crew, a container company delivers a portable storage container to your property. You load it, or you hire labor to load it. Then the container company picks it up and transports it to another location or stores it.

Common container-style services include companies such as PODS and U-Pack.

U-Pack describes its model as a self-moving service where the customer does the packing and loading, and U-Pack drives the belongings. U-Pack offers trailer and ReloCube options and delivery choices such as door-to-door or service-center delivery.

PODS describes its service around portable containers that customers load, with PODS handling transportation and storage options; PODS also emphasizes that the customer does not have to drive the moving vehicle.

How container moving usually works

The basic process is:

- The container is delivered.
- The customer loads it or hires loading help.
- The container is picked up.
- The container is transported or stored.
- The container is delivered to the destination.
- The customer unloads it or hires unloading help.

- The empty container is picked up.

Best for

Portable containers are best for customers who want flexibility.

They are especially useful for:

- DIY moves
- Delayed closings
- Remodeling projects
- Temporary storage
- Long-distance budget moves
- Customers who do not want to drive a rental truck
- Moves where loading can happen over several days
- Customers who want to combine storage and moving

Advantages

Portable containers can offer:

- Flexible loading schedule
- Storage built into the process
- No need to drive a large truck
- Potential cost savings compared with full-service moving
- Less pressure than same-day loading
- Ability to hire labor separately
- Useful staging option during home sales or renovations

Limitations

Portable containers are not right for every move.

Potential issues include:

- Driveway or parking restrictions
- HOA restrictions
- Apartment access limitations
- City permit requirements
- Limited container sizes
- Customer must load correctly

- Weather exposure during loading
- Long carries from container to home
- Limited availability in some areas
- Possible delivery scheduling constraints
- Heavy items may still require professional movers
- Damage risk if items are poorly packed or loaded

What to ask

Ask:

- What container size do I need?
- Where can the container legally be placed?
- Do I need a permit?
- How long can I keep it?
- What happens if closing is delayed?
- Is storage included or extra?
- How is transportation priced?
- Is there a weight limit?
- What items are prohibited?
- What happens if my items shift during transit?
- Do I need professional loading help?

The biggest mistake with container moving is assuming that transportation solves the whole move. The container company may move the container, but the customer is still responsible for packing, loading, securing, and unloading unless separate labor is hired.

Portable Containers

Portable container service is a specific service category that often supports DIY, hybrid, and storage-based moves.

A moving company may offer labor to load or unload containers even if the container itself comes from another provider.

For example, a customer may rent a PODS container, U-Pack ReloCube, Pack-Rat container, or similar unit, then hire movers only for the heavy lifting.

What portable container moving help may include

- Professional loading

- Professional unloading
- Furniture padding
- Tie-down strategy
- Space optimization
- Disassembly
- Heavy item placement
- Load balancing
- Protection of fragile items
- Staging items by priority
- Separating unload-first items
- Container-to-home transfer
- Home-to-container transfer

Best for

Portable container loading help is best for customers who like the flexibility of containers but do not want to risk injury, poor loading, or wasted space.

It is especially useful when the container includes:

- Heavy furniture
- Mattresses
- Large dressers
- Glass items
- Exercise equipment
- Fragile items
- Stacked boxes
- A tight space limit
- A long-distance route

Insider advice

A container is only as safe as the load inside it.

Good loading matters because containers can shift during pickup, transport, storage, and delivery. Heavy items should be placed thoughtfully. Fragile items should be protected. Empty space should be reduced. Furniture should be secured.

Saving money by loading poorly can become expensive if items arrive damaged.

Loading & Unloading

Loading and unloading service is often called labor-only moving.

This means the movers provide the physical labor, but the customer provides the truck, trailer, container, storage unit, or transportation method.

Common situations

- Loading a rental truck
- Unloading a rental truck
- Loading a portable container
- Unloading a portable container
- Loading a storage unit
- Unloading a storage unit
- Rearranging a garage
- Moving furniture inside the home
- Helping with a freight trailer
- Helping with a customer-owned trailer

Best for

Loading and unloading is best for customers who are managing their own transportation but need professional muscle and loading skill.

It is especially useful for:

- Budget-conscious moves
- DIY long-distance moves
- U-Haul, Penske, or Budget truck rentals
- PODS or U-Pack containers
- Storage-unit moves
- College moves
- Small apartment moves
- Customers comfortable driving the truck themselves

What it usually does not include

Labor-only service may not include:

- Truck
- Fuel

- Transportation
- Moving blankets
- Boxes
- Tie-downs
- Dollies
- Insurance for the customer's truck
- Driving
- Full-service move coordination

Some companies bring basic equipment. Others expect the customer to provide supplies. Clarify this before the crew arrives.

What to ask

Ask:

- Do you provide the truck or only labor?
- Do you bring dollies and tools?
- Do you provide moving blankets?
- Do you provide tie-downs or straps?
- Can you drive the rental truck?
- Are there extra charges for stairs or heavy items?
- How many movers do I need?
- How long should loading take?

Labor-only moving can be an excellent value, but the responsibility split must be clear.

Residential Moving

Residential moving refers to moving household goods from one home to another.

This can include houses, apartments, condos, townhomes, retirement communities, manufactured homes, guest houses, and storage units.

What residential moving may include

- Furniture protection
- Box loading
- Appliance moving
- Bedroom furniture
- Living room furniture

- Dining room furniture
- Patio items
- Garage items
- Home office items
- Packing services
- Unpacking services
- Disassembly and reassembly
- Truck transportation
- Placement at the new home

Best for

Residential moving is best for customers moving personal household belongings.

It can be local, statewide, interstate, full-service, labor-only, or container-based depending on the situation.

Important details

Residential moving is personal. Movers are handling more than objects. They are handling family belongings, memories, important documents, fragile items, children's furniture, heirlooms, and the pieces of everyday life.

A good residential mover should focus on:

- Clear communication
- Furniture protection
- Floor and doorway awareness
- Respect for the home
- Careful placement
- Customer direction
- Accurate scheduling
- Practical problem solving

What to ask

Ask:

- How do you protect furniture?
- Do you protect floors or doorways when needed?
- Do you disassemble beds?
- Do you reconnect appliances?
- Can you move patio and garage items?

- Can you handle fragile items?
- Can you pack?
- Can you unpack?

Residential moving is the core service most people think of when they hear "moving company."

Furniture Moving

Furniture moving can mean a full move or a smaller service focused only on furniture.

Some customers do not need boxes moved. They only need large furniture transported, rearranged, loaded, or delivered.

Common furniture moving situations

- Moving furniture between homes
- Moving furniture within the same home
- Rearranging rooms
- Moving furniture to storage
- Moving furniture for remodeling
- Picking up furniture purchases
- Moving furniture out for flooring installation
- Moving large items upstairs or downstairs
- Moving furniture into a garage or staging area

Best for

Furniture moving is best for customers who need help with large, awkward, or heavy household items.

This may include:

- Sofas
- Sectionals
- Beds
- Dressers
- Armoires
- Dining tables
- China cabinets
- Desks
- Bookcases

- Recliners
- Patio furniture
- Entertainment centers

What makes furniture moving different

Furniture moving is not just lifting.

A good crew thinks about:

- Doorway clearance
- Stair angles
- Wall protection
- Disassembly
- Blanket wrapping
- Load order
- Weight distribution
- Floor protection
- Fragile surfaces
- Glass removal
- Hardware management

What to ask

Ask:

- Will you wrap the furniture?
- Can you disassemble and reassemble it?
- Can you move it upstairs or downstairs?
- Do you handle tight turns?
- Can you move it without damaging walls?
- Do you move single items?
- Is there a minimum charge?

Furniture moving is often one of the most practical ways to use a moving company for a smaller job.

Packing & Unpacking

Packing and unpacking services help customers prepare belongings before the move and settle in afterward.

Packing can be full-service or partial.

Full packing

Full packing means the movers pack most or all household goods.

This may include:

- Kitchen items
- Dishes
- Glassware
- Books
- Decor
- Linens
- Clothing
- Lamps
- Small appliances
- Garage items
- Office items
- Fragile items

Partial packing

Partial packing focuses only on selected areas.

Common partial packing requests include:

- Kitchen only
- Fragile items only
- Closets only
- Artwork only
- China cabinet only
- Garage only
- Last-minute leftover packing
- Breakables only

Unpacking

Unpacking may include:

- Opening boxes
- Removing packing paper
- Placing items on counters or tables

- Setting up kitchen basics
- Removing empty boxes
- Organizing by room
- Helping the customer get functional faster

Unpacking does not always mean detailed organizing unless that service is specifically included.

Best for

Packing and unpacking are best for:

- Busy families
- Seniors
- Corporate moves
- Customers with fragile items
- Large homes
- Last-minute moves
- Customers with limited time
- Customers physically unable to pack
- Moves with kitchens, glassware, or artwork

What to ask

Ask:

- Do you provide boxes and supplies?
- Do you charge by box, hour, or project?
- Can I pack some items myself?
- Can you pack fragile items only?
- How do you label boxes?
- Do you unpack at destination?
- Do you remove packing debris?
- What items will you not pack?

Packing is one of the biggest quality differences between a smooth move and a chaotic move.

Packing Supplies

Packing supplies are the materials used to protect, organize, and transport your belongings.

The right supplies matter because boxes, tape, padding, and protective materials are part of the move's damage-prevention system.

Common packing supplies

- Small boxes
- Medium boxes
- Large boxes
- Dish packs
- Wardrobe boxes
- Picture boxes
- Mirror boxes
- TV boxes
- Mattress bags
- Packing paper
- Bubble wrap
- Stretch wrap
- Tape
- Labels
- Markers
- Furniture pads
- Corner protectors
- Floor protection
- Moving blankets
- Straps

Best for

Packing supplies are useful for any customer packing themselves or preparing for movers.

They are especially important for:

- Kitchens
- Glassware
- Artwork
- Mirrors
- Televisions

- Lamps
- Books
- Fragile decor
- Electronics
- Mattresses
- Long-distance moves
- Storage moves
- Container moves

Why supplies matter

Poor supplies create preventable damage.

Common problems include:

- Boxes collapsing
- Overpacked boxes splitting
- Loose items shifting
- Glass rubbing against glass
- Furniture surfaces scratching
- Mattresses getting dirty
- TVs being packed incorrectly
- Liquids leaking
- Hardware getting lost

What to ask

Ask:

- Do you sell or provide boxes?
- Are supplies included in packing service?
- Are mattress bags extra?
- Do you provide TV boxes?
- Do you provide wardrobe boxes?
- Can unused boxes be returned?
- Do you supply labels?
- Do you bring stretch wrap and tape?

Supplies are not just add-ons. They are part of the protection plan.

Office Moving

Office moving focuses on business relocations.

This may include moving desks, chairs, files, conference tables, computers, printers, shelving, office supplies, reception furniture, breakroom items, and storage-room contents.

What office moving may include

- Pre-move planning
- Department-by-department labeling
- Desk and workstation moving
- File cabinet moving
- Conference room moving
- IT equipment handling
- Cubicle disassembly coordination
- After-hours scheduling
- Weekend moving
- Furniture placement
- Floor-plan-based unloading
- Office-to-storage moving
- Business equipment transport

Best for

Office moving is best for:

- Small businesses
- Professional offices
- Medical offices
- Real estate offices
- Law firms
- Retail offices
- Administrative teams
- Startups
- Coworking transitions
- Commercial tenants

What makes office moving different

Office moves are not just about furniture.

They are about downtime.

A residential move may be stressful, but an office move can interrupt revenue, staff productivity, phones, computers, client service, and business operations.

Good office moving requires:

- Planning
- Labeling
- Sequencing
- Clear access instructions
- Building coordination
- Elevator scheduling
- Parking coordination
- After-hours timing
- Communication with management

What to ask

Ask:

- Can you move after hours or on weekends?
- Can you follow a floor plan?
- Do you move file cabinets?
- Do file cabinets need to be emptied?
- Can you move computers?
- Do you disconnect electronics?
- Can you coordinate with building management?
- Do you provide certificates of insurance if required?
- Can you stage departments separately?

Office moving should be planned around business continuity.

Commercial Moving

Commercial moving is a broader category than office moving.

It may include offices, retail spaces, warehouses, showrooms, studios, clinics, schools, nonprofits, or business storage.

What commercial moving may include

- Business furniture
- Retail fixtures
- Shelving
- Equipment
- Inventory
- Backroom storage
- Commercial supplies
- Office furniture
- Display pieces
- Records
- Conference furniture
- Warehouse items
- Business-to-storage transfers
- Staged relocation

Best for

Commercial moving is best for organizations moving business-related items rather than household goods.

How commercial moving differs from residential moving

Commercial moves often involve:

- Building rules
- Loading docks
- Elevators
- Insurance requirements
- Business-hour restrictions
- Employee coordination
- Multiple departments
- Equipment sensitivity
- Tighter deadlines
- Downtime concerns
- Larger furniture systems
- More complex access

What to ask

Ask:

- Do you handle commercial moves?
- Can you provide proof of insurance?
- Can you work with building management?
- Can you move after hours?
- Can you move equipment?
- Can you handle multiple stops?
- Can you label by department?
- Can you stage the move in phases?

Commercial moving is about logistics, not just lifting.

Senior Moving

Senior moving is a more careful, supportive style of residential moving designed for older adults, downsizing households, retirement communities, assisted living moves, or family-managed transitions.

What senior moving may include

- Packing help
- Furniture downsizing
- Careful room setup
- Apartment-to-community moves
- Home-to-family moves
- Storage coordination
- Donation staging
- Furniture placement
- Unpacking basics
- Patient communication
- Coordination with family members
- Coordination with community move-in rules

Best for

Senior moving is best for:

- Older adults downsizing

- Moves into retirement communities
- Moves into assisted living
- Moves from a long-time family home
- Adult children coordinating a parent's move
- Customers who need extra patience and planning
- Customers who may feel overwhelmed by the process

What makes senior moving different

Senior moves can be emotionally complex.

The move may involve leaving a longtime home, sorting decades of belongings, deciding what fits in a smaller space, and coordinating with family or facility rules.

A good senior moving approach emphasizes:

- Patience
- Respect
- Clear communication
- Gentle pacing
- Careful furniture placement
- Family coordination
- Reduced chaos
- Practical setup at destination

What to ask

Ask:

- Do you help with downsizing moves?
- Can you work with family members?
- Can you coordinate with retirement communities?
- Can you pack and unpack?
- Can you place furniture according to a floor plan?
- Can you help set up the most important rooms first?
- Can you handle smaller, careful moves?

Senior moving is not just a service type. It is a communication style.

Specialty Item Moving

Specialty item moving refers to items that require extra planning, equipment, strength, experience, or protection.

Common specialty items

- Pianos
- Safes
- Gun safes
- Pool tables
- Hot tubs
- Large appliances
- Exercise equipment
- Treadmills
- Ellipticals
- Commercial equipment
- Artwork
- Antiques
- Large mirrors
- Glass tables
- Oversized furniture
- Heavy stone pieces
- Aquariums
- Arcade machines
- Medical equipment
- Large sculptures

Best for

Specialty item moving is best for customers who have items that are too heavy, fragile, valuable, awkward, or risky for standard moving methods.

Why specialty items cost more

Specialty items may require:

- Extra movers
- Special equipment

- Lift gates
- Crating
- Disassembly
- Protective materials
- Longer handling time
- Route planning
- Weight assessment
- Stair planning
- Door removal
- Third-party specialists

What to ask

Ask:

- Have you moved this item before?
- How many movers are needed?
- What equipment will you use?
- Does it need to be disassembled?
- Does it require crating?
- Can it go upstairs or downstairs safely?
- Are there weight limits?
- Are there access restrictions?
- Is additional valuation available?

Do not assume a standard moving crew can safely handle every specialty item.

Fine Art Moving

Fine art moving is a specialized service for artwork, framed pieces, sculptures, antiques, gallery items, and high-value decorative pieces.

What fine art moving may include

- Custom wrapping
- Soft packing
- Glass protection
- Corner protection

- Picture cartons
- Mirror cartons
- Custom crates
- Climate considerations
- Careful handling
- Inventory documentation
- Placement planning
- Specialty transport coordination

Best for

Fine art moving is best for:

- Original artwork
- Large framed art
- Canvas pieces
- Glass-covered art
- Sculptures
- Antiques
- Gallery pieces
- High-value decor
- Sentimental heirlooms
- Fragile wall art

What makes fine art moving different

Fine art is vulnerable to:

- Scratching
- Punctures
- Frame damage
- Glass breakage
- Corner damage
- Moisture
- Heat
- Pressure
- Improper stacking

- Vibration
- Handling marks

Fine art should not be treated like ordinary wall decor.

What to ask

Ask:

- Do you offer fine art packing?
- Do you use picture boxes or custom crates?
- Do you protect glass separately?
- Can you document item condition?
- Do you handle high-value items?
- What valuation options are available?
- Will the art be stacked or separated?
- Can you move large framed pieces?

For valuable or irreplaceable pieces, packing quality matters as much as transportation.

Crating Service

Crating service provides custom or semi-custom wooden protection for fragile, valuable, oversized, or unusually shaped items.

Crating is often used when standard boxes, blankets, or padding are not enough.

Items that may need crating

- Fine art
- Sculptures
- Large mirrors
- Marble tops
- Glass tops
- Antiques
- High-value furniture
- Chandeliers
- Fragile electronics
- Trade show pieces
- Specialty equipment

- Museum-style items
- Oversized decor

Best for

Crating is best for items that are:

- High value
- Fragile
- Irreplaceable
- Large
- Awkwardly shaped
- Difficult to replace
- Vulnerable to pressure
- Being shipped long distance
- Going into storage
- Being handled by multiple parties

Types of crating

Crating may include:

- Wooden crates
- Slat crates
- Solid crates
- Foam-lined crates
- Custom-built crates
- Reusable crates
- One-way shipping crates

What to ask

Ask:

- Does this item need a crate or just special packing?
- Is the crate custom-built?
- Is it foam-lined?
- Who builds the crate?
- How long does crating take?
- Can the crate be reused?

- Is crating included in the estimate?
- How is the item protected inside the crate?

Crating is not always necessary, but when it is necessary, skipping it can be expensive.

Storage Solutions

Storage solutions help customers bridge timing gaps before, during, or after a move.

Storage may be needed because of closing delays, remodeling, downsizing, staging, lease gaps, temporary housing, or uncertain move-in dates.

Types of storage

- Self-storage
- Portable container storage
- Mover-managed storage
- Warehouse storage
- Short-term storage
- Long-term storage
- Storage-in-transit
- Garage staging
- Business storage

Best for

Storage solutions are useful for:

- Delayed closings
- Home staging
- Remodeling
- Downsizing
- Temporary housing
- Military-style transitions
- Estate transitions
- Business moves
- Decluttering before listing a home
- Moves with uncertain delivery dates

Storage with movers versus self-storage

Self-storage gives the customer more direct access and control.

Mover-managed storage may be more convenient when the moving company handles pickup, storage, and redelivery.

Portable container storage gives the customer loading flexibility and can work well when the container can remain on-site or be stored by the provider.

What to ask

Ask:

- Where will my items be stored?
- Can I access them?
- Is storage climate-controlled?
- How is storage priced?
- Is pickup and redelivery included?
- Are items inventoried?
- What protection applies while in storage?
- How much notice is needed for delivery?
- Are there minimum storage periods?

Storage is not just a place to put things. It changes the move plan.

Packing Supplies vs. Packing Service

These are related, but they are not the same.

Packing supplies

Packing supplies are the materials: boxes, paper, tape, wrap, pads, and containers.

Packing service

Packing service is the labor and skill used to pack your belongings.

A customer can buy supplies and pack themselves.

A customer can hire movers to pack using customer-provided supplies.

A customer can hire movers to provide both supplies and packing labor.

The best choice depends on time, budget, fragility, and how much control the customer wants.

Choosing the right service type

Use this simple decision guide.

Choose local moving if:

You are moving within the same city or metro area and want a crew and truck.

Choose direct service if:

You want one company responsible for the move with fewer handoffs.

Choose van-line service if:

You have a larger interstate or cross-country move that benefits from a national network.

Choose statewide long-distance moving if:

You are moving within the same state but outside your local metro area.

Choose interstate moving if:

Your belongings are crossing state lines.

Choose portable container moving if:

You want flexible loading, storage options, and transportation without driving a rental truck.

Choose loading and unloading if:

You are renting your own truck or container and only need professional labor.

Choose packing service if:

You want help protecting fragile items, saving time, or preparing the home faster.

Choose crating if:

You have fragile, valuable, oversized, or irreplaceable items that need more than normal packing.

Choose senior moving if:

The move requires extra patience, family coordination, downsizing help, or careful setup.

Choose office or commercial moving if:

You are moving business furniture, equipment, records, workstations, or inventory.

Choose storage solutions if:

Your move-out and move-in dates do not line up or you need temporary space.

Questions to ask before choosing any moving service

Before booking, ask:

- What exact service type am I buying?
- Are you providing labor, transportation, packing, storage, or all of the above?
- Are you the company performing the move?
- Will anyone else handle my belongings?
- Is this local, statewide, interstate, or container-based?
- How is the price calculated?
- What can increase the final cost?
- What supplies are included?
- What supplies are extra?
- What protection or valuation applies?
- What happens if the move date changes?
- What happens if my inventory changes?
- Who do I contact on moving day?
- What paperwork will I receive?

The clearer the service type, the easier it is to compare movers fairly.

Final takeaway

Moving services are not one-size-fits-all.

A small apartment move across town, a senior downsizing move, a container load, a statewide relocation, and a cross-country van-line move are all "moves," but they are not the same service.

The right choice depends on distance, budget, schedule, physical difficulty, storage needs, packing needs, and how much responsibility you want the moving company to handle.

The most important thing is clarity.

- Know who is doing the work.
- Know who is transporting the shipment.
- Know whether the move is local, statewide, or interstate.
- Know whether the service is direct, brokered, van-line, container-based, or labor-only.
- Know what is included.
- Know what costs extra.
- Know who is accountable if something goes wrong.

A good mover will not make this confusing. A good mover will help you understand your options before moving day.

Sources

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