

Move Preparation Guide

How to get your home, belongings, family, and movers ready before moving day.

Moving Buddies Tucson AZ

A practical, professional-style preparation guide for reducing move-day stress, cost, delays, and damage risk.

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Moving day goes better when the preparation is boring, obvious, and finished before the truck arrives.

Most moving problems do not start when the movers lift the first sofa. They start days or weeks earlier: vague inventory, weak packing, unfinished rooms, no parking plan, no elevator reservation, no decision maker on site, pets loose in the house, hardware missing from furniture, appliances still connected, boxes half-open, and customers trying to make major decisions while the crew is already working.

This guide is built for people who want a professional-level move preparation plan. It is not a collection of cute hacks. It is a practical system for reducing time, cost, damage risk, confusion, and stress.

The central rule is simple:

Preparation is what lets movers move.

A prepared home allows the crew to protect, load, transport, and unload efficiently. An unprepared home forces the crew to stop, ask questions, wait, repack, move around clutter, search for access, and solve preventable problems on the clock.

Short Description

A comprehensive moving preparation guide that explains how to get ready before moving day, including timeline planning, decluttering, packing, labeling, supplies, access, parking, pets, appliances, furniture readiness, mover communication, and the final move-day checklist.

Meta Title

Move Preparation Guide | How to Get Ready for Moving Day

Meta Description

Prepare for moving day with a complete guide to packing, decluttering, supplies, labeling, access, parking, appliances, pets, essentials, mover communication, and move-day readiness.

What “move preparation” really means

Move preparation is not just packing boxes.

It includes:

- Deciding what is moving and what is not.
- Creating an accurate inventory.
- Booking the right service level.
- Preparing parking and access.
- Packing boxes correctly.
- Separating valuables and essentials.
- Preparing furniture for safe handling.
- Disconnecting appliances and electronics when required.
- Labeling rooms and boxes clearly.
- Managing pets, children, and household traffic.
- Having a decision maker available.
- Making sure the new home is ready to receive the shipment.

Top moving-company planning resources tend to agree on the same broad preparation pattern: start early, pack least-used items first, use proper materials, label clearly, confirm details before moving day, and keep essentials separate. Mayflower publishes an 8-week moving planner; United recommends packing from least-used to most-needed items; Allied and North American both emphasize early planning, supplies, labeling, and careful packing; Two Men and a Truck recommends breaking packing into manageable phases; U-Pack and PODS stress loading preparation, protected paths, and weight distribution for truck or container moves.

The preparation mindset

A professional move is built around sequence.

The sequence should be:

1. Decide.
2. Sort.
3. Donate, sell, discard, or keep.
4. Pack.
5. Label.
6. Stage.

7. Confirm.
8. Move.

A stressful move often follows the opposite pattern:

1. Panic.
2. Throw items into random boxes.
3. Leave closets unfinished.
4. Forget what is going.
5. Block walkways.
6. Ask the movers to wait.
7. Add items last minute.
8. Pay for extra time.

Good preparation gives the movers a clear job. Bad preparation makes the movers become packers, organizers, traffic managers, negotiators, and guessers.

The 8-week move preparation timeline

Not every move gets eight weeks. Sometimes customers have a closing date, lease deadline, emergency move, job relocation, or last-minute schedule change.

But the eight-week model is useful because it shows the ideal order of operations. Mayflower's planner is built around an 8-week moving timeline, and U-Pack, North American, Allied, and Two Men and a Truck all organize moving preparation around staged checklists rather than one giant final-week scramble.

8 weeks before moving day: define the move

Start with the big decisions.

Decide:

- Are you hiring movers, renting a truck, using a container, or doing a hybrid move?
- Are you moving locally, statewide, interstate, or into storage?
- Do you need packing help?
- Do you need loading and unloading only?
- Do you need help with heavy items, appliances, stairs, or specialty items?
- Are there dates that are fixed, such as a closing, lease end, elevator reservation, or delivery window?

Create a moving folder.

This can be digital or physical. Keep:

- Estimates.
- Inventory lists.
- Receipts.
- Building rules.
- HOA rules.
- Storage information.
- Utility transfer notes.
- Change-of-address confirmations.
- Contact names.
- Parking or elevator permissions.
- Photos of furniture or damage-prone items.

This folder prevents the move from becoming a memory test.

6 to 7 weeks before moving day: reduce the shipment

Every item you eliminate is an item you do not pay to pack, carry, load, unload, store, or find a place for.

Declutter before packing, not after moving.

Sort by category:

- Keep.
- Donate.
- Sell.
- Trash.
- Recycle.
- Give to family.
- Store temporarily.
- Not sure.

The “not sure” category should be small and time-limited. If half the house becomes “not sure,” you are delaying decisions instead of preparing.

Focus first on:

- Garage items.
- Patio items.
- Storage closets.
- Old paperwork.
- Duplicate kitchen items.
- Broken furniture.
- Outgrown children's items.
- Unused exercise equipment.
- Old electronics.
- Decor that will not fit the new home.

North American specifically notes that decluttering before packing can reduce weight, volume, time, and total move complexity.

5 weeks before moving day: create the real inventory

A mover cannot plan accurately from “three-bedroom house” alone.

Create a practical inventory by room:

- Living room.
- Dining room.
- Kitchen.
- Primary bedroom.
- Secondary bedrooms.
- Bathrooms.
- Office.
- Laundry room.
- Garage.
- Patio.
- Shed.
- Storage unit.
- Closets.

For each room, note:

- Large furniture.
- Small furniture.

- Boxes expected.
- Fragile items.
- Appliances.
- Heavy items.
- Items needing disassembly.
- Items not going.
- Items going to another stop.

Do not forget the hidden areas. Garages, sheds, closets, attics, patios, and storage units are where estimates often become inaccurate.

4 weeks before moving day: gather supplies and start packing

Buy or collect supplies early.

Core supplies:

- Small boxes.
- Medium boxes.
- Large boxes.
- Wardrobe boxes if needed.
- Dish or kitchen boxes if needed.
- Packing paper or blank newsprint.
- Tape.
- Markers.
- Labels.
- Mattress bags.
- Stretch wrap.
- Furniture pads if doing any part yourself.
- Zip bags for hardware.
- A parts box.
- Trash bags for actual trash, not for random move packing.

Professional principle:

Boxes should close flat, stack square, and survive being carried.

Do not build a move around weak grocery boxes, open totes, loose bags, and random containers unless the move is extremely small and low-risk.

3 weeks before moving day: pack least-used items

Start with items you will not need before move day.

Pack:

- Seasonal decor.
- Books.
- Extra linens.
- Guest-room items.
- Storage items.
- Decorative items.
- Fine china or occasional-use dishes.
- Out-of-season clothing.
- Wall decor.
- Collectibles.

United and Mayflower both recommend working from least-used items toward everyday essentials so you do not pack yourself into a corner before moving day.

2 weeks before moving day: confirm logistics

This is the week to remove uncertainty.

Confirm:

- Move date.
- Arrival window.
- Pickup and delivery addresses.
- Apartment or unit numbers.
- Gate codes.
- Elevator reservations.
- Loading dock rules.
- Truck parking.
- HOA or building restrictions.
- Storage-unit access.
- Payment method.

- Services included.
- Packing responsibilities.
- Appliance responsibilities.
- Any extra stops.

If the move has changed, tell the mover now. Do not save surprises for moving day.

1 week before moving day: finish the house, not just the boxes

The last week should be for finishing and confirming, not starting.

Do:

- Finish most packing.
- Label boxes clearly.
- Create a first-night box.
- Create a personal valuables bag.
- Separate items movers should not take.
- Confirm utilities.
- Clean access paths.
- Remove wall-mounted items if needed.
- Confirm pets and children plan.
- Make sure the new home is accessible.
- Verify keys, gate codes, garage remotes, and storage locks.

1 day before moving day: stage and simplify

The day before is not the time to pack the whole kitchen.

Do:

- Finish remaining boxes.
- Tape all boxes closed.
- Label everything.
- Empty trash.
- Clear walkways.
- Unplug small electronics.
- Gather remotes and cords.

- Prepare mattresses.
- Keep tools and hardware bags handy.
- Put personal essentials in your vehicle.
- Charge phones.
- Set aside payment method.
- Sleep if possible.

Moving morning: protect the clock

Moving morning should be quiet and controlled.

Do:

- Be ready before the arrival window.
- Secure pets.
- Clear vehicles from the driveway if needed.
- Open gates.
- Reserve parking.
- Keep children out of work zones.
- Walk the crew through the home.
- Point out fragile, heavy, not-going, and high-priority items.
- Confirm destination rooms.
- Stay available for questions.

The goal is to let the movers start moving quickly.

The room-by-room packing strategy

Pack room by room whenever possible. North American and Two Men and a Truck both recommend keeping like items together and avoiding mixed-room boxes because it makes unpacking and loading more efficient.

Room-by-room packing helps because:

- Boxes go to the right room.
- Unpacking is easier.
- Inventory is clearer.
- Fragile items are easier to identify.

- The mover can load more intelligently.
- You are less likely to lose small items.

Use a packing status system

Mark each room as:

- Not started.
- In progress.
- Packed except daily-use items.
- Finished.
- Not moving.

Two Men and a Truck suggests a simple visual method: after an area is packed, close drawers and doors to signal that the area is done. That kind of visual system prevents repeated checking and missed cabinets.

Box rules that actually matter

Rule 1: heavy items go in small boxes

Books, tools, dishes, canned goods, paper files, and dense kitchen items belong in small boxes.

Large boxes are for light bulky goods like pillows, bedding, towels, and soft items.

United, PODS, and other major moving resources consistently advise keeping heavy items in smaller boxes and light items in larger boxes.

Rule 2: fill boxes completely

A box should be full, but not bulging.

Underfilled boxes collapse.

Overfilled boxes split.

Loose boxes shift.

Fill voids with blank newsprint, packing paper, towels, or other appropriate filler.

Rule 3: close boxes flat

Movers need boxes that stack.

If the top caves in, the box is underpacked.

If the top bulges, the box is overpacked.

If the flaps do not close flat, fix the box before move day.

Rule 4: tape properly

Tape the bottom and top seams securely.

For heavy boxes, reinforce the bottom seam.

Do not assume one weak strip of tape will hold a box full of dishes or books.

Rule 5: label on more than one side

Label at least two sides and the top.

Include:

- Destination room.
- General contents.
- Fragile if actually fragile.
- Priority if it should be opened early.

Example:

Kitchen - plates - fragile.

Office - books - heavy.

Primary bedroom - bedding - first night.

Rule 6: do not create mystery boxes

Avoid labels like:

- Stuff.
- Misc.
- Random.
- Later.
- Important.

Mystery boxes slow unloading and create unpacking frustration.

Packing paper: use more than you think

Blank newsprint and packing paper are the workhorses of household packing.

For fragile kitchen items, paper does three jobs:

1. Wraps the item.
2. Separates items from each other.
3. Fills empty space so the box behaves as one stable unit.

Use a bottom cushion, item wrapping, layer separation, side void fill, and a top cushion.

Do not pack glass against glass.

Do not pack dishes loose.

Do not leave the top half of a dish box empty.

Mayflower recommends clean, ink-free news wrapping paper and generous cushioning on the top and bottom of cartons. Allied similarly emphasizes wrapping fragile items in paper, filling empty space, and using sturdy cartons that close securely.

What to pack first

Start with items you rarely use.

Good first-pack categories:

- Books.
- Decor.

- Wall art.
- Seasonal clothing.
- Seasonal decorations.
- Guest-room items.
- Extra dishes.
- Extra linens.
- Collectibles.
- Stored garage items.
- Hobby items not needed before the move.

Save for last:

- Daily toiletries.
- Work equipment.
- Medications.
- Basic kitchen items.
- A few outfits.
- Pet supplies.
- Kids' essentials.
- Bedding for the last night.
- Cleaning supplies.
- Phone chargers.
- Important documents.

What should not go on the moving truck

Some items should stay with you.

Keep personally:

- Cash.
- Jewelry.
- Passports.
- Birth certificates.
- Social Security cards.
- Deeds and titles.

- Insurance documents.
- Medications.
- Medical equipment you need immediately.
- Phones and chargers.
- Laptops.
- Keys.
- Firearms and ammunition, unless handled through proper legal and service-specific procedures.
- Sentimental irreplaceable items.
- Daily pet supplies.
- Essential children's items.

Avoid packing or sending with movers unless explicitly approved:

- Hazardous chemicals.
- Fuel.
- Propane tanks.
- Paint.
- Solvents.
- Pesticides.
- Fireworks.
- Perishable food.
- Open liquids.
- Live plants when not accepted.
- Anything leaking, unsafe, or unsanitary.

For interstate moves, FMCSA consumer documents remind customers to understand mover paperwork and responsibilities before signing; prohibited-item rules can also depend on the mover, service type, and law.

The first-night box

A first-night box prevents the worst kind of move-day problem: needing one basic item and having no idea where it is.

Pack:

- Toilet paper.
- Paper towels.
- Hand soap.

- Basic cleaning supplies.
- Trash bags.
- Shower curtain if needed.
- Towels.
- Bedding.
- Pajamas.
- A change of clothes.
- Basic toiletries.
- Medications.
- Phone chargers.
- Snacks.
- Bottled water.
- Pet food.
- Pet bowls.
- Kids' bedtime items.
- Basic tools.
- Box cutter.
- Flashlight.
- Light bulbs if needed.
- Important remotes.

United's first-night-box guidance emphasizes water, snacks, basic disposable kitchen items, toiletries, bedding, and practical essentials. The principle is the same for any move: keep the first night livable even if most boxes remain closed.

Furniture preparation

Furniture preparation does not mean the customer has to professionally wrap every item. If you hire movers, the movers usually handle furniture padding and stretch wrapping as part of their process, depending on the service agreement.

Customer preparation means making furniture ready to be safely handled.

Before moving day

Empty furniture unless the mover tells you otherwise.

Remove fragile, heavy, liquid, sharp, valuable, or loose contents from drawers.

Remove items from shelves.

Clear the top of every dresser, table, nightstand, and cabinet.

Remove candles, lamps, decor, picture frames, electronics, loose hardware, and glass items.

Tell the mover about weak furniture, antiques, wobbly legs, previous repairs, particleboard pieces, loose veneer, or existing damage.

Drawers

Soft, lightweight clothing may sometimes stay in sturdy dressers depending on the mover and move type. United and Mayflower both note that soft lightweight drawer contents may not always need to be removed, while breakables, spillables, and items that can damage other items should come out.

Use judgment.

Remove:

- Books.
- Tools.
- Paper files.
- Liquids.
- Breakables.
- Jewelry.
- Cash.
- Medications.
- Heavy items.
- Sharp items.
- Loose fragile objects.

Hardware

If you disassemble anything yourself:

- Take photos before disassembly.
- Bag hardware by item.
- Label each bag.

- Keep all hardware in one parts box.
- Do not mix bed bolts with table bolts.
- Do not tape hardware directly to finished wood.

Beds

Beds are common move-day delay points.

Prepare by:

- Removing bedding.
- Boxing or bagging bedding separately.
- Removing items stored under the bed.
- Clearing both sides of the bed.
- Locating needed tools if you are disassembling it yourself.
- Keeping hardware organized.
- Telling the mover if the bed is adjustable, storage-style, platform-style, bunk-style, antique, fragile, or complex.

Mattresses should be protected with mattress bags when appropriate, especially if they will be carried through exterior areas, loaded into storage, or handled during a multi-stage move.

Do not assume movers can safely handle a complex bed without time and access.

Large furniture

Large furniture needs clear access more than anything else.

Prepare:

- Dressers.
- Armoires.
- Cabinets.
- Desks.
- China cabinets.
- Dining tables.
- Sofas.

- Sectionals.
- Entertainment centers.
- Bookcases.

Do:

- Empty contents.
- Remove loose shelves.
- Remove glass shelves or doors when necessary.
- Remove table leaves.
- Remove fragile knobs or finials when needed.
- Clear the exit path.
- Tell the mover about stairs, tight turns, or previous difficulty getting the item into the home.

If the furniture was assembled inside the room and never moved as one piece, say so.

A mover needs to know if the item does not fit through ordinary doorways without disassembly.

Small furniture

Small furniture still needs preparation.

Prepare:

- Nightstands.
- Small tables.
- Chairs.
- Stools.
- Small cabinets.
- Small bookcases.
- Accent pieces.
- Lamps.

Do:

- Clear the tops.
- Empty drawers.
- Remove loose shelves.

- Box small loose items.
- Remove lampshades and bulbs.
- Box fragile decor.

Small loose furniture is often damaged because people treat it casually. It should still be padded, loaded intentionally, and kept from rattling around the truck.

Appliances

Appliance preparation is one of the most overlooked parts of moving.

Unless you have arranged otherwise, customers are usually responsible for disconnecting and preparing appliances before movers arrive.

Small kitchen appliances

All countertop-sized kitchen appliances should be boxed.

Examples:

- Toasters.
- Toaster ovens.
- Blenders.
- Mixers.
- Coffee makers.
- Air fryers.
- Rice cookers.
- Electric kettles.
- Food processors.
- Small microwaves.
- Juicers.
- Slow cookers.

Clean and dry them first.

Remove loose trays, blades, glass parts, and accessories.

Wrap accessories in paper.

Fill empty space with paper.

Label the box.

Refrigerators and freezers

Prepare by:

- Emptying all food.
- Defrosting if needed.
- Cleaning and drying.
- Removing or securing loose shelves.
- Disconnecting water lines if applicable through a qualified person if needed.
- Leaving time for the appliance to dry.

Do not move a refrigerator full of food.

Do not move a wet freezer.

Do not assume movers disconnect water lines or reconnect appliances unless that service is clearly included.

Washers and dryers

Prepare by:

- Disconnecting water hoses.
- Draining hoses.
- Disconnecting gas dryers through a qualified person when required.
- Securing cords and hoses.
- Installing shipping bolts if the manufacturer requires them.

If you do not know how to safely disconnect an appliance, hire the right technician.

Electronics

Prepare by:

- Backing up important data.
- Photographing cable connections.

- Removing cords.
- Bagging and labeling cords.
- Packing remotes separately but clearly.
- Using original boxes when available.
- Telling the mover about wall-mounted TVs or built-in systems.

Movers may move televisions, but wall-mount removal, wiring, and reconnection should be clarified before moving day.

Packing the kitchen

The kitchen usually takes longer than expected.

Start early.

Steps:

1. Pack rarely used serving items.
2. Pack extra cookware.
3. Pack pantry items that are sealed and worth moving.
4. Pack small appliances.
5. Pack dishes and glassware with lots of paper.
6. Leave only the last few days of essentials.
7. Empty the refrigerator and freezer before move day.

Do not pack open liquids, leaking bottles, greasy appliances, loose knives, or food that can spoil.

Use small boxes for dishes and dense kitchen items.

Use paper generously.

Label fragile boxes clearly.

Garage, patio, and storage areas

These areas are often underestimated.

Prepare early because they contain awkward, dirty, sharp, heavy, or prohibited items.

Sort:

- Tools.
- Yard equipment.
- Paint.
- Chemicals.
- Fuel.
- Propane.
- Sports gear.
- Holiday bins.
- Outdoor furniture.
- Planters.
- Ladders.
- Shelving.
- Patio decor.
- Grills.
- Storage totes.

Do not expect movers to transport hazardous materials.

Empty fuel from equipment when required.

Clean dirty items.

Bundle long-handled tools.

Disassemble shelving if needed.

Tell the mover about heavy garage items before moving day.

Closets

Closets can be packed efficiently if you start early.

Options:

- Fold clothes into boxes or suitcases.
- Use wardrobe boxes for hanging clothes.
- Leave some lightweight clothing in sturdy dresser drawers if allowed.
- Pack shoes separately.
- Remove items from closet floors.
- Bag linens or pack them in large boxes.

Do not leave closet shelves full and assume movers will handle it.

A full closet on move morning usually means the move is not ready.

Documents, valuables, and personal essentials

Create a personal carry set.

Keep with you:

- IDs.
- Passports.
- Medications.
- Medical devices.
- Financial documents.
- Closing documents.
- Lease documents.
- Insurance documents.
- Jewelry.
- Cash.
- Laptop.
- Phone.
- Chargers.
- Keys.
- Garage remotes.
- Pet records.
- School records.
- Sentimental irreplaceable items.

Do not put these in the moving truck.

If losing it would create a serious problem, keep it with you.

Access preparation

Access preparation can save more time than packing one extra box.

Before moving day, inspect:

- Driveway.
- Street parking.
- Gates.
- Walkways.
- Stairs.
- Elevators.
- Hallways.
- Doorways.
- Low branches.
- Loose gravel.
- Tight turns.
- Long carries.
- Loading docks.
- Storage-unit aisles.

Clear:

- Toys.
- Shoes.
- Rugs that slide.
- Plants.
- Hoses.
- Trash cans.
- Loose boxes.
- Patio clutter.
- Cars blocking truck access.

PODS loading guidance specifically emphasizes creating a clear protected loading path before loading a container. The same principle applies to professional movers: if the path is blocked, the move slows down.

Parking and building rules

Parking is not a small detail.

If the truck cannot park close, the move can take longer and cost more.

Confirm:

- Can the truck park in the driveway?
- Can it park at the curb?
- Is there a loading zone?
- Is a permit needed?
- Is the street narrow?
- Are there low branches?
- Is the driveway steep?
- Are there HOA rules?
- Are there apartment move-in hours?
- Is the elevator reserved?
- Does the building require a certificate of insurance?
- Is there a gate code?
- Is there a security desk?

Do this before the crew arrives.

Pets, children, and household traffic

A move is not a normal day at home.

Doors stay open.

Heavy items move through walkways.

Strangers enter and exit.

Dollies roll through the house.

The truck ramp may be down.

Pets and children need a plan.

Pets

Secure pets in:

- A closed room.
- A crate.
- A friend's home.
- A boarding facility.
- A pet daycare.

Label the room if an animal is inside.

Tell the crew.

Do not let pets roam during loading or unloading.

Children

Arrange supervision away from active work zones.

Keep toys out of pathways.

Keep snacks, water, and comfort items separate.

Do not rely on movers to watch for children while carrying furniture.

New-home preparation

Preparing the old home is only half the job.

The new home also needs to be ready.

Before delivery:

- Confirm keys.
- Confirm gate codes.
- Confirm utilities.
- Confirm elevator reservations.
- Clean major rooms if possible.
- Decide furniture placement.
- Label destination rooms.
- Measure tight spaces.
- Protect floors if needed.
- Clear the driveway.
- Make sure someone can direct unloading.

A mover should not have to ask where every box goes while standing in the doorway.

Create simple room labels:

- Primary bedroom.
- Bedroom 2.
- Office.
- Kitchen.
- Garage.
- Storage.
- Living room.

Tape labels to doorframes if needed.

The move-day walkthrough

When the crew arrives, do a short walkthrough.

Point out:

- Items going.
- Items not going.
- Fragile items.
- Heavy items.

- Items needing disassembly.
- Items already damaged.
- Boxes that need special care.
- Parking rules.
- Bathroom access.
- Pets.
- Water availability if offered.
- Destination room plan.
- Any unusual instructions.

Do not make the walkthrough too long, but do not skip it.

The crew needs the map before the work starts.

How preparation affects cost

Preparation can reduce cost because it reduces time.

Moves take longer when:

- Boxes are not finished.
- Boxes are open.
- Items are not labeled.
- Furniture is full.
- Appliances are connected.
- Parking is far away.
- Elevators are not reserved.
- The customer is still deciding what goes.
- Movers must move items multiple times.
- Walkways are blocked.
- Hardware is missing.
- The crew has to wait for access.

Preparation can also reduce damage risk because the move becomes less rushed and more controlled.

The cheapest move is not always the move with the lowest hourly rate.

The cheapest move is often the move with the least wasted time.

How to communicate with your mover before moving day

Send updates early.

Tell the mover if:

- You added furniture.
- You added boxes.
- You added a stop.
- You need packing help.
- You need appliance help.
- You have stairs.
- You have elevator restrictions.
- You have a gate.
- You have a storage unit.
- You have heavy items.
- You have fragile or high-value items.
- You need to change dates.
- You need a different crew size.

A good mover would rather know early than discover the issue after arrival.

FMCSA's consumer moving checklist for interstate moves emphasizes reviewing documents, accompanying the mover during inventory, and keeping contact information available. Even for local moves, the principle is useful: clear documentation and communication protect everyone.

Common preparation mistakes

Mistake 1: packing too late

Packing almost always takes longer than expected.

Start early and work in layers.

Mistake 2: using boxes that are too large

Large boxes filled with heavy items are slow, unsafe, and likely to fail.

Mistake 3: leaving boxes open

Open boxes cannot stack properly.

They slow the crew and spill easily.

Mistake 4: mixing rooms

Mixed boxes create unloading and unpacking chaos.

Mistake 5: ignoring parking

A long carry can change the whole move.

Mistake 6: forgetting the garage

Garages often contain the most awkward items and the most prohibited items.

Mistake 7: assuming movers disconnect everything

Appliances, electronics, wall mounts, water lines, gas lines, and built-ins require clarification.

Mistake 8: leaving pets loose

Pets can escape, hide, bite, trip movers, or get injured.

Mistake 9: not separating valuables

Movers should not be responsible for your passport, medication, jewelry, laptop, or closing documents.

Mistake 10: changing the move on moving day

Last-minute changes are sometimes unavoidable, but they often increase cost and stress.

Move preparation for a full-service move

If you hire a full-service mover, your preparation is different.

You may not need to pack everything, but you still need to:

- Decide what is moving.
- Separate items not moving.
- Remove personal valuables.
- Identify fragile and high-value items.
- Empty trash.
- Remove prohibited items.
- Prepare access.
- Confirm parking.
- Reserve elevators.
- Secure pets.
- Be available for questions.

Full service does not mean no preparation.

It means the mover handles more of the labor.

Move preparation for a partial packing move

Partial packing is common.

You might hire movers to pack:

- Kitchen only.
- Fragile items only.
- Artwork only.
- Closets only.
- Last-minute remaining items.

Prepare by separating what you want packed professionally.

Do not mix customer-packed and mover-packed items without clarity.

Label or stage areas:

- Pack by mover.
- Already packed.
- Do not move.
- Customer will carry.

Move preparation for labor-only or container moves

If movers are only loading or unloading, your preparation matters even more.

You are responsible for:

- Truck or container rental.
- Parking or placement.
- Equipment provider rules.
- Pads and straps unless provided.
- Weight limits.
- Transportation.
- Timing.
- Weather exposure.
- Container pickup and delivery.

U-Pack and PODS both emphasize using proper loading supplies, balancing weight, using available space, placing heavy items low, and protecting items before loading. Container moves especially need tight loading because the container may be lifted, transported, stored, and redelivered.

Prepare:

- Clear path to container.
- Have pads and straps ready.
- Keep boxes closed and labeled.
- Stage heavy items first.
- Protect furniture before loading.
- Do not load wet or mildewed items.
- Do not exceed provider rules.

Move preparation for apartments, condos, and HOAs

These moves depend on rules.

Confirm:

- Move-in and move-out hours.
- Elevator reservations.
- Loading zones.
- COI requirements.
- Gate access.
- Parking permits.
- Dock access.
- HOA container rules.
- Noise rules.
- Trash and debris rules.
- Hallway protection rules.

If the building refuses access, the movers cannot solve that from the truck.

Move preparation for Tucson-area moves

In Tucson and surrounding areas, plan for heat, sun, monsoon storms, desert landscaping, gates, gravel, and long carries.

Tucson-specific preparation:

- Start early when possible during hot months.
- Have water available for your household.
- Clear cactus, pots, hoses, and rock borders from paths.
- Watch for loose gravel on ramps and walkways.
- Keep pets indoors and secure.
- Check monsoon weather.
- Avoid placing boxes or furniture where rain runoff can hit.
- Confirm truck access in foothills, gated, or narrow-street areas.
- Trim low branches if needed before move day.

Heat makes unprepared moves more expensive because fatigue slows everyone down.

Final move preparation checklist

Two to eight weeks before

- Choose service type.
- Get estimates.
- Vet the mover.
- Confirm date range.
- Create a moving folder.
- Declutter.
- Start inventory.
- Order supplies.
- Begin packing least-used items.

Four weeks before

- Pack storage and seasonal items.
- Notify important parties.
- Confirm building rules.
- Plan parking.
- Schedule utilities.
- Arrange donation or disposal.
- Start labeling boxes by room.

Two weeks before

- Confirm move details with mover.
- Update inventory.
- Finish most packing.
- Reserve elevators.
- Confirm gate codes.
- Plan pet and child care.
- Prepare appliances.

- Identify items not going.

One week before

- Pack most remaining rooms.
- Create first-night box.
- Separate valuables.
- Prepare furniture.
- Empty garage and patio items that need sorting.
- Confirm payment method.
- Clear access paths.

Day before

- Finish packing.
- Tape all boxes closed.
- Label all boxes.
- Empty trash.
- Disconnect approved items.
- Charge phone.
- Pack personal vehicle essentials.
- Confirm arrival window.
- Set aside keys, remotes, and documents.

Moving day

- Be ready before the crew arrives.
- Secure pets.
- Clear driveway and paths.
- Walk the crew through the home.
- Point out special items.
- Stay available.
- Do a final room check.
- Confirm destination placement.
- Keep essentials with you.

Final takeaway

A smooth move is not created by luck.

It is created by preparation.

Start early. Reduce the shipment. Pack correctly. Label clearly. Separate valuables. Prepare furniture. Box small appliances. Confirm parking. Reserve elevators. Secure pets. Communicate changes. Keep essentials with you. Make the new home ready before the truck arrives.

The better prepared you are, the more the movers can focus on what you hired them to do: protect, carry, load, transport, unload, and place your belongings efficiently.

Move preparation is not glamorous.

It is the difference between a controlled moving day and an expensive scramble.

Selected Research Sources

- Mayflower - Ultimate Moving Planner and Packing 101 resources
- United Van Lines - Moving Tips, Packing 101, and First Night Box guidance
- Allied Van Lines - Long Distance Moving Checklist and packing resources
- North American Van Lines - Moving checklists and packing tips
- Two Men and a Truck - Moving checklist and packing checklist resources
- U-Pack - Moving checklist and loading tips
- PODS - Packing and loading tips for containers
- FMCSA - Protect Your Move consumer resources and moving checklist