



Packing Tips & Hints

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Tips from the Professionals

Visit the [Avatar Moving](#) site. They explain useful things, like the difference between *Newsprint* and *old newspaper*. **Newsprint** is *unprinted* newspaper paper and so relatively cheap and good. **Old Newspapers** have been printed and the ink will come off and stain the things you're wrapping, possibly permanently. ***Don't use old newspaper!*** You'll also find strong advice against using used boxes, like those available from some local markets, for packing. Stains and food residues in these boxes can ruin your goods and attract insects if you use them for storage.

Packing Hints

Here's a list of packing supplies that will come in handy:

Plastic bags and labels for easy identification.

[Foam peanuts, Styrofoam pellets or "popcorn"](#).

Tissue or craft paper for delicate packing jobs.

[Clean newsprint](#) for general use cushioning.

Corrugated paper and/or [bubble wrap](#) for figurines and fragile items.

[Gummed tape \(1 1/2 to 2 inches wide\) and tape dispenser](#).

[Markers](#) and labels for identifying contents of cartons.

Notebook and pencil for carton identification log.

Scissors and/or [box knife](#).

[Packing boxes](#) in sizes ranging from book boxes to wardrobes.

[Mattress bags](#)

Pack on a room-by-room basis and do one area of the room at a time. It's best not to mix items from different rooms in one box. The last area to be packed should usually be the kitchen. Many items here are used on a daily basis right up to, and including, moving day!

Start packing several cartons each day a few weeks before your move. Be sure that the items you pack won't be needed before your move, of course. By pacing yourself, you'll be more organized and the job won't be so overwhelming.

- Take an inventory of what you pack. Note where packed boxes are to go, especially those that need to go to storage.
- Use Corrugated Boxes. Use clean cartons designed for moving. Boxes obtained from grocery or liquor stores are not always clean, and they may not withstand the weight of the items that you'll be putting in them. Also, their odd sizes tend to make loading more difficult. Use a new box large enough to allow room for adequate cushioning material on all sides of the contents. Choose a box strength which is suitable for its contents. Never exceed the maximum gross weight of the box. This is usually defined in the Box Maker's Certificate printed on the bottom of the box.
- Protect it Inside with Cushioning Materials. It's important to properly cushion the contents of each carton. Wrap each item separately. Fragile articles need both proper separation from each other and clearance from the corners and sides of the box. This will prevent against damage and protect the contents from shock and vibration which can pass from the outside of the box to the contents. Proper cushioning material, combined with a strong outer container, will help protect your belongings.
- A wide variety of materials can be used for cushioning and protection. These include:
 - Air encapsulated plastic (bubble pack)
 - Expanded polystyrene (peanuts) [Note: may not be suitable for heavier products that tend to shift toward the bottom of the package while in transportation.]
 - Corrugated dividers
 - Polystyrene dish sleeves
 - Paper (crumpled Kraft paper or newspaper) [Note: Paper is only suitable for lighter products. It tends to flatten when used as cushioning for heavy products.]

Use enough cushioning material to ensure that the contents cannot move easily when you shake the box. Several inches of cushioning material all the way around should do it. Extremely fragile objects require special packaging for safe shipment.

- Close boxes securely using Strong Tape. Proper closure of your package is as important as adequate cushioning. To close a box securely, use a strong tape - two inches or more in width - such as the types described below. Use professional packing tape, which is a wide, strong, clear or brown tape. Masking tape is not strong enough to support the weight of a fully packed carton. Tape all cartons closed on the top and bottom -- don't just fold the end flaps closed.
 - Pressure sensitive plastic, clear or tan - the most convenient and widely used
 - Water activated paper tape - the least expensive, but can be a bit messy without a special dispenser
 - Pressure sensitive reinforced (strapping) tape - strongest, but more expensive

Do not use masking tape or cellophane tape. These tapes do not provide the strength necessary for secure closures.

- Use Proper Labeling. To minimize confusion and to make retrieving items from storage easier, keep these important points in mind:
 - Mark each box with the name of the room it is going to go into and a brief description of contents (you'll appreciate this when you're looking for that

important something!). For boxes [going to storage](#), it's a good idea to put an inventory sheet on the box to find items later.

- Avoid marking or labeling over a seam of closure or on top of sealing tape.
- Mark [fragile boxes](#) to give everyone a clue of which ones they really shouldn't drop or kick around. Identify the "Top" of fragile boxes if the contents might be damaged by storing the box on the sides or bottom. The "Top" should be the most stable orientation of the package as it rests on a flat surface.
- Consider buying a pack of [colored stickers](#) and color coding the boxes by room or by type of item (clothes, etc.). Hang a balloon of a corresponding color outside the room where you want the color-coded boxes to be delivered. Color coding is especially good for any boxes that you will need to place into storage (no point in loading them up twice!).
- Decide what you are going to need to unpack first and mark a sequence on the boxes. Do this for the boxes for each room.

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Packing Suggestions and Techniques

- Heavy Packages. Don't pack too much into a box. It is better to have a lot of boxes that you can lift, than fewer boxes and a strained back. When packing a box that weighs more than 30 pounds, it is important to re-evaluate your package materials and check that they are adequate for heavier package contents.
 - Cartons need to be of stronger construction, preferable with seams that are stitched or stapled, not glued. Check the box maker's certification for maximum weight. The higher the weight certification, the better your box will protect its contents from impact in handling and over-the-road vibration.
 - Use new cartons whose strength has not been compromised by humidity or prior use wear and tear.
 - Seal with heavy duty tape, preferably [reinforced](#).
 - Dense cushioning is a must. Peanuts and crumpled paper are not acceptable. They crush and shift under heavy loads. Customized corrugated or [molded foam "framing"](#) are more suitable and reinforce the rigidity of the outer carton.
 - Do not band packages together unless each individual package is in a carton designed to support the total "package" weight. If you must band packages, use a minimum of two bands in each direction, and label the individual boxes. Band together only same sized boxes.
- Don't pack too many books into a box. They are remarkably heavy for their size. Alternate books so that it goes pages/spine/pages/spine as you look into the box as most hardback books are slightly wider at the binding and they may get damaged if you put them all the same way around. Individually wrap fragile books, valuable hard covers and delicate dust jackets before placing them in the box. Consider boxing them in a sensible sequence for refilling your shelves (e.g. by type/size and alphabetical).
- Small Items. To prevent small items from being lost or mistakenly thrown out with the packing paper, wrap miniature knickknacks and other small items in brightly-colored tissue paper before placing them in the box.
- Dish ware - most damage to dish ware is due to improper packing. Use more cushioning than you think you need. Use [heavy duty boxes](#) and tape.
 - Plates and Flat China - Begin with the larger items and put smaller items toward the top. Select a medium-sized carton or [dish pack boxes](#) and line the

bottom of the carton with crumpled newsprint paper. With [clean newsprint](#) paper stacked neatly in place on a work table, center one plate on the paper. Grasp a corner on several sheets of newsprint paper and pull the newsprint over the plate until sheets completely cover the plate. Stack a second plate on and, moving clockwise, grasp a second corner and pull newsprint sheets over the second plate. Stack a third plate. Grasp remaining two corners, folding two newsprint sheets of each corner (one at a time) over the plate. Turn your wrapped stack of plates upside down onto your newsprint paper. Re-wrap the entire bundle: start with one corner of newsprint paper and pull two sheets over the bundle; cover bundle with next corner, then the third corner; and finally, the fourth. Seal the bundle with packing tape. Place the bundle of dish ware in a medium-size box so that the plates are standing on edge.

- o Glassware and Crystal - Always wrap each piece individually. Never put one piece inside of another. Stuff glasses and stemware with crumpled tissue or clean newsprint paper before wrapping. Glassware and crystal should make up the very top layer of your carton and should be packed rim down. Delicate glassware and stemware should be placed in an upright position, not on its side. Especially fragile items should be packed in a separate carton and then packed in a larger carton surrounded by cushioning. Lay on the corner of clean newsprint paper and roll it one or two full rotations (depending on size); pull sides of the newsprint paper up and over glass/stemware and continue rolling to the far corner. Corrugated paper, bubble wrap or [dish pack cell kits](#) may be used for added protection. The cell kits are usually available in various heights to accommodate short and long stemware.
- o Bowls - Wrap individually, then nest 2-3 together and wrap as an entire package. They can be placed on end or flat. Continue to add layers in the same manner as for plates and china. Fragile mixing bowls may be packed using the technique detailed for Glasses and Cups. Don't forget to use dish pack boxes!
- o Glasses and Cups - Even though they can be fairly sturdy, it is still important that each is carefully wrapped. Pack with the rims down. With clean newsprint in place on the work table, position one cup six to eight inches from one of the corners. Now pull the near corner of the paper up and over the cup. Nest a second cup directly on top, with handle to left (second cup should "nest" itself in packing paper folded over the bottom cups). Pull the two side corners up and over, one at a time, and tuck corners inside the top cup. Hold the bottom and top cup in position and roll cups to the remaining corner. Again, use dish pack cell kits for maximum protection.
- o Unpack breakables over the box you're taking them out of; that way, if you happen to drop an item, it will land on some packing material, thereby reducing its chance of breakage.
- Statuary, figurines, curios. Wrap generously in [bubble pack](#), wrap in a layer of clean paper and pack in boxes with plenty of crumpled paper or foam packing "peanuts" in between items. Objects with delicate appendages, such as candelabras or figurines with extended arms, should be wrapped with extra bubble pack and surrounded by extra packing material. Again, unpack breakables over the box you're taking them out of; that way, if you happen to drop an item, it will land on some packing material, thereby reducing its chance of breakage.
- Mirrors, Glass/Marble Table Tops, Pictures, Paintings, Etc. - The moving companies recommend purchasing special cartons for all but the smallest items in this category. [Mirror and picture cartons](#) can handle most situations. Only one article

should be packed in each carton. Cross mirror glass with a series of masking tape "Xs" to help strengthen the glass, then wrap in a generous cushion of clean paper, and place in a flattened packing or telescoping carton. Consider professional crating assistance for over-sized or especially heavy items such as table tops.

- Clothing - Folded clothing can be left in sturdy dressers or packed in suitcases, if desired. Other fold-able clothing should be packed in [medium sized cartons](#). Hanging clothing should be packed in [wardrobe cartons](#) and hung from the steel bar included with the wardrobe carton. If wardrobe cartons are not used, clothes should be removed from the hangers and packed in lined cartons. Hats should be left in their boxes and repacked in moving cartons. If there is no hat box, a small carton can be used with the hat surrounded by clean crushed newsprint and loosely filled with the same.
- Food - Never pack perishable items, aerosol kitchen products or frozen food. Box dry foods in medium sized cartons after taping any openings or tops closed. Jars should also be taped shut and wrapped as well as cushioned. Both cans and jars should be packed in the [smaller cartons](#) because of weight.
- Lamps - Remove shade, bulb and harp assembly (the loop that supports the shade, it usually slides off easily). Double wrap the bulb and harp assembly. Wrap the base and cushion it in a [dish pack](#) or [similar type box](#). For lampshades, select the carton size as close to the shade measurements as possible. Pack only one shade per container. Don't use crumbled newsprint inside or around the outside of the shade. Glass lampshades and chandeliers should be packed in sturdy boxes as you would any fragile glassware.
- Major Appliances - Many appliances require servicing, disconnecting and preparation. You may be able to perform most of the requirements yourself. Use particular caution when disconnecting gas appliances as the flexible gas line connecting most gas appliances is fragile.
 - Refrigerators & Freezers: should be emptied of all food. Thoroughly clean and dry all interior surfaces to prevent mold and mildew buildup. Shelves should be either secured in place or detached and wrapped. An open box of baking soda can help avoid unpleasant odors. The electric cord should be unplugged and taped to the back. If there is an ice maker, it should be disconnected from the water line and drained in advance. Be sure to wedge refrigerator and freezer doors open when placing into storage.
 - Washing Machines: should have all hoses disconnected and containerized. If you elect to place hoses in the tub or drum, be sure to wrap the metal couplings with cloth or paper to avoid damage to the tub's surface which could result from bouncing or vibration. The electric cord should be unplugged and taped to the back. The washer drum should be secured (see the Instruction Manual for specifics).
 - Dryers: should have the vent hose removed and containerized. The electric cord should be taped to the back. Clean the lint trap. Gas dryers need special care to avoid damaging the flexible gas line. Be sure to turn off the gas supply before disconnecting the flex line from the dryer!
 - Barbecue Grills and Propane Tanks -- Wrap grates and briquets separately in newspaper (or place all briquets into a grocery bag) and place parts in carton. Pad carton with newsprint to reduce movement of contents. Propane tanks must be drained before the move. Consult your local gas grill distributor for the safest method.
- Small Appliances - Clocks, radios and other smaller appliances should be individually wrapped and packed along with linens or towels or surrounded with

crushed paper for protection. Tangles in the electrical cords can be minimized by neatly looping the individual cords and tying them with 'twisties' from your local market. Rubber bands work well, too.

- Tools - Any power tools containing gasoline or oil should be drained before moving. Never pack or store flammable fluids, like gas or oil! Long handled tools can be bundled and secured with tape or stretch wrap. Hand tools should be wrapped and packed according to general packing rules.
- Draperies and Curtains - [Wardrobe cartons](#) are excellent for hanging curtains and drapes. If wardrobes aren't used, pack folded curtains and drapes in cartons that have been lined with clean newsprint.
- Bedding - Mattresses must be covered to protect them from soil and damage, especially when preparing them for storage. Appropriate sized [mattress bags](#) are recommended and are available from good packing suppliers.
- Beds - Lash bed rails together with [rope](#) or [plastic stretch film](#). As you take beds apart, mark all pieces so you know which goes with which headboard, etc. Place covers on mattresses to keep clean during moving and storage.
- Flowers and Plants - For short moves, its best to transport your potted plants in the back of a van or the like. Pack them to prevent tipping and crushing. If you move them with an open truck, like a 'pickup', cover them to prevent wind damage. Live plants and potted flowers will likely not survive a long distance move unless you are able to provide daily care for them. Many movers will only take them on the condition that they are marked as "dead" on the inventory. If they survive, then it is a bonus. Artificial flower arrangements should be carefully wrapped and packed in individual cartons. If possible, secure the arrangement to the bottom of the carton. Cushion and label appropriately.
- Electronics and Clocks - Original manufacturer's packaging with Styrofoam inserts provide the best protection for moving electronic goods. If these are not available, large or medium cartons should be used and the item well wrapped and cushioned. Larger home electronics such as consoles and large screen (projection type) televisions should not be packed but should instead be moved as furniture. Grandfather clocks and other delicate mechanical devices require special pre move preparation. Its best to consult a specialist.
- Computers - here's the information you need to make sure your computer doesn't arrive at your new home in bytes and pieces.
 - Make backup copies of all your files. Store the backup disk with your original program disks and keep in a secure container. All backup media is temperature sensitive. High temperatures will damage your backups.
 - Remove any floppy diskettes, CD's and all other media (ZIP disks, 'thumb' drives, etc.) from their drives close the drive door.
 - Most modern hard disks "auto park" the heads when power is removed. The disk automatically retracts the recording heads from the data area into a safety zone. To prepare an older hard disk, you'll need to make sure the recording heads are parked for transport. IBM and most hard-disk clones include the program SHIPDISK.EXE, which parks the heads. The hard disk becomes unparked once you turn the computer back on.
 - Once your hard drive is secure, turn off the system and remove all cables from the back of the unit. Carefully label them so you know where to connect them again. Individually loop and tie the leads to prevent tangles.
 - When possible, you should always pack your computer in the box that it came in. If you don't have the original box, all equipment should be packed in sturdy boxes with generous packing. Don't use Styrofoam 'peanuts' as they can

generate enough static electricity to damage some components. Use the original packing or generous amounts of clean crumpled newspaper.

- If you have a printer, pack it in its original box. Remove ink cartridges from ink jet and laser printers. Don't forget to do the same with a FAX machine. If you are moving a pin printer, insert a piece of paper in the platen to secure the print head.
- Some scanners need to have the scanner bed secured before moving, consult the manual.
- If you are taking a hi-fi / home theater set up apart, ask yourself this question. Do I know enough to be able to put this together again (if it was installed for you, possibly not! If this is the case, you'll probably be hiring an installer to put it together again at your new house, so if you aren't moving too far, you can get them to take it apart here and put it together again there, for a reasonable fee. If you are moving far you may need to pay two different companies. In any case the speaker wiring etc. may need to be different in each property so it is worthwhile getting it all set up properly again.) If you feel safe (or lucky) get a roll of sticky labels and mark up every lead and connection. Check that the colors of the leads are consistent through the connections. For home theater set-ups, again labeling everything to start with will make things much easier. Certain equipment (record decks in particular) may need to have transit screws replaced/tightened to prevent damage in transit. Remove the stylus and put it in a padded box (matchbox or similar) and tape that to some safe part of the deck. Use a twistie or similar to restrain the arm. Remove the platter (being careful with the rubber belt if it is belt driven) and pad it safely to stop it coming loose and breaking the rest of the deck during the move. Remove all cassettes, CDs, laser discs etc. from their apparatus before securing them for transit. Before reassembling the equipment, it is a good time to clean all the contacts and the ends of the leads with an appropriate cleaner (not Pledge/Mr. Sheen!).
- Record albums, tapes, CDs. Stack these items on end so they can absorb shock with less chance of damage. Pack tightly so they're secure and can't shift.

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What Not to Pack For Safe Moving and Storage

Some common household items should not be packed, stored or shipped because they are hazardous materials. Examples of these materials include flammables such as paint, varnish and thinners, gasoline, kerosene and oil, bottled gas, aerosol cans, nail polish and remover, ammunition and explosives, corrosives, and cleaning fluids and detergents. Packing Flammable Articles can Cause Explosion or Fire. Heat from the sun can raise temperatures inside a closed van or storage unit to more than 150 degrees. Even in the middle of winter, heat builds up inside. Many common items, including aerosol hair spray or cleaning products can trigger an explosion or fire that could destroy your possessions when packed or stored. For your own safety and the safety of your belongings, make sure that no member of your family packs these items in a container to be moved. Replacing a can of hair spray is much easier than replacing all of your belongings.

Restricted Materials Include:

- Bottled gas of any type

- Paints, varnishes, solvents, thinners and oils
- Corrosives and explosives
- Ammunition
- Gasoline, kerosene and any other flammable liquid
- Flammable household items like nail polish remover and lamp oil
- Heating agents like Sterno
- Ammonia and bleach
- Aerosol cans regardless of the content
- Matches and lighters Aerosol
- cans of all types Chemicals
- and chemistry sets Cleaning
- fluids
- Cologne
- Fertilizers with ammonium nitrate
- Fire extinguishers
- Fireworks
- Flammable goods
- Flares
- Food of any kind, including pet foods
- Furniture polish
- Lighter fluid
- Perfume
- Starter fuel
- Tanks of compressed gas
- Any other type of combustible

You should personally transport irreplaceable photos, financial papers and assets (bank checks, insurance policies, stock certificates, etc.), legal documents (wills, passports, etc.), valuables, jewelry, coin and stamp collections, etc.), and medical and family history records. For your personal protection and security, we recommend that the following not be packed. These items should be kept with you during your move, or secured in a safe deposit box or bonded storage area for storage.

- Cash
- Personal Papers
- Documents pertaining to the move
- Deeds, wills or other such valuable papers
- Evidence of debt
- Securities
- Jewelry (except for costume jewelry)
- Prescriptions
- Furs
- Stamp or coin collections
- Family photographs
- Any item that is not replaceable and can be transported by other means safely

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Preparing Your Business Move

The following tips information will give you an idea of what you can expect in your office or business move. These comments are presented in outline format to save time. More details on most of these comments are available in the other sections on this web page.

Labeling

- Every item to be moved must have a label on it.
- Place labels on each item of furniture. The labels are color coded.
- If an item must be dismantled to be moved, be sure to label all parts.

Disconnect all wiring

- Wiring, telephone or any equipment which is fastened to desks, etc., **MUST** be disconnected.

Personal Computers, Monitors, Keyboards, External Storage, Printers, Fax Machines, Typewriters, etc.

- Unplug all equipment from the power source and from other peripheral equipment.
- Place all cables, cords, covers etc. in a moving carton with your other desk contents, etc.
- Make sure each piece of equipment has been properly serviced for moving, if any servicing is required.

Packing Cartons

- Place label on either END of the carton, NOT on top, bottom or sides
- Please do not over pack cartons. Cartons are stacked when they are moved. "Domed" cartons don't move well.
- Our special auto-bottom cartons do not require packaging tape.

Desks and Credenzas

- Label the desk on the top surface
- Place small items such as pens, rubber bands, etc., in an envelope and put it in one of your moving cartons.
- Glass tops on desks - place separate label on lower right hand corner. Remove all papers from under the glass. Remember to label the desk.

File Cabinets

- Vertical (standard) file cabinets can be moved full. It is not necessary to pack contents. Be sure all pressure plates are moved forward.
- Lateral File Cabinets - you may leave the bottom two drawers full. All drawers above the bottom two must be packed in cartons.
- If you have locks on file cabinets, go ahead and lock them. Be sure to keep the key in a safe place.
- If you do not have a key, place packing material around the lock so the lock can no longer be forced into a locking position.

Bookcases

- Contents are to be removed and packed into cartons.

Copiers

- All required servicing **MUST** be completed prior to moving. Contact your vendor to arrange this and to make any necessary service after the move.

Clean House

- This is the perfect time to clean house.

Employees

- Keep employees informed about the entire move process and what is required of each of them. This will make the move less stressful and a lot more enjoyable. Your move consultant will hold informational meetings with your office.

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