

# Self Storage Association

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## What is Involved in Renting a Storage Unit?

**The monthly fee:** The rate you are charged to store your property depends on a number of variables.

The size of the unit. To maximize your unit space be sure to stack items when possible. Think of how to use the vertical space - for example, stand furniture, such as a couch, on its end if possible. Some careful planning and packing will save you \$20. - \$40. each month.

The supply of that particular size unit. If the facility has several units they may be willing to cut you a deal don't be afraid to ask.

**The term of the lease:** If you pay up front, you will usually get a discounted rate, again don't be afraid to negotiate. Check several facilities and be sure to compare benefits to pricing so that you can have an apple to apple comparison.

**"Set up" or "processing" fees:** Often when you are price shopping, you may not be told of this extra cost that some facilities will charge. Ask about this or any other ancillary charges so that your comparison-shopping is more meaningful.

**Late fees:** Be sure you understand how much it will cost you if your payment is not on time and exactly when this fee is activated. While most late fees are reasonable, others may not be. In any case, it will drive your rental costs up "substantially" in a comparative sense. If your unit rents for \$50/month and the late fee is \$15, that is a whopping 30% increase for that month.

**Transportation costs:** The amount of money required to transport your property to the facility can vary considerably. Truck rental, insurance costs, and fuel are some of the normal costs associated with moving your possessions. Some facilities are now offering free use of a truck (to move in) as an incentive to get you to their facility. Negotiate with them to also provide the truck when you leave, at the end of the lease term, this will save you time, frustration, and money.

**Insurance:** You must not assume that your property is protected against loss or damage just because you pay a monthly fee to a storage facility.

Read the agreement!! Ask questions and be very specific so that you know what the facilities' responsibility is regarding your property. If you have a homeowner's insurance policy, your property may be covered even if it is stored at a different location than your residence. Don't buy double coverage!

Ask your insurance provider for your coverage limits. If you do need to have your property insured, it will be a good idea to do some comparisons on what the facility offers. (We will give you several names and phone numbers of people who specialize in this business, just call or e-mail us.)

**Ancillary costs:** Other things that you will probably need that will add to your expenses of the move, may be among the following; moving boxes, tape, rope and straps, blankets, packing covers, tarps, locks, Styrofoam, bubble wrap, etc.

## **The Legal Issues Involved In Renting a Storage Unit**

**Know your rights:** Most states now have some kind of statute that governs the self-storage industry. The courts are not very forgiving of operators who walk on the rights of the public. Let us know if you need help locating the your state's laws.

**The rental agreement:** Read your agreement carefully and seek help if you are uncertain about the language of the document. When you sign the rental agreement, the owner, at that point, has a secured interest over your stored property. In the event of nonpayment of rent, the owner's lien rights that result from the agreement give him the ability to foreclose on and sell your property to satisfy his financial interests. Some questions you may want to ask... "If someone removes my property, who is responsible?" "If my property is damaged in some way, who is responsible?"

## **The Security Issues Involved in Renting a Storage Unit.**

One of the concerns of people who use self-storage is not only the safety of their property, but of their personal safety as well. The following is a series of benefits that are commonly provided by the industry as a whole and may well be a guide in your selection process.

**Security fence:** Does the property have a perimeter fence that will resist most intruders? Most facilities built today have this as a standard item, but some of the older ones do not.

**Entrance gate:** What type of gate controller does the property have? The vast majority of the facilities use a keypad for entering and exiting. Each tenant is given his or her individual code that allows access. Every time you enter and leave using the keypad, you leave a record of the time entered, duration of stay, and the time you left. Some properties have a keypad for entry but not for exit which will not track the time you spent on the property.

**Perimeter Infrared Beams (PIB):** This system is usually placed inside the fence line and will set off an alarm when a large object has interrupted the beam. The alarm is usually tied to the police department and will normally insure prompt dispatchment of an officer.

**Video Cameras:** Many facilities today use closed circuit television (CCTV) to not only provide 24-hour surveillance, but to use as a marketing advantage over the properties that do not. However, this may increase the rental rates a few dollars. Take note of the camera locations as compared to the unit you have selected to see that you are in the viewing, if not, you may want to request a different location. Most facilities provide surveillance tape for thirty days and then it is reused; if the interval is shorter, it may not provide the desired security.

**Door locks:** Now you have decided on a storage unit to rent. The facility has done some things to protect your property. Here are some additional things to you need to think about. Some have said that most perpetrators will not spend more than a couple of minutes trying to remove a lock from a door. Therefore, some locks have been rated based on how long they can endure an assault. The ratings are class 1, 1 minute, to class 5, 5 minutes. Even the strongest lock, however, becomes an easy prey to a pair of bolt cutters. The shackle part of the lock is the weak link when under attack by bolt cutters. There is a type of lock on the market called a round or disk lock that limits the shackle's exposure and therefore makes it a better choice in this case.

**Individual door alarms:** One latest development in the storage industry that has enhanced security is the advent of tenant door alarms. One manager cited that when they installed individual door alarms, their "break in" rate dropped to almost zero. Again, this feature will probably cost you a little more per month versus the properties that do not offer it.

**Lighting:** Lighting is an important issue especially if you will need to access the facility at night. It would be a good idea for you to

drive by the facility in the evening to see how well it is lighted. If the property had indoor corridors, ask how the lights work. Some may be on timers that allow a limited amount of time.

## **Helpful Tips for Moving**

### **Before the Move**

1. Tell the children about the move.
2. Take inventory of everything you will be moving.
3. Schedule a moving estimate 6-8 weeks before the move. Have them do a complete estimate (i.e. they do the packing), even if you plan on doing it yourself. This way you will be prepared if you run out of time.
4. Choose a mover at least 3 weeks in advance, 4-5 if you are moving in the summer. You don't want to be stuck without a mover.
5. Plan to move on a weekday when banks, utilities, and government offices are open.
6. Contact your insurance agent to transfer your coverage.
7. Plan on eating everything out of your refrigerator and freezer. This will save you BIG bucks if you don't have to throw them away.
8. Collect all your important records (i.e. medical records, dental records, veterinary, school, legal, birth certificates, passports, insurance documents, etc.), secure them in a box, and keep them with you.
9. Find medical and legal professionals in your new area.
10. Have your car tuned up.
11. Close and transfer banking accounts.
12. Notify the post office as well as other important people of your change of address.
13. Cancel all services to your house. (I.e. newspapers,

lawn services, maid services, etc.)

14. Plan to have your phone and utilities disconnected after you leave.
15. Pick up the dry cleaning from the cleaners.
16. Make hotel or motel reservations for the trip to the new home.
17. Finalize real estate and apartment rental needs.
18. Recruit moving day help. Friends, family and neighbors are good prospects.
19. Pre-pack if at all possible.
20. Pack a small bag with a few tools as a back up for any last minute detailing on the house.
21. Return library books.
22. Arrange to have your pets taken care of for the moving day. A move is quite stressful for a pet.

### **Day of Move**

1. Label boxes. This way your moving crew will know which box goes in which room, and it will save you some sanity also. If you are putting these boxes in storage and need to get to some of the items periodically, write a full description of the contents of each box on a sheet of paper and number your boxes. This will help you find the things you need from time to time.
2. Arrange to be at the house the entire day. You are responsible to do any last minute changes or repairs.
3. Plan on eating fast food all day. There will be no time to cook.
4. Get your kids involved.
5. Load houseplants last and unload them first.
6. Double check to make sure the truck driver knows exactly where to deliver your items.
7. Check the oil in the car.

8. Save all moving receipts; many will be tax deductible.

9. Pack a necessity bag for the trip. This may include special toys for the kids.