

TOP 10 MOVING DAY TIPS

What Professional Movers Know That Most People Don't

Research-backed advice from 25+ years of Bay Area moving experience

#1 **Book Early. Or Pay 40% More.**

The single biggest mistake Bay Area clients make is waiting too long to book. Research from the moving industry shows that families who wait until 4 weeks before their move often pay 40% more than those who book 8–10 weeks out, and they face limited availability for quality crews, especially from May through September.

In the Bay Area, with its high housing turnover and competitive rental market, top-rated moving companies fill their calendars fast. The best crews are booked solid weeks in advance.

★ **PRO TIP:** *Book your movers the same week you sign your lease or close on your home. Even a rough date can be locked in and adjusted later. This alone can save you hundreds of dollars.*

#2 **Pack a “First Night” Box and Keep It With You**

This is the tip that gets ignored constantly by clients, and it's the one that causes the most misery on arrival night. After a long moving day, the last thing you want to do is dig through 50 boxes looking for your toothbrush, phone charger, or the kids' pajamas.

Pack one clearly labeled box (or bag) that rides in your personal car. NOT on the truck. Include: toiletries, medications, phone chargers, a change of clothes per person, important documents, basic tools, snacks, and anything you'll need within the first 24 hours.

★ **PRO TIP:** *Label this box “OPEN FIRST” in large red marker. Put it in your car before the movers arrive so it never accidentally ends up on the truck.*

#3 **Reserve Parking Before Moving Day, Not On It**

In San Francisco, Oakland, Hayward, and most Bay Area cities, parking a large moving truck requires permits or reserved curb space. Movers who can't park close to your door carry furniture farther, which costs you more time and money on hourly moves and increases the risk of damage.

Contact your city's transportation or parking authority at least 1–2 weeks before your move to reserve a “No Parking” zone. In SF, this can be done online. The fee is typically \$50–\$100, which is far less than the extra hours you'll pay if movers are double-parked or parking far away.

★ **PRO TIP:** *Also notify your building manager and neighbors in advance. For apartment buildings, reserve the elevator if one is available. A waiting elevator can stall an entire move.*

#4 Declutter BEFORE You Pack. Every Box Costs Money.

Moving companies charge by time, weight, or volume. Every item you move that you didn't need costs you real money. Research consistently shows that most households move at least 20–30% of items they discard or donate within a year of arriving at their new home.

Start decluttering room by room, 6–8 weeks before your move. Begin with the spaces you use least: attics, garages, storage rooms. Use the rule: if you haven't used it in 18 months, it doesn't deserve to move with you.

FACT: Moving companies charge by weight & volume. Reducing your load by 15% can save \$200–\$500 on a typical Bay Area move.

#5 Label Every Box With Room AND Contents

Unlabeled boxes are the single biggest source of post-move frustration. Professional crews move items from multiple rooms simultaneously to efficiently load the truck. Label the TOP and at least ONE SIDE of every box with: (1) Destination room, (2) General contents, and (3) “FRAGILE” if needed.

This lets movers place boxes directly into the correct room at the new house without you playing traffic director for hours after the truck leaves.

★ **PRO TIP:** *Color-coding with tape or markers by room (blue = kitchen, green = bedroom, etc.) speeds up unloading by 30–40% according to professional moving crews.*

#6 Clear All Paths Before the Crew Arrives

Professional movers navigate tight spaces, carry heavy items down stairs, operate dollies and moving straps, and work quickly. Cluttered hallways, unsecured rugs, toys on the floor, and obstacles between rooms do not just slow things down. They cause accidents and damage.

Before your crew arrives, walk every path from every room to the front door. Remove rugs, secure loose wires, move obstacles. Designate one room as "OFF LIMITS" for valuables your movers should never touch. Put a sign on the door.

★ **PRO TIP:** *Never leave cash, jewelry, or irreplaceable items accessible during a move. Keep valuables in a locked car or on your person. This protects your belongings AND your movers from any misunderstandings.*

#7 Photograph Everything Valuable Before It Moves

Before your movers load a single item, photograph your high-value possessions: electronics, furniture, artwork, antiques. Note serial numbers and keep receipts in a separate folder. This documentation is essential if you ever need to file an insurance claim.

Also photograph the condition of walls and floors at both your old home and your new one before and after the movers work. This protects both you and your moving company from disputes about pre-existing damage.

★ **PRO TIP:** *Store your photos in Google Photos or iCloud so they're date-stamped and accessible anywhere if you ever need them for a claim.*

#8 Set Up Utilities BEFORE You Arrive, Not After

One of the most common and most avoidable moving day disasters is arriving at your new home to find no electricity, no water, or no WiFi. Scheduling utility transfers takes 5 minutes but is almost universally forgotten until it's too late.

At minimum 2 weeks before your move, contact providers to transfer: electricity, gas, water, internet/cable, and renter's or homeowner's insurance. Schedule your OLD utilities to disconnect the day AFTER you move out, not the day of, in case the move runs long.

BONUS TIP: Schedule your internet installation 1–2 days BEFORE move-in. Tech installers often have 1–2 week lead times, which is longer than most movers.

#9 **Keep Kids and Pets Off-Site on Moving Day**

Professional movers work quickly through tight spaces carrying heavy items. Children and pets underfoot on moving day are not just an inconvenience. They are genuine safety hazards that also significantly slow the crew down, costing you money on hourly moves.

Arrange for a trusted friend, relative, or pet sitter to take children and pets for the day. If that's not possible, designate one adult whose sole job is managing them in one safe, closed-off room away from the action.

★ **PRO TIP:** *Moving day is stressful for pets behaviorally. A calm environment away from the chaos also prevents escape risks when doors are propped open all day.*

#10 **Tip Your Crew. And Feed Them.**

A well-treated crew works with more energy, more care, and more attention to the details that matter. Tipping movers is standard practice in the industry and a direct signal of respect for demanding physical labor.

The industry standard is \$25–\$50 per mover for a standard move, or 10–15% of the total bill for larger jobs. Bump this up for extra effort: heavy furniture, multiple flights of stairs, long carry distances. Also have water, coffee, and snacks available when the crew arrives. It is a \$20 gesture that genuinely boosts morale across an 8–10 hour move.

★ **PRO TIP:** *Have cash ready in individual envelopes per mover before moving day. Individual tips feel more personal and genuine than handing one lump sum to the crew lead.*

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