

A step by step guide to moving home

Step 1. Book a removal firm

Unless you have not got a lot of furniture and personal belongings it is worth hiring a removal company. Ask friends and family whether they can recommend a firm to you. Alternatively, search for removal companies that are members of the British Association of Removers. It is best to obtain written quotes from two or three specialists.

They will probably visit your home before making a quote to get an idea of the amount of furniture and boxes you will be moving. This is so they can provide the correct number of staff to assist with the move and an appropriate sized vehicle(s). Ask them whether the quote includes insurance for any damage to your belongings during transit and what they will do if there is an accident.

Some firms also offer a packing service. If you decided to enlist a firm to help you with the packing they will normally come to your house a day or two before you moving date to wrap and box your belongings. This service does of course come at an extra cost but may be worth it if you are busy and have a lot to pack.

Even if you don't enlist the help of a packing service, most removal firms can provide you with packing materials such as boxes, padding and parcel tape. These maybe provided at no extra cost or there may be a nominal charge.

If you decide to move your belongings yourself, hire a van. Again, obtain a couple of quotes before making a decision and check that you are not limited to a certain mileage. If you choose to do it yourself, enlist the help of family and friends and make sure that someone can help carry heavy items of furniture. Check whether your home and contents insurance will cover you for any belongings damaged during the move.

Step 2. Get organised

Moving home is one of the most stressful life experiences. However, a little bit of forward planning can go a long way towards making your move as smooth as possible.

A month before you move

- Book time off work if necessary
- If you are living in rented accommodation give notice to your landlord
- Have a clear out. Anything that you don't need should be recycled or given to charity
- Obtain packing materials such as newspapers, tissue paper, boxes, cardboard, wrapping, padding and parcel tape
- Contact your telephone and utility providers and tell them you're moving

Two weeks before you move

- Contact the removal firm with the final details
- Start packing things you rarely use
- Phone the telephone company and ask them to connect the phone in your new home
- Arrange building insurance and contents insurance for your new home
- Tell the local authority that you're moving

One week before you move

- Pack everything except things that you will need between now and your move
- Redirect your mail
- Pay any outstanding bills
- Use the checklist below to inform the right people and relevant authorities you are moving
- Put important and valuable items, such as passports, birth certificate and jewellery, in a safe place
- Obtain TV license for your new home

The day before you move

- Finalise last minute packing
- Pack a box of essential items, such as toilet paper, a torch, a kettle, teabags, coffee, mugs, spare bulbs etc
- Defrost the fridge and freezer
- Disconnect appliances

- Check your utility suppliers have switched on your gas, electricity and phone in your new home
- Clean the house
- Leave a 'welcome' card for the people who have bought your house, along with a few local takeaway menus and any instructions they may need
- Get a good nights rest!

Your moving day

- Turn off electricity, gas and water supplies at the mains at your old address
- Check all appliances are disconnected
- Secure all windows and doors before heading to your new home

Packing tips

- Label which boxes are for which rooms - this will make it easier to unpack and find essential items when you arrive in your new home
- Label each box and write a brief summary on a separate sheet of paper as to what is in that box. This is especially useful if you don't think you will be unpacking each box immediately after your move (for example; if there is limited storage space)
- Mark fragile items clearly - and if you're moving yourself, load them into the van last
- Take very fragile items with you in your car
- If you're moving your belongings yourself, put one or two heavy items into each container so that they weigh roughly the same
- Remember to keep essential items handy until the last minute - this may include a kettle, a couple of mugs, toilet paper, snacks, water etc.

Moving checklist

When you move, it is important that you to remember to inform the following:

- **Personal Contacts**
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Employer
- **Local services**
 - Milk delivery
 - Paper delivery
 - Library
 - School, college etc
 - Gym, social club etc
 - DVD rental
- **Financial Services**
 - Bank
 - Building Society
 - Insurance Companies
 - Credit Card Companies
 - Charge Card Companies
 - Store Cards
 - Loan Providers
- **Government Agencies**
 - Inland Revenue
 - Council Tax office
 - DVLA
- **Utilities & Services**
 - Gas
 - Electricity
 - Water
 - Phone / Mobile Phone company
 - Internet Service Provider
 - Royal Mail
 - Cable/Satellite company

- TV licensing
- **Health Providers**
 - Doctor
 - Dentist
 - Optician
 - Consultants
 - Vet
- **Other**
 - Publications/Subscriptions
 - Trade Unions
 - Professional Bodies