

HOMEOWNER FIELD GUIDE

MOVE LIGHTER

A Homeowner's Guide to Streamlining Your Stuff Before You Move

Less to pack. Less to pay to move. Less to unpack.

THE GOAL Do not organize everything you own. Decide what deserves to make the move, then pack only what supports the life you want in your next home.

Why Declutter Before Packing?

- Every item removed before the move is one less item to wrap, lift, transport, insure, unpack and find space for.
- A calmer, less crowded home is easier to clean, photograph, show and prepare for sale.
- Early decisions reduce last-minute dumping, rushed donations and boxes labeled 'miscellaneous.'
- Your new home starts organized instead of inheriting clutter from the old one.

The Simple Rule

Touch each item once and choose its next destination: MOVE, SELL, DONATE, RECYCLE/DISPOSE or DECIDE LATER. Keep the 'decide later' category small and give it a firm deadline.

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C2 Financial Corporation | Homebuyer & Homeowner Education

START WITH A PLAN, NOT A PILE

A practical system that keeps decisions moving

1. Set Your Move Standard

Before opening a closet, decide what the next home should feel like. Choose three words - for example: calm, useful and easy to maintain. Use those words when an item is difficult to judge.

2. Build Five Clearly Marked Zones

ZONE	WHAT BELONGS THERE
MOVE	Useful, loved and appropriate for the next home.
SELL	Worth enough to justify the time, listing, pickup and deadline.
DONATE	Clean, safe and usable - but no longer needed.
RECYCLE / DISPOSE	Broken, expired, unsafe or not accepted for donation.
DECIDE LATER	A small holding zone with a decision date - never a second storage room.

3. Work in Small, Complete Zones

- Start with one drawer, shelf or three-foot section - not an entire room emptied onto the floor.
- Finish the zone completely: decide, clean, return keepers and remove outgoing items.
- Use 25-minute work sessions followed by a short reset if the project feels overwhelming.

4. Use Fast Decision Questions

1. Would I buy this again today?
2. Will it fit the size, climate and lifestyle of the next home?
3. Have I used it recently - and do I realistically expect to use it soon?
4. Is the cost of replacing it lower than the cost and effort of moving and storing it?
5. Am I keeping the item, or keeping guilt, obligation or a past version of myself?

WHEN YOU ARE STUCK Photograph sentimental objects, keep one representative item from a collection, or place a limited number of items in a sealed review box dated for 30 days after the move.

ROOM-BY-ROOM PRIORITIES

Begin where decisions are easiest and visible progress is fastest

Kitchen & Pantry

- Discard expired food and spices.
- Donate duplicate tools and small appliances you do not use.
- Use up freezer and pantry items before moving week.

Closets & Bedrooms

- Try on uncertain clothing now.
- Remove damaged, uncomfortable and wrong-size items.
- Limit linens to what fits the beds and routines in the next home.

Garage, Storage & Utility

- Separate hazardous products early; movers may not transport them.
- Dispose of paint, fuel, chemicals, batteries and propane through approved local programs.
- Donate duplicate tools and abandoned project supplies.

Paper, Office & Technology

- Shred documents containing sensitive information.
- Keep vital originals together; digitize only when appropriate and secure.
- Match cords to devices and label both ends.

Living Areas & Decor

- Measure large furniture against the new floor plan, stairs, doors and elevators.
- Avoid moving low-value furniture that will not fit or serve a purpose.
- Create one labeled container for remotes, hardware and furniture instructions.

Recommended Order

Storage areas -> guest rooms -> books and decor -> closets -> kitchen -> everyday living spaces -> essentials. Leave daily-use areas functional until the final week.

MOVE IT OUT - ON PURPOSE

A decision is not finished until the item leaves the house

Sell Strategically

- Set a minimum value. If the likely proceeds do not justify the listing, messaging and pickup time, donate it.
- Photograph items in batches, describe condition honestly and set a firm sale deadline.
- Anything unsold by the deadline automatically moves to donation or responsible disposal.

Donate Responsibly

- Confirm current acceptance rules before loading your vehicle; many organizations cannot accept damaged furniture, mattresses, chemicals or recalled items.
- Give only clean, safe, functional items. Donation is not a substitute for disposal.

Recycle and Dispose Safely

- Check local rules for paint, chemicals, medications, batteries, electronics, propane, fluorescent bulbs and construction debris.
- Remove personal information from computers, phones, printers and storage devices before recycling or resale.

Protect What Should Never Enter the Moving Truck

KEEP WITH YOU	PACK SEPARATELY / VERIFY
Identification, passports, closing documents and keys	Medications and essential medical equipment
Cash, jewelry, irreplaceable keepsakes and small valuables	Hazardous, flammable or pressurized products
Laptops, backups, account recovery information and chargers	Plants, food and temperature-sensitive items
One-night essentials and children's/pets' immediate needs	Items prohibited by your mover, building or destination

SAFETY NOTE Moving-company restrictions vary. Ask your mover for its prohibited-items list before final packing, not on moving day.

PACK SMARTER AFTER YOU DECLUTTER

Make every box easier to load, locate and unpack

Use a Labeling System That Answers Four Questions

6. Which room receives this box?
7. What are the main contents?
8. How urgent is it: OPEN FIRST, WEEK ONE or STORAGE?
9. Does it require special handling: FRAGILE, HEAVY or THIS SIDE UP?

Pack an Open-First Kit

PERSONAL	HOME	MOVING / CLOSING
☐ Medications	☐ Bedding	☐ IDs/documents
☐ Toiletries	☐ Towels	☐ Keys/codes
☐ Clothes	☐ Basic tools	☐ Mover contacts
☐ Chargers	☐ Paper goods	☐ Payment method
☐ Pet/child needs	☐ Cleaning kit	☐ Inventory photos

Protect the Home You Are Leaving

- Keep floors and walkways clear; stage packed boxes against walls, not in traffic paths.
- Avoid blocking electrical panels, water shutoffs, furnaces, exits or inspection access.
- Complete repairs, cleaning and trash removal before the final walkthrough when required by the transaction.
- Photograph empty rooms, appliance condition, utilities and meter readings when appropriate.

Protect the Home You Are Entering

- Confirm access, parking, elevators, loading rules and floor protection before the truck arrives.
- Direct boxes to rooms immediately; do not create one giant unpacking pile.
- Set up beds, bathrooms, medication, pet supplies and basic food before opening nonessential boxes.

THE 24-HOUR WIN A successful first day is not an unpacked house. It is a safe, functional home where everyone can sleep, shower, eat, charge a phone and find the essentials.

YOUR MOVE-LIGHTER COUNTDOWN

A practical schedule you can start at any point

WHEN	FOCUS	FINISH LINE
6-8 weeks	Storage, garage, guest rooms, books and decor	Donation and disposal routes confirmed
4-5 weeks	Closets, furniture decisions, sale listings	Large-item decisions complete
2-3 weeks	Kitchen, office, technology and nonessentials	Most boxes packed and labeled
Final week	Everyday items, open-first kit, cleaning	Outgoing items gone; essentials separated
Moving day	Documents, valuables, inventory and access	Nothing important enters the truck by mistake
First 30 days	Unpack by priority; review sealed 'decide later' box	Remaining items earn a place or leave

Final Walkthrough Checklist

- ☐ All SELL, DONATE and DISPOSE items have left the property
- ☐ Cabinets, closets, attic, crawlspace, garage and outdoor storage checked
- ☐ Documents, medications, valuables, keys and open-first kit separated
- ☐ Boxes labeled by room, contents, priority and handling needs
- ☐ Mover restrictions, parking and building access confirmed
- ☐ Trash removed; rooms cleaned; repairs and transaction obligations completed
- ☐ Final photos and utility/meter records captured when appropriate

Real Estate Resource Desk

Continue your planning with Denny's financing, home-search, closing and moving resources:

Homebuyer Resource Desk: [Open the Resource Desk](#)

Homeowner Reports: HomeownersReports.com

Secure Loan Application: RealEstateLoanApplication.com

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