

When looking for a new home, consider the following:

- Think about your existing furniture and visualize placement of your furniture. Try to visualize if your furniture pieces will work in your new place.
- Make a note of how many closets, hall cabinets, kitchen cabinets and garage space you will have.

General Packing Tips

- Pack one room at a time. Purge as you are packing. Ask yourself the following questions: Do I use this anymore? Do I still need it? Can I donate it? Should I sell it in a garage sale or ebay, etc.?
- If you are planning on having a garage sale, pick a corner of your garage and/or an area in your home to set aside those items.
- Take pictures of the items being donated to attach to your donation receipt. Try to donate the items as soon as possible to try and clear space in your current home as much as possible.
- When packing your kitchen. First sort your kitchen items. Put like with like (all your glasses together, all your dishes together, all your tupperware, pots and pans, etc. together) so you can see how much you have. After you have sorted, purge and pack what is left over, which are the items that you will take with you to your new home or that they will go to storage.
- Follow the sort, purge, pack (or donate, or garage sale) process throughout your house.
- Avoid mixing things from different rooms in the same box; it will make unpacking more time consuming.
- Pack clothing and linens in suitcases.
- Wrap small items that can be easily lost in brightly colored tissue paper before placing them in boxes.
- Clearly label each box with your name, its general contents, an arrow indicating which side is up, "Fragile" if contents are breakable, and which room each box belongs in. Refrain from noting anything valuable, such as silver, on the outside of a box.
- Assigning color codes to label and corresponding rooms or family members can make unpacking quicker.
- Use small boxes for heavy items, large boxes for light ones, and medium boxes for everything in between. Heavier items should be placed at the bottom, lighter ones on top. A good rule of thumb is that if you can't pick up a box with ease, it's too heavy.
- When disassembling furniture, put hardware in a plastic bag and affix it to the corresponding piece (however, do not apply tape or any adhesives directly to polished or painted wood surfaces).
- Never pack flammables or combustibles

Label and Color Code -- Standard Labels -- color code them .. use construction paper or tape if you have it.

- Kitchen
- Living room
- Family room
- Master bedroom
- Girl bedroom OR guest bedroom
- Boy bedroom OR Bedroom #1 or Bedroom #2
- Bathroom (if needed Bathroom #1, #2, etc)
- Storage
- Garage

Pack the Essentials Last

The concept of the "Survival Box" will help you. You know what that is, right? It's a box containing the essentials of life: coffeemaker and children's nighttime loveys, bed sheets and blankets and pillows, an alarm clock. Paint it red, plaster it with Little Mermaid stickers, do something to it so it stands out like a sore thumb, and put it in the truck last, so it's first out in the new house. Your Survival Box will reflect your own family's needs. Think about your immediate needs, and hold those essentials back until the end.

General Packing Tips

- 1. Pack a suitcase-** For each member of the family moving, pack a suitcase as if you're all going on a 3-day vacation, including changes of clothes, medications, eyeglasses, toiletries, etc. Keep the suitcases separated from all the other items to be moved, such as in your car, at your new workplace, etc. so you'll have everything you need for the first few days without searching through boxes.
- 2. Create "Open Me First" boxes-** Pick one or two boxes per room as "Open Me First" boxes. Put in them the things you'll need first at your new location. Then mark the sides of the boxes so you'll know which ones are which.
- 3. One at a time-** Wherever possible, work on packing just one room at a time (instead of several all at once) to keep things focused and organized.
- 4. Less is more-** Use packing as a way to clean out belongings for donations, a yard sale, and/or the recycling center. Aim to eliminate 1/3 of your belongings. You'll save time and expense.
- 5. Off the floor-** Instead of the floor, use a completely cleared-off table top or counter in each room for packing boxes. You'll find you get much more accomplished.
- 6. Tracking small parts-** When taking apart items to be moved, such as tables, securely tape screws and other small parts securely to the underside of the item. You'll always know where to look and save time putting things back together.
- 7. Save space-** Use towels, pillows and t-shirts you're packing as extra padding around fragile items. It will save room in your boxes.
- 8. Criss-cross tape-** Tape boxes along the seams where the flaps meet together. Then tape perpendicularly at the center of the first tape, forming a cross.
- 9. Stacking-** Stack boxes with the heaviest on the bottom, lightest on top to prevent crushing.
- 10. The 30-pound rule-** Keep each box below 50 pounds absolute maximum and below 30 pounds wherever possible. Heavier boxes lead to injuries, are much more likely to burst their tape or seams and tend to get dropped.
- 11. Scale-** Keep a bathroom scale in the room you're packing so you can keep the boxes below the weight limits.

Letting People Know

1. **Post Office-** File your change of address with the Post Office at least 30 days prior to the date of the move.
2. **Referrals-** Ask everyone you notify for a referral in your new area.
3. **Records-** Get copies of your existing records (transcripts from schools, medical records from doctors, etc.) while you're notifying the changes of address.

Change of Address- Who To Notify

1. Accountant/tax preparer; Alumni associations; Attorneys
2. Babysitter/ child care provider; Banks (auto loans, checking accounts, credit cards, home equity, IRA's, mortgage, safe deposit box, savings account); Broker; Business cards (order new ones if applicable)
3. Cell phone provider; Child care/ daycare; Chiropractor; Courts, especially for traffic tickets or local disputes; Credit bureaus; Credit card issuers
4. Dentist; Department of Motor Vehicles; Diaper service; Doctor; Dry cleaning pick-up and delivery
5. Family members and friends
6. Health clubs; House cleaning service; House of worship
7. Insurance providers (auto, health, life, other vehicles); IRS (form 8822)
8. Lawn care; Luggage tags (replace existing ones)
9. Magazine subscriptions
10. New business cards; New employer; Newspaper subscriptions
11. Old employer; Orthodontist
12. Parent-teacher association; Passport; Pet sitter/ dog walker/ pet day care; Pharmacy (BONUS: get year-to-date expense summary for taxes); Physical therapist; Physician (BONUS: get referral for new location); Post office; Professional organizations
13. Retirement plan holders; Return address labels (order new ones)
14. Schools (BONUS: get copies of transcripts); Snow removal service; Social Security Administration; Swimming pool maintenance (pool cleaning, pool opening or closing); Swimming pool memberships
15. Veterinarian BONUS get vet records and recommendations
16. Water delivery service

Open Me First Box: The Kitchen

1. Aluminum foil or plastic wrap
2. Break-proof or disposable flatware, cups, and plates
3. Coffee maker and coffee (don't forget the filters!)
4. Dish detergent
5. Frying pan and spatula
6. Pet food and bowls
7. Scissors
8. Tea kettle

Open Me First Box: Main Bathroom

1. Bath mat
2. Bath towels
3. First-aid kit (aspirin, band-aids, hydrogen peroxide)
4. Shampoo
5. Shower curtain and rings
6. Soap
7. Toilet paper
8. Toothbrushes and toothpaste

Open Me First Box: Tool Room or Drawer

1. Duct tape
2. Flashlight
3. Flat-head screwdriver
4. Hammer
5. Level
6. Phillips-head screwdriver
7. Picture hangers
8. Tape measure
9. Utility knife

Unpacking

1. **Unpacking Plan-** Just like with packing, have a plan for unpacking. Otherwise you're likely to end up frustrated with a sea of half-opened boxes with your necessities still "missing in action."
2. **Prioritize Rooms-** Focus on "Open Me First" boxes in the bathrooms and kitchen first.
3. **Trash and Recyclable Boxes-** Keep at least one trash bag (for the real trash) and one large emptied box (to hold used packing paper and biodegradable "peanuts") available in each room BEFORE you start the heavy unpacking.
4. **Time Limits-** Set an objective of unpacking a certain number of boxes each day until all the boxes are all unpacked.