



**...how it should be done!**

By Matt Faizey of M&G Transport

# So, you have decided to move?

You do realise they say the three most stressful things in a person's life;

Death, Divorce and Moving House!

Hang on a minute, I'm supposed to be helping here. Ok. Let's get cracking.

I assume you have sold your home as you are reading this and are about ready to start packing up.

Before you pack *everything* ready for moving let me tell you a little story:

*When I was but a wee nipper just starting to learn this trade I remember we effected a removal to the Isle of Wight. This customer had us take two vans over. The first van contained everything from his house, pretty much, and the second the contents of his shed and garage. At the new address when we arrived, there was sited on the drive two large skips. Very simply the gentleman had us unload pretty much all of the contents of the second vehicle into these skips! Absolutely shocking.*

That power drill in the garage bought fifteen years ago with no plug and a burnt out motor isn't going to be much use at the new house is it.

Are you going to need all of the appliances that you currently possess? If you own a bright yellow fridge and have a nice new brown kitchen in the new home then why take it?

The Moral of the story? I don't think you need to ask, do you.

Have a clear out donate to charity, get a skip, get friends over, advertise in the local free papers. Let's face it, its time for a new start so throw everything you don't need away. All you will end up doing is paying for loads of stuff to be moved that you didn't need to.

This is most definitely the first step in preparing your home ready for removal.

# Packing

Whatever happens, your home, as well as yourselves need to be prepared for the process of moving. It may not seem like a 'big deal' but trust me it is.

Whether moving across town or to a different country everyone will have concerns in common. Everyone will want the process to go smoothly with no hiccups. Everyone will want the widescreen TV, the china, the pictures, in fact everything to arrive at the new address safe, well, and on time.

Many of our staff have, in their own way, helped to contribute to this guide. They don't realise it though! It is the moans and groans about what a customer has or has not done that have over the years built up and produced some of the most basic principles of packing up a home.

Despite this guide, despite all that is contained in it there is only one basic rule:

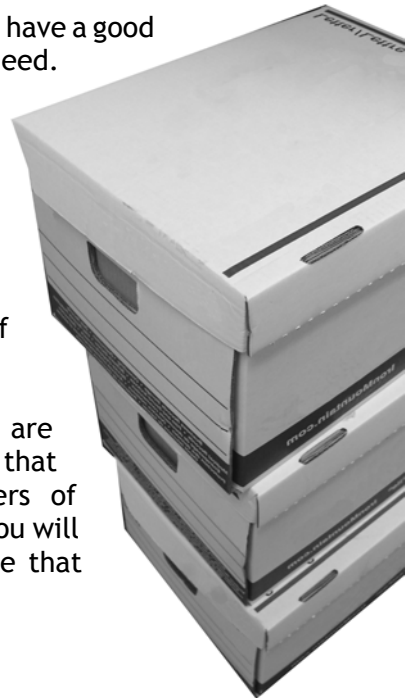
If it fits in a box then put it in a box without exception.

Any removal company that came to quote should have a good idea of the number of boxes you are going to need.

Many people think they are helping by going out and getting boxes from supermarkets, friends and colleagues. Please, don't do this. Removal companies' staff are used to moving and loading particular sizes or quality of boxes.

Moreover, more often than not, the boxes you will end up with will be of a far inferior quality. If in doubt phone the removal company.

As a general rule, however, what you need are 'Double Walled Cartons'. Double wall signifies that they are strong and made up of two layers of cardboard weave. Also, the boxes supplied to you will be of an appropriate size and not an 'odd' size that would be difficult to \*pack on a removal vehicle.



When it comes to packing up the contents of your home it is worth bearing in mind that there are a whole host of cost savers already present. Many companies may try to push you to purchase bubble wrap, polystyrene chips, or maybe a whole host of other materials.

Speaking from 12 years experience I can honestly say that these things are more of a luxury than a necessity. In your airing cupboard you more than likely have towels and bed linen. On your sofas you have cushions. Maybe you have a whole host of cuddly toys?

All these things can act as cushioning for breakable items. Basically what you are doing is using household items to substitute for bubble wrap or polystyrene chips.

The bed sheets could be used for wrapping large pictures and the like. Although check with the removal company first as many professional companies would rather you let them handle this part.

I'm sure, having read this guide so far, you have your own ideas now. Moving on: Crockery and China / Glassware are a little more tricky. Our packing crews use packing paper to wrap these and usually pack each box in 'layers'. This means placing everything in the box as if it were on its own shelf. Imagine an X-Ray of the side of a packed box. What you would see would almost look to be items packed on shelves. However, back on the paper point. Newspaper is just as good for protective purposes but you must remember that the print will rub off on everything. Therefore, everything will need washing at the new address, including your hands! Very often packing paper is relatively cheap and much cleaner. Once again though, if you are on a tight budget, newspaper is just as good.

In between each layer, and indeed around each item, our packers will very often use generous quantities of shredded paper; it's perfect cushioning material.

In other words, and to put it simply, don't just throw everything into boxes. Careful, methodical packing equal's safe packing. Consider the weight of each item and the item underneath. Never ram as much into each box as you can. Always leave each item with a little bit of room to move. I normally think of this as the 'jiggle factor'. If you jiggle the box would all the items move safely or be rigid. If they were rigid then there is no room for compression or twist. And at some point the box will need to.

When packing breakables into boxes always leave around an inch at the top. Never pack all the way up just in case the box or item that will be placed on top in the van compresses it a little. Also, place something soft at the bottom. Think of this in the same way as suspension on your car. The box will be lifted and placed down possibly up to 6 times on the day.

Bad packing can lead to broken items even if the removal company are wonderful.

Good Packing can result in no breakages at all even if the removal company are bad!

Remember when you pack your crockery and china you need to place the heavier items towards the bottom of the box. Six saucepans on top of dried flowers is most definitely not a good idea. Yes I know its common sense but it has been known.

*A lady once blamed us because a clay type pepper pot had got broken in a box. I was there when she unpacked it and saw that there were casserole dishes stacked on top of it!  
Needless to say I did have to politely point out that maybe, just maybe, the packing was at fault.*

Ideally you would have casserole dishes at the bottom, followed by mugs and dishes and then glasses. In other words consider the weight and strength.

*Another memory that comes back about 15 years ago (early nineties) we moved a lady locally who asked for help with unpacking. Her family helped pack up but could not be there for the unpacking. I unpacked the kitchen boxes. I kind of gradually noticed that many items looked old so on one such bottle I had a peek at the 'sell by date'. If I remember right it was a date in 1984. I carried on looking and lost count of the number of items that were well out of date. Please check this before you pack foodstuffs, there is no better time to clear out the cupboards.*

Strength > consider a vase. If you lay it on its side and stood on it, it would break. If you stood on it the correct way up it might break. Turn it upside down and stand on it? Not a chance. More often than not a method such as this will tell you the best way to place something in a box.

Whilst packing up, some people bubble wrap or blanket small furniture or pictures. Whilst this is very, very helpful for the \*removalists there is one point that is really worth remembering.

The gummy sticky stuff that the tape 'sticks' with makes a real mess. If the tape directly touches picture frames or furniture it can leave a really horrible mess. Please, if you do this be careful.

Have you been on holiday recently? Just wondered, are those suitcases still in the loft? If so get them down and start packing all the clothes that you haven't worn in ages. They either go in boxes or suitcases. Suitcases are by far the better option. This principle of 'space management' may seem petty right now but when you are in the new home you'll understand why. The last thing you will need is for the new property to look any more full than it has to. Make use of the suitcases, picnic baskets, laundry basket; in fact anything that is too big to put in a box but will act as a container.

Many, many people seem to think that the garage and shed are areas that they can just 'leave to the day'. Please do not do this. These areas are just as important to pack up as everywhere else.

\*Oil based paints, solvents, petrol and other such flammable or hazardous materials cannot be taken onto the vehicle so please dispose of them beforehand.

Garden tools are always fiddly. The only thing you can do is bunch them together and wrap some tape round.

Setting aside the items listed above any other paint tins, car wash tins, etc etc can all be boxed up no different to household items. Just make sure the lids are secure.

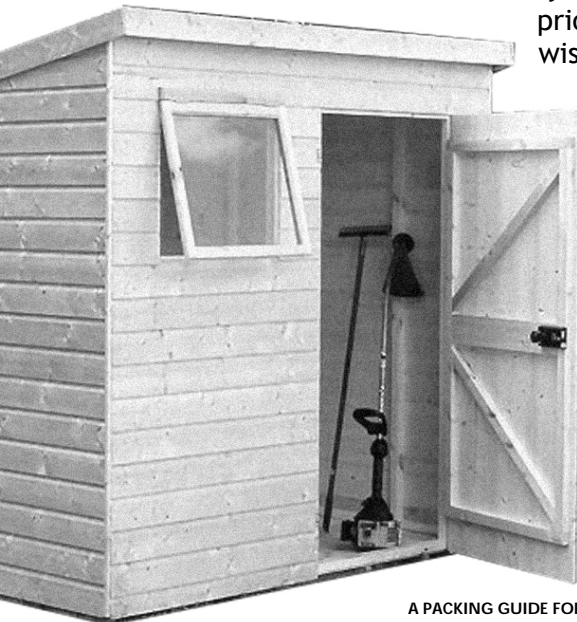
# 'Is the creepy crawlies house, sorry, I mean shed coming madam?'

Are you taking the shed with you? No doubt if you are it will have been dismantled into panels. These panels may be in perfect condition and ready to move. More likely if the shed has been there for a while they will have cobwebs, woodlice and spiders on them. Please, for the sake of 10 minutes, give them a tickle with a broom. Not just for the sake of the removal men but simply for the fact that the panels will be situated less than six feet from your sofa. Would you like the bugs to find a nice new home?

The same principle applies to workbenches and many solid items from the garage. Workbenches, ladders and old bits of wood are the favourite places. Please just give these a quick sweep.

Coming back to the hazardous substances point. Petrol lawnmowers, motorbikes, all these would have to be drained. Sorry but it could invalidate your removal insurance if this is not done.

It never fails to amaze me how many people choose the moment the removalists are closing up the van to announce that they wish to take the six foot conifer they have yet to dig up! Please decide prior to the removal which plants you wish to take with you.



When the aforementioned tree has been dug up please do not expect the crew to take it with the dirty roots exposed. Put the tree roots into two black bags (at least). Once again think of the creepy crawlies.....

# Other preparations

So many people to inform, and you must do so in good time. There's no way I could list everything here but for starters:

- GAS
- WATER
- ELECTRIC
- SCHOOLS
- DVLA
- FRIENDS
- INSURANCE COMPANIES

*all need to be notified of your new address.*

Whilst on the phone to the utility companies ensure the reconnection at the new address is taken care of. The last thing you would want is to have no heating on your first day in your new home.

Closer to the time you might need to inform the milkman, newspaper shop etc etc.

Also ensure, if moving some distance, that if any goods are with local suppliers that you collect them; maybe a watch that is being repaired or clothes at the dry cleaners.

# Personal possessions

There are going to be certain things that you will want to keep safe. Maybe valuables, jewellery, or insurance papers. Please collect these things and place them in your car or somewhere safe before removal day.

Also, without being specific (I could write a whole book on this bit) some people may have items that could definitely be considered personal. Do you? If so clear them out of the way. Please. It's not nice to find something that you'd rather not have seen because the customer forgot to hide it.

# Moving Day

Moving day is nearly always going to be pretty stressful but there are many measures you can take to minimise the fuss.

Firstly please make sure you haven't packed the kettle and some cold drinks. Obviously it's nice for the crew if the customer could kindly make them a 'cuppa'. However, far more important than that, will be the facility for you to just stop and take time out. Along with the kettle leave out some snacks, especially if you have children that will be present.

Whilst on the subject of children... I can only make this as an observation based upon what I have seen over the last decade or so but it seems as though many parents miss a trick. More than once we have seen that the kids bedrooms are perfectly packed up whilst other rooms are not. The reason for this we have discovered is as follows:

Sometimes parents choose to try to get their children involved in the process and to try to make it more of a family event. From what we have seen this is very much worthwhile. Children can be very 'literal'. Those children who have become actively involved and have been allowed to pack their own things have normally done so very well.

Just give them the one line piece of advice; 'If it fits in a box, then put it in a box.'

Back to the subject of moving day, and children. It is not uncommon to get 'stuck for keys'. Therefore, please make sure you have some toys, or games (for this read PSP, Gameboy etc) left out. If you are moved out of your old home at 13:00 and face a three hour wait for the keys to your new home then you'll need something to keep you amused, sorry, I mean keep the *kids amused*.

In the old packing guide we asked people to try to get an estimated completion time from the solicitor but the truth is that in our experience we have, more often than not, seen the first person's money get transferred at around 11>11:30. From that point on it is almost pot luck as to how fast things move. There are just so many different people involved that, when you hear the question 'How many people are there in the chain?', most people tend to think of the number of houses.

Whilst this is, strictly speaking, correct I would have to say whatever number you come up with then multiply it by four. For every home and its owners there is one solicitor, one estate agent and the bank.

Have you wondered why it takes so long to arrange the dates and get everyone moving in the same direction? This is the reason: it's because for every home there are three different sets of people involved in the negotiations!

## How does the purchase work? What happens and when?

I include this little section because maybe if I can give you just some advice on this then it might make life a little less stressful. I have no legal qualifications; I have never worked in an estate agency. However I have seen things from what I believe to be the most stressful end for quite some time.

Firstly the greatest challenge seems to be getting a date agreed, or, trying to get everything set for a particular date. No matter what **anyone** tells you until you have *\*exchanged contracts\** nothing is certain. Anyone could still pull out. Even if you have been in to sign the contract, unless your solicitor confirms *\*exchange of contracts\** has taken place, you are not 100% moving.

The ideal time to book the removal company is when this has happened. You could make a *\*provisional booking\** but not a definite one. You can only make a definite booking once the exchange has taken place. Now some people have, with many removal companies over the years, tried to take advantage and tell the small fib that exchange has taken place when it hasn't. This being to secure a date knowing full well they might have to cancel it. Moreover, people have been known to book numerous dates with more than one company that does not require a deposit. These companies work on trust. These companies have been learning fast.

Once a company suspects a customer is doing this they will phone round other companies to find out. It has been known for all companies to collectively agree that they will not let on to the customer that they

know and just wipe the booking out without saying anything.

This might sound harsh, but it's no more harsh than the customer potentially playing with peoples livelihoods.

*We had this very thing happen not too long ago. A friend of ours in the area (owner of a removal company) called in one Saturday morning for a coffee. During a natter he mentioned a customer's name, and so it transpired he had booked with both him and us for separate dates. Then our friend phoned two other companies and one of those had a booking also.....*

*Removal companies are in fierce competition and it is a tight market. Many Removalists are part time and only get paid for the days they work (ours are full time so it's the company that suffers). When people do this they are ultimately causing a drop in income for someone's family.*

Please be up front with everyone from the start. The whole selling, buying and moving process relies on trust. Without this the whole process is doomed.

Also, please don't think you actually **have** to move on a Friday. This was said to me just two days ago by someone. Yes it's true that most people do try to move on a Friday, but there is nothing to stop you from moving on any other of the five standard working days in a week. In fact, given that the banks and solicitors are at their most busy on a Friday, there is a good case for moving on one of the other days when you may get better attention.

## **I suppose we ought to move back to the packing and moving guide:**

In light of what is written above maybe the next tip I could give would be this. Try to collect up all the keys for the property you are selling **before** you start packing. It's no good on removal day hunting round for the key to the garage door; especially not if it might be in a box!

For removal day it's a good idea to create what we call a 'ready box'. This box is last out and first in. In here you would have just about anything you will or might want to use. This could consist of medication, bank details, contact numbers and the kettle! I know there will be many more things that you might find as you go that you'll want in here.

## Storage

Are you moving into storage?

When you move you may have to put all of your possessions into storage. The most common reason for this is, quite simply 'I have sold but have not found anywhere I would like to move to.' If it is not this then it will be something similar.

Since M&G's conception (1983) we have seen the 'into storage' scenario hundreds upon thousands of times. Many people believe it's a simple process, to be considered in the same light as a 'straight' move. This belief is both true and false. The process, from our point of view, is similar but the customer should view things slightly differently.

So many times when a customer books or enquires about moving into storage we always hear the same thing 'I should only be in storage for 4 to 6 weeks.' Unfortunately, very often this proves not to be the case and customers end up being in store for 4 to 6 months!

Therefore, when having your home contents brought into storage;

Keep passports with you. **Please.** It is very difficult and time consuming to search through 1500 cubic feet of tightly stacked household goods so that you can go on a holiday that was booked before you even had your home on the market !

Medication. Please never put medication into storage, or, to be more specific. Ensure medication is kept well away from items in your home that are to be brought into storage.

We would suggest that any medication is placed in your car or private possessions (handbag?) prior to the removal van turning up.

I'm sure, now you have read these brief points, that you will identify a whole host of possessions that need to be separated and kept safe. If anything we advise you keep an open box somewhere, covered with a sheet so that, as you think of something, you can just fetch it and drop it in right away.

Assuming you are using one of our storage facilities then the following rules and guidelines apply:

Your storage unit is rented on a month by month basis; that is calendar month, not 4-weekly. Insurance can be supplied by the storage company, however it is worth checking with whoever provides your household cover at present. Some lucky people might find that the cover for storage is already included.

Everyone will require a different amount of storage space. You will have been given a quotation for the amount of space you require. Very often a (good) estimator will quote for the maximum amount of space you are likely to need. This is never normally fixed and could go up or down. This is done in the interests of keeping customers happy. Its one thing to be quoted an amount and find it becomes reduced, and quite another to take a deliberately planted cheap price at first and find it increases. Should you purchase items without informing the removal or storage company then it will go up. If you have a massive clearout then tell the company right away. Forewarned is forearmed. If you can get away with a smaller unit then the company should endeavour to make sure you get one.



# And finally...

I think that's pretty much about it for now. No doubt this guide will be continually added to over time. Indeed, if you can think of anything we should include then we would love to receive an email or phone call from you.

Listed shortly are some explanations for some of the terminology you may hear over the next few months and have read in this booklet.

Should you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to give us a call or send in an email on:

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# Terminology

**\*stuck for keys** - What is 'stuck for keys'? This can happen from a number of scenarios. The first and most common is that there is a problem with transferring the monies from vendor to purchaser all the way up the chain. I can only quote you some examples of the causes for the delays we have had as heard by staff over the years;

'A lady in the bank forgot to transfer the funds, basically she forgot to press the button.'

'The solicitor went to lunch and didn't get back till gone four in the afternoon.'

'There is a problem with the first time buyers' mortgage.'

These are just a few things we have heard over the years. The point is that it can happen to you. So please be prepared.

**\*Provisional booking** - this is where you ask the removal company to make a tentative booking in their diary for you. This does not hold the date for you, despite what any company may say. Until you have exchanged contracts no removal company will take a definite booking from you. Not to mention, it is unfair of you to try to make one without the exchange actually having taken place; or at least not without a deposit being sent to 'hold' the date.

**\*'Packing a removal vehicle'** - A finely judged and skilled art in itself. M&G load vehicles in terms of rows. That is to say we create rows across the van. The principle is not unlike how you pack a box; heavy at the bottom and lighter as you move on up. The short principle is referred to as 'bases, boxes, bits'. You could have a sideboard at the bottom. This would then have boxes stacked on top and then, towards the very roof of the vehicle, light objects such as lampshades, cushions etc. It is for this reason that removal crews are very picky about the order in which they empty a property.

**\*Removalists** - well, in this day and age it might just be considered discriminatory to use the term 'removal man'. Hence the gender inclusive term 'removalist'. Yes, I think it's bonkers too!

**\*Oil based paints** - paint is normally either water or oil based. Oil based paints are flammable and water based are not. Cheap emulsion is very often water based and some specialist paints that are expensive can be oil based. If in doubt check the tin.

This moving guide was written by Matt Faizey of M&G Transport. It is based on an accumulative experience of the moving industry, both domestic (home) and commercial (office) for nearly 23 years.

M&G Transport was established in 1983.

M&G Removers have been moving people and Companies for many years.

We have been successful because we care, and most of the removals we effect throughout the United Kingdom are via recommendations. Our success is, in part, due to the fact that we operate using our own employed, fully trained staff who take a pride in each and every domestic or office removal they do.



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