

**CHAPTER 15  
ORGANIZING YOUR MOVE WITH EFFICIENCY**

*“The noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands.”  
~ Isaiah 32:8 ~*

**NEW** YORKERS ARE TRANSIENT. When my husband and I moved from Brooklyn to Manhattan, the process took a great deal of organization and financial prudence. Despite the fact that we only moved from one borough to another and that financial organization is my area of specialty, the move nonetheless took an unexpected bite out of our savings. On top of that, moving takes a tremendous amount of coordination. Here are some tips to consider as you plan *your* next move.

**Compare Moving Company Prices**

When we were newlyweds moving from our Park Slope studio apartment into a more spacious apartment in Crown Heights Brooklyn, all we did was dump what few possessions we had in boxes, call our friends, thank them with pizza and away we went! Six years later, after having established a home with real furniture and significant possessions, we needed professional assistance for the move from Crown Heights into our Manhattan apartment. Hence, we searched for a moving company.

*Chapter 15 – Moving*

We called three companies. One was a national franchise, the other was a local “mom and pop,” and the third was a referral. The first two gave me a quote over the phone. The latter company took the time to visit and provide a free consultation. According to the friend that provided the referral, the third moving company was economical, provided courteous service in addition to complimentary boxes, and even called the next morning to welcome them into their new home! We were impressed. Combined with the friend’s recommendation and the fact the third moving company quoted the lowest price, the deal was sealed for us.

**Resources:**

If you are moving in-state, research any complaints regarding your designated moving company at:  
Better Business Bureau - [www.bbb.com](http://www.bbb.com)

NYS Consumer Protection Office  
[www.consumer.state.ny.us](http://www.consumer.state.ny.us) - 1(800) 697-1220

If you are moving interstate (across state lines), research possible complaints regarding your moving company at:  
U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)  
[www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov) - 1(888) DOT-SAFT / 368-7238

The American Moving and Storage Association provides a moving referral service that lists moving companies that agree to abide by the association’s rules, as well as an arbitration service.  
[www.moving.org](http://www.moving.org) - (703) 683-7410

**Insist that a representative from the moving company come to your home in person to physically assess your belongings rather than merely giving you an estimate over the phone.** Having a conversation over the phone about the weight of all of the items in your entire household is just not gonna cut it. Obtain an estimate in writing so that there are no major discrepancies on the day of

the move. Press for “fixed-price” or “not-to-exceed price” bids from moving companies so you are not in for the shock of your life when the movers hand you the bill upon arrival at your destination. Don’t put yourself in a situation where your moving company holds your goods hostage until you pay them what they want. In-person estimates also provide the moving company with the opportunity to scope out whether your residence is a walk-up or has a freight elevator, etc. Inquire about freebies, and obtain receipts for anything you pay for upfront. Make sure the terms of the contract are clear and adequately communicated between the estimator and the movers contracted for the big day.

Why do I say all of this? The Managing Supervisor for the moving company came to our home for the free consultation, provided the estimate, and gave us free boxes. I prepaid for the wardrobe boxes, but the movers were not aware of this, as it was not noted on the invoice. Had I not presented *my* receipt, it might have been a hassle, causing unnecessary stress on the day of the move.

### **Change-of-Address Notifications**

**Fill out the free change of address cards with your local post office or on the Internet at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).** Until the original parties’ changes take effect, the post office will forward first class mail to your new address. The USPS recommends 30 days prior to your move date. I recommend filling out one card for each household member, including name variations, even if it takes a few more moments to fill out each card individually. My surname is formally “Brooks-Rolling,” but some mail appears as “Rolling.” For the sake of thoroughness, I filled out two cards for myself, and one for my husband. You do not want sensitive documents—such as credit card offers—ending up in the hands of the next occupant of your old dwelling place.

And if those new occupants are not as financially astute as you are at this point about calling the OPT-OUT # and shredding sensitive documents (Chapter 3), they just might toss it in the trash for an identity thief to get their hands on, and then you’d have to place a

fraud alert on your records (Chapter 11)...so get the address change card filled out, OK?

**Send out move notifications as soon as you know the new address.**

Unless circumstances dictate otherwise (e.g., your new dwelling is still occupied by someone else), I recommend sending out move notifications about 1½ to 2 months before the move in order to account for the time it takes for the database management personnel in various companies and organizations to update their records.

Decide the best methods for notifying family, friends, acquaintances, business associates and places from whom or from which you regularly receive mail. Should you use a post office move notification card? A stationery store's move notification card? E-Mail? Fax? A telephone call? A combination of some or all of these methods?

For instance, calling mail order companies might be a good idea because 1) it is efficient and cost-effective and 2) it generally takes anywhere from one to upwards of five or six more mailings before the updates take effect because magazine labels are often pre-printed several months in advance. The method all depends on what is the most effective communication method to the intended party without your having to make multiple efforts to change your address with each party.

In our case, we did not want certain parties in possession of our e-mail addresses; we were willing to spend only so much money on postage; and I, as the "Domestic CEO" of the household, had more time on my hands than my husband to make the notifications. Therefore, I e-mailed family and friends in addition to sending them cute little "I'm moving" cards from Hallmark; I also called the places that sent us mail regularly, such as our professional and alumni associations, and mailed notices to the remainder.

Also, take the opportunity to notify organizations from which you no longer wish to receive mail. And do not assume that the national headquarters of an association is going to alert its local counterpart.

Notify both. For instance, Meeting Professionals International, of which I am a member, has a local chapter, as well as a magazine for its members. I notified national headquarters, the local membership officer, and the magazine subscription office of our new address. Keep extra move notification cards on hand for old mail that trickles to your new address.

**Alert your credit card companies.** Unlike mail order companies, the changes take effect immediately. These companies do not want you to miss a payment deadline and of course, will be more than happy to make whatever accommodations necessary to expedite your paying on time. Call and check off the “change of address” box on your statement. Time it such that both you and your next credit card statement are physically at your new address at the same time.

**Avoid overlaps in utilities. If you know when you are moving, turn on/off utilities at the proper time so as to avoid overlaps in billing.** For instance, if you are moving on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, make sure the utilities (gas, heat, water, electricity, phone, cable) are turned off at your old residence on or around the day of the move, and that utilities are turned on at your new residence *by* the first night of occupancy. Make sure the bills are prorated; that is, you’re paying only for the time up until you vacate the old residence and not until you occupy the new residence. The utility company will not automatically know this information unless you communicate it to them.

#### **Address Change Notifications**

There is an entire list of entities that you should remember to provide a change of address notification to directly, using one of the aforementioned means. In select cases, you may opt to forego providing a forwarding address, but let the entity know nonetheless that you will no longer be at the address (so that your private mail will not end up in the hands of the next tenant).

Remember to time sensitive address change notifications. You do not want your credit card bill preceding you at your new address, or

your bank statements still arriving at your previous address. Here is a checklist you might refer to:

- Family and Relatives
- Friends and Neighbors
- Banks and Financial Institutions (i.e., Investments & Retirement)
- Credit Card Companies
- Credit Reporting Agencies
- Utility Companies (i.e., gas, electric)
- Phone company, Cell phone company
- Government Agencies (i.e., DMV, Voters Bureau, Veterans Administration)
- Place of Worship
- Gym & recreational franchises
- Daycare providers
- Educational Institutions (i.e., Alma Mater)
- Professional Associations
- Human Resources/Personnel/Benefits Administrator
- Healthcare agencies
- Business Associates/Clients
- Professional Service providers (Doctor, Lawyer, Insurance Agent)
- Vendors (i.e., Salon)
- Magazines & Subscription offices
- Mail Order Catalogs
- Frequency Rewards Partners
- Airlines, Hotels and Car Rental

### **Watch Your Budget**

Beware. Extraneous expenses can easily creep up on you. To help control your budget, take inventory of all of your possessions and calculate the number of boxes you will need, as well as the various types of boxes. I was amazed to find that U-Haul sold boxes specially made for TV/DVD/VCR, microwave, wardrobe, kitchen utensils, glasses, etc. Don't forget packing supplies, such as duct tape, rolls of bubble wrap and rope. If the moving company provides complimentary supplies, take advantage!

### **Packing and Labeling**

Make signs bearing the name to the rooms of your new residence in big, bold readable letters (typing the signs on a computer is more preferable, if you can do so). Proceed to make several copies of each sign to tape to

the boxes. You can even color-code them if you like (i.e., “Bathroom” signs are all yellow). As you are packing, write the contents of the box on each sign. For instance, the sign may read “Kitchen”. Write “pots and pans” on one sign. Write “utensils” on another Kitchen sign, “glasses, cups and mugs” on another, and so on and so forth. That way, the movers can place the box into the kitchen, but you know which box contains pots and pans as you unpack *several* kitchen boxes.

Reserve one set of signs you have made to affix to the doors of each room in your new residence as a guide map for the moving crew. For instance, tape the “Bedroom #2” to...guess which door? This is so you will not have to move boxes around from room to room once you get settled in; that is what you are paying the movers to do! Label boxes with delicate items with the caution “Fragile—handle with care.”

Finally, as you unplug all of the plugs, extension cords, adaptors and modems, write where the items belong to on masking tape with a black marker; wrap tape around the cord. For instance, as you unplug the VCR, label the cord “VCR,” and wrap the tape around the cord. Designate a box specifically for “electronics”. When we last moved, knowing to which appliance each of the cords, plugs, adaptors and modems belonged was a pure timesaver, and kept me sane.

**Resource:**

To locate a Professional Organizer who can assist in packing your apartment for a move, contact The National Association of Professional Organizers at [www.napo.net](http://www.napo.net) - (847) 375-4746 (national headquarters) [www.napo-ny.net](http://www.napo-ny.net) - (212) 439-1088 (within NYC)

**What To Do With Throwaways**

Moving is an excellent time to shred papers and to give items away. There are at least four ways to go about this. You can:

- 1) Throw out pure junk (clearing the clutter away).
- 2) Give away clothes to the Salvation Army or the Goodwill (tax-deductible).

- 3) Give away nice items to family and friends (promotes goodwill).
- 4) Sell to consignment shops (extra cash in the pocket).

Hey, you can also have a yard sale. The thing about throwaways is that one person's junk is another's treasure. I remember giving expensive candle votives that my husband thought were ugly to a family member who happened to be a "candle person." She loved them!

### **What To Keep With You**

Keep sensitive documents such as social security numbers, credit cards, checkbooks, passports, pertinent financial and legal info, insurance policies and wills within your possession at all times. My husband (the one who hated the candle votives) went so far as to insist that the computer hard drive travel with us during our move. Make plans for these items to travel with you and you alone to your new destination.

### **On The Big "Day Of"**

Make provision to eat breakfast. Even if other people are moving you, it still takes a lot of energy on your part, so be sure to eat nutritiously. Have a suitcase already packed with personal effects, night clothes, and a change of clothes so that once the day's moving is over, you can get a good night's sleep without fumbling for toiletries such as toothpaste.

### **Storage Considerations**

If you absolutely must go the storage route, evaluate affordability, cleanliness and accessibility. Storage was once a foregone conclusion for us, as our new Manhattan apartment was smaller than our previous Brooklyn apartment. We did not own a car at the time, so storage locations outside the borough of Manhattan were out. When I visited one storage facility with the lowest price, it looked downright scary. It was located in an old warehouse and was dark, dank and dingy—I thought a bat would fly at my throat at any minute!



We ultimately chose a well-lit facility with attentive customer service on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and the price fit our budget. Avoid basement storage units, where vermin and mice like to hang out, and look for signs of leakage or damp smells in your unit before you lock those precious belongings behind closed doors. You don't want any nasty surprises! Assess accessibility times—the best prices in town won't help if you cannot gain access to your items at times most convenient to your schedule.

**Once You Arrive...**

If you are moving to a new locale as a direct result of a job offer or relocation, be sure to keep all receipts for either reimbursement or tax purposes. Finally, have someone to help you with unpacking—the sight of all of those unopened boxes can be overwhelming. But if everything is labeled, you can put everything in its proper place.

As you can see, moving is not a task to be left for the last minute. It is a process. The steps outlined above can help to eliminate stress. Mazeltov, and happy moving!

*2 more moving tips by MBR:*

*~ If you have the opportunity, sweep and mop prior to moving furniture in.*

*It's hard to mop floors once the furniture has been moved into your new residence. ~*

*~ When getting settled in, it is easy to become overwhelmed.*

*Focus on first things first: Bathroom-Kitchen-Bedroom.*

*Resist the urge to buy new furniture and appliances immediately. Get by with what you already have. ~*