

Consumer Tip Sheet – How to Move Valuables And Antiques

Somewhere in all that stuff you have to move, you may have some valuable articles. We don't mean sentimental items that are priceless to you. (Yes, that high school track trophy represents a great accomplishment...but moving it is relatively simple. Wrap it, box it, done.) We mean pieces that are worth a significant amount of money.

These are often antiques or high-end electronics, such as computers, televisions and stereo equipment. They're special, and they have their own special strategies for safe transportation. It's a little more effort, because we're not talking about packing your everyday dishes here. Here are some tips for moving truly expensive, hard-to-replace objects:

In General

- Want to use a moving company? Just be sure they have experience transporting antiques. It's not the same as moving ordinary items. Also check their references and reviews.
- Discuss liability with the movers. How much extra might you need to cover your valuables in the (highly) unlikely event an accident occurs? See if your homeowner's insurance covers moving. Better safe than sorry.
- Using a video camera, document the state of your valuables. If something unfortunate happens, everyone is very clear about the objects' original conditions. It's all about your peace of mind.

Furniture

- If you're using professional movers, point out these significant pieces when you do the walk-through to get your quote. Movers can transport these items safely, but most people can't tell a Louis XV chair from an Ikea seat. Make sure everyone knows what's what.
- On moving day, check that the company rep passed the information about valuables along to the employees who will actually be doing the heavy lifting. As long as they're informed, they can fully protect your items.

Other Treasures

- For an extra fee, moving companies will also pack your belongings. If you have valuable and fragile items, let them do the work, if you can swing it. Doing it yourself will save a few bucks, but what happens if that 300-year-old vase gets smashed because you didn't wrap it properly?

Be aware: if you pack items yourself and they break because you were a little...lax, that damage probably won't be covered by insurance.

- If you're going to pack breakables yourself, use the same material the professionals do, such as double- and triple-walled cartons, cushioning wrap, tissue and packing paper, and strong tape.
- Label each box something obvious and clear, such as FRAGILE! Keep these containers separate, and point them out to the movers so they don't stack your books on top of your vintage Ironstone pitcher.
- It's always best to move electronics in their original containers. They may be a pain to save, but your desktop computer will slide nicely into that authentic company box. After all, it was safely shipped that way once. The second transport should be no different.

You're going to worry about your valuables when you move. But you'll fret less if you've done everything you can to provide a safe transition for your prized possessions.