

# Consumer Tip Sheet – Moving over Christmas & New Years

The December holiday season can be frantic and stressful. Add a move into the mix and it brings a whole new meaning to challenging.

Here's some tips to help you navigate the most wonderful time of the year.

## Moving Date

Moving companies over the winter often have fewer crews and resources due to less demand than peak summer moving season. Deciding on your move date and booking your moving company are equally important at this time of year. The more lead time you give yourself and your choice of movers the better.

## Moving Checklist

Time to download a moving checklist. There are lots of checklists available online and CAM has its own checklist that will give you a task list based on your move date. You can access that at [www.mover.net](http://www.mover.net) While not everything on the list will pertain to you, the list will certainly help keep you focused with all of the distractions of the holiday season around you.

## Pick 3

It's important that you research the moving companies you are asking quotes from. As always, check their status with the Better Business Bureau as well as CAM. Look at their reviews – not the one liner/5-star ones – look for real reviews that discuss the move and how well the company reacted if there was a problem. And if you don't see a bad review? Everyone has at least one, even professional movers. It's your responsibility to choose a mover. Look for telltale signs that they may not be on the up-and-up ... no street address, don't answer the phone with an identifying company name and only want to give you a price over the phone.

## Visual Survey

We cannot stress enough the importance of a visual survey. Whether the consultants come to your home for a walk around with you, or they connect and do the survey through an online tool or even video chat – like Skype or FaceTime, it is so important for your potential moving companies to see your shipment so they can provide an accurate quote. You should get a minimum of three quotes, so be prepared for this.

## **Don't Forget the Presents!**

Christmas involves presents. If you are planning on buying lots of presents, or bulky and heavy gifts that are not available during the visual survey, make sure you advise your moving company as additional items moving may affect your final moving charges. For example, you are surprising your husband with a fancy exercise bike under the tree and he is surprising you with a new massage recliner chair as a surprise for Christmas, and you both are buying a play gym for your kids for the new home. It may not seem to be much individually, but when combined, all of this is adding weight and bulk to your shipment. Not disclosing this to your moving company technically voids your contract and could result in further charges that you will have to pay. The best thing to do for Christmas is to use gift cards and buy everything once you have moved into your new home.

## **Start Packing Early**

If you're planning to resume the New Year in your new home, you need to start packing as early as possible. Packing about six weeks before the end of the year will ensure that you're moving goes smoothly. If you are moving before Christmas, make sure all Christmas presents are packed in moving boxes if possible. You could even wrap and label them beforehand, that way you'll know where they all are.

## **Need Help? Ask for it!**

Moving is overwhelming, especially during a stressful time of year. Don't be shy to ask for help from friends and family.

## **Keep Track of What's Moving**

If you are moving long distance, your mover will make an inventory of each item that will be loaded into the truck. However, those inventory lists will be generic, so if you want to save time trying to find things at your new home, label your boxes with your last name, room that the box will go in, and a general description of what is inside (clothes, books, bathroom closet, storage decorations, etc.). You can even mark your boxes A, B and C, with the A boxes needing to be the first ones opened (which means in most cases, that they're the last ones packed). Your C boxes could be books, summer clothes and pool toys, for example. It's perfectly acceptable to make your own inventory list with your own numbering system. That way, you'll know exactly what is in Box 23. This is particularly a good idea if you are moving locally, or if a box goes missing. You'll know exactly what was inside.

## **Make Some Down Time**

Even in the middle of the craziness of your move, school finishing for the term, perhaps work winding up, and the pressures of the Season, make sure that you take time to have a wonderful dinner, or go see a movie, or drive around town with your family and look at the holiday lights. Remember, you're in this for the long haul, so you don't want to burn out.

## Other things to do when preparing for the end of the year move

- If you have children or pets at home, make sure someone takes care of them or get your kids involved, so they see the move as a good thing. If you're moving before Christmas, the kids may be anxious about Santa not finding them on Christmas Eve. Write to Santa early so he is aware – (Santa Claus c/o North Pole, Canada HOHOHO) and get a visit in to the mall Santa if possible.
- Speaking of change of address - Make sure your friends and family know your new address so that holiday cards and Christmas presents don't get lost.
- When packing, sort out the items that you don't want to take with you and separate out your donation boxes, so you don't take unwanted items with you.
- Think about having a Christmas box prepared – full of Christmas goodies and perhaps a festive tablecloth, cutlery, and other decorations, so you won't forget them when moving to your new dig.

Be positive - what a wonderful way to start off your new year! In a fresh home full of possibilities!