

Moving Abroad Timeline

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

You are ready to embark upon a new phase of life in a different country. There are going to be a few additional things to include in your preparations for moving day.

Documentation will play a premiere role in your next several months; yes, months. Leave yourself ample time, if possible, to prepare. Especially, if you need to order education certificates from out of province, or will be applying for customs relief. If you are able to use an international moving company. Much of the workload can be avoided by using a company that is familiar with packing for customs approval, scheduling multiple modes of transportation to ensure a smooth procession, and tracking your belongings along the way.

If you do decide to take on this task yourself, be aware that packing in particular will require more time and effort than a move domestically. For example, each box, crate and cargo container needs to be accompanied by an official declaration of its contents, which must be attached visibly to the outside of the medium. These are specific forms that are used to declare your possessions at points of entry into and/or through countries along the way to the destination.

You will require a visa in many cases, and/or a resident permit, depending on the country. Documents, such as education certificates, could need to be apostilled to be deemed legitimate in your soon to be host nation.

Departing Canada with your possessions can also involve disposition taxes; a spank on the bottom on the way out by the federal government for your desire to not remain in the country. Certain countries charge an import taxes for possessions not deemed "household", or personal. Importing vehicles (air, sea or land) can necessitate mechanical alteration in order to become compliant with your new destination's regulations.

One thing to know about moving abroad is that costs are not dramatically greater for an international move than for a domestic move. In both cases, the most significant cost is the distance and fuel requirements; and the more you move the more it will cost. However, there are ways to prevent unnecessary costs, and customs brokers and international moving companies are familiar with the rules and regulations needed to get the paperwork done for you in advance of your move.

A discussion with a reputable Customs Brokers can prove very useful for alerting you to possessions that you might not wish to take with you due to the added costs. As well as any potential pitfalls, such as poor labelling of your packed items. Delays are not common, but they do happen, and they can really make an unnecessary mess of your plans.

Here is a timeline that I hope will help you get settled into your new country. Assess your own

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busy schedule, and modify the indicated leeway in terms of months and weeks to ensure that your move is smooth and hassle-free.

3 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR MOVE

- Perform an inventory assessment. Look at what you have, and based on simple comparison decide if you are downsizing, or are able to comfortably retain all of your possessions. Begin gathering boxes, bubble-wrap, packing tape, and mattress bags for your move. Ensure that you have a few decent markers on hand to label boxes as you pack them.
- Consider how you will furnish your new place, and whether you will be taking everything with you, storing some items; and/or determine what might be sold, given away, recycled, or discarded. Contemplate how you will move your belongings; a self-move, a rental vehicle and strong friends/help-for-hire, or a full-service moving company. Start to research and compare costs and reputations of any service requirements.
- Little by little, start packing seasonal or items not needed in the coming few weeks, first. Aim to tackle a closet or small storage area per day. Be realistic about the value of keeping items, and as the days progress, if you find yourself with enough items to warrant a yard sale, then choose a weekend mid-month. Often a sale over two days is sufficient to move items that will find a buyer. That which remains by the end of the weekend the market will have helped you to assess in terms of being worthy of continued efforts to market.

Set your sale date two weeks down the road, giving yourself ample time to go through the rest of your belongings. Over the course of the coming week, move the items to be parted with to a designated space. Four days before the sale, establish and mark prices on your items, move them into a position for display ensuring that no confusion with what is being kept can occur.

★ A garage can be very useful as a display showroom for your sale. Also items that do not sell on the first day of the sale can remain in place without the need to move them.

- Have a plan for the items that are not going with you, or items that do not sell. Research charities in your area that could make use of, or raise money from, items that you are no longer interested in keeping. Often times these organizations will come and pick-up items that you are donating, saving you the trouble of finding a way to move, or sell the items.
- It's time to think about the size of vehicle necessary to make your move a success. If you are looking at renting a van or truck, then you should know that there are load capacity maximums for most vehicles. Plan for multiple trips, or ensure that the vehicle can safely

transport all of your possessions. Rental company websites such as U-HAUL, Budget, Enterprise, and Home Depot generally present a guide associating the number of rooms with

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a vehicle size, based on a single trip between old and new places. Of course, full service moving companies will look after these details, when they provide a quote for your move.

TWO MONTHS UNTIL THE BIG DAY

- If a storage facility has been deemed necessary, the time to secure a space large enough to safely house your possessions is now. Be sure to separate boxes and items that will be stored from that which will be moving with you to your new place. Facilities that offer temperature controlled, air conditioned spaces generally present the best opportunity to ensure that your items are kept dry and free of mildew odours.
- By now, you should be well on your way to having items not needed on a day-to-day basis packed into labelled boxes. Keep packing a little each day. Begin making calls to schedule charitable pick-ups if desired, and assess the need for a removal service for items that are not going to be useful moving forward. Schedule the removal company for a visit as soon as you feel that you have a firm grasp of the possessions and furnishings that you will be taking with you, and will not be donating.
- At this point, there may be practical tasks that need to be addressed. If you have children, then it's time to request the transfer of education and medical records, depending on whether you are moving beyond district boundaries; inside or outside of the province, etc. These items can take a bit of time to arrive, so don't wait until you need them. You can also call to schedule utility services, cable/Internet/phone cancellations/installations and account transfers in advance of your move to ensure a seamless transition to your new place.

ONE MONTH UNTIL THE MOVE

- Around now, you will want to confirm moving plans. If hiring a moving company, or assistance, to get you packed and moved, then book the date(s) needed to get your belongings to your new place. These companies can require access to your possessions a day or two before the move, if there is a need to disassemble items or package and load them onto the truck, in advance of the move. If organizing friends and family for the transfer, then start seeking commitments for your desired date(s). Continue to pack items that you are certain not to require over the coming weeks.
- If you will be purchasing new furnishings and appliances for your new place, then you will want to order these items, at this point. Also, begin transferring subscription addresses for monthly items, and make arrangements with Canada Post to forward your mail to your new address beyond moving day. During this month, ensure that your banking institution, alarm monitoring company and essential services are all aware of your pending address change.

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★ Don't forget to arrange the transfer of home insurance to your new address, and maybe let your company, bank and credit institutions know that you're moving. Some of this can be done online. If you travel internationally, then use the denoted space in your passport to write-in your new address. Do this before you attempt to use it, following the move.

★ The Government of Canada and British Columbia each have instructions for changing your address for licenses, registrations and permits. Most involve notifying individual departments. See the links on my site for their instruction pages.

○ OK. Your doing great! The necessary official address changes are out of the way. Now, keep packing. Over the next week, really narrow down what you need left unpacked to only the essentials, i.e. toys, shoes, clothing, cosmetics, bath linens, food, plates, glasses and utensils. It's time to begin emptying your kitchen cupboards, and decide what items will make the cut (Get it? Like knives in the kitchen. Aah-ha! Ha! Ha!). But seriously, the big day is not far off now. So, ensure the kids have any toys, gear, uniforms and costumes that are necessary for the next couple of weeks, and everything else decide whether it's coming with you to the new place. There are a number of charitable organizations that will happily take unused clothing off of your hands.

○ Three weeks before moving time, if you live in, or will be moving into, a condominium or a building that specifies a service elevator for building occupants, then this is when you will want to reserve the day. There could be more demand than you might expect for the elevator, so don't let this one move up and down your list. I can't help myself....

By now, you should be packing all but necessary musical instruments, artwork, fine porcelain items, ornaments, lamps and lights, wall decorations, etc. Try to really isolate what remains to the essentials, and the bare furniture at this point. This will make the next step easier.

○ You've done it! Everything is nearly packed. It's time for a big clean. For those, who, like myself, have a preference for doing all of your own house cleaning, this next part might seem taboo. However, I'm going to say it anyway. There are times when a professional cleaning service can simply make your life easier. This is one of those times. Depending on the size of your place, a team of two cleaners can make pretty quick work of your walls, floors, kitchen, bathroom counters and cupboards, etc. Schedule a team, or gather your family, or a friend and cleaning supplies, Also, consider scheduling a carpet cleaner to come in the day before your move.

THE LAST WEEK HAS ARRIVED

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- At this time, you will be living with family in a home full of bare furnishings and boxes, your bedding and absolute essentials; and possibly a TV, if you're devoted. Call to double-check that everything remains on schedule with your movers. Invest in moving insurance, if you have not done so, yet.

If you are renting a moving van or truck, it's time to go pick it up, and to begin loading it with your belongings. Give yourself three or four days for this task, if friends or a labour service will be helping you. Otherwise, give yourself as much time as you can, and work at a pace that is not overwhelming. Call to confirm that access to your new place will be made available, and that no scheduling disruptions are anticipated.

★ A hand-truck, or dolly, can be especially useful for moving multiple moderately sized boxes, simultaneously. You might consider more than one of these, if there will be a group of you in a self-directed effort that involves many boxes. Also, be sure to leave your vacuum unpacked, it will inevitably be useful over the next couple of days.

THREE DAYS BEFORE THE MOVE

- The van or truck is loaded, or nearly loaded with all of your possessions, and you are looking rested. Yeah, right. Well, you are doing a good job of convincing everyone that you are well-rested. There are just a few last items to consider. If you are leaving a house that will be vacant for a period lasting more than a month, then you might want to give some thought to how the water supply can be turned-off to the house. This can ensure that if anything were to go wrong with the plumbing after you move, then no serious damage will arise.

★ Keep in mind that if you have scheduled a carpet cleaner, then the water will need to remain on until after this visit. Nonetheless, make yourself aware of the process for turning the main water supply valve off. If you are leaving a property vacant during the winter, this can be especially important in order to prevent water in pipes from freezing and bursting.

- You are down to last meals in the old homestead. At this point, if you find that you have left yourself non-perishable items that will not be used, then consider dropping them off at a food bank. Also, it's time to empty and defrost your refrigerator. Take a moment to be grateful for life, and tonight and tomorrow try to just get a good night's rest.

★ If you have prescriptions that need refilling, take a moment today to order them. Confirm

that your babysitter, if needed, will be available to care for the kids on moving day. This will benefit all involved, and help ensure that no unnecessary injuries occur during the move. Any

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pets that will need to be placed in care for a few days, while you get settled into your new place, should now be made comfortable in their temporary home.

TWO DAYS UNTIL THE DAY

- **No big chores today. The carpet cleaner might be around. Otherwise, pick-up your prescriptions, and make sure that your babysitter is still available. Today you can run any chemicals that have been sitting in the shed to the Eco Centre for disposal, i.e. paints, solvents, gasoline, propane etc. That's it! Take a moment for yourself. Hit a cafe with a friend.**

There are a couple of ways to handle how this evening can go. A lot of people will opt to have packed their beds, and bedding into the moving truck, by now. If this is you, then you have a hotel to look forward to this evening, and will be well rested for the morning.

MOVING DAY HAS ARRIVED

- **The day is here, and you are looking and feeling confident. Assured that a smooth transition will take place, today. You have made all of the arrangements, and double-checked with the movers, and/or your helpers; and all that needs to happen now is to hand over the keys, and pick up keys for the new place. Oh... And, well, move your belongings in from the truck. Like I was saying, you look and feel great! Not gonna work, hunh? I tried.**

Well, be proud of yourself. The hardest part of the move is already over, i.e. preparing for it. You have aced this one! If you need to move your mattresses still, then this is the day to empty the truck and make a final trip back to pick them up. If not, enjoy getting settled into your new place!