

Emergency Packing and Moving

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EMERGENCY PACKING AND MOVING

PART I

This paper is designed to explain what is involved in moving the contents of a three bed-room house that has had a major fire above the plate line in the roof area.

To be considered a priority are steps necessary to reduce the homeowners loss and preserve their belongings thereby reducing the dollar amount of the claim to the insurance company.

Several elements are required to accomplish this with expediency and efficiency. We will explain in a systematic order by the use of photographs plus a section on the methods we have found to be most profitable in our locale.

Most of our knowledge in handling furniture and household contents has come from the N.I.F.R. workshops, peers, your local moving and storage companies. Of course, the 17 years of trial and error have taught us much.

We have found the steps described herein have been helpful to the homeowner, the insurance industry and other fire restorers. We hope they will be beneficial to the restoring industry as a whole.

Photograph # 1 shows major damage to a three bed room house. The insured's agent called our office at 9:00 a.m. advising us that his client had an explosion in the attic resulting in fire and requesting emergency service. Through our telephone in the office and using our paging system we were able to be on location at 9:20 a.m. The fire department was still on location and in the final stages of extinguishment and clean up.

I met with the home owner and explained that their insurance agent had notified our company to respond and take whatever action was necessary to preserve and reduce their loss. After meeting the family and explaining our services they gave permission to proceed by signing a Work Order Authorization.

Within the hour, three of our trucks with personnel were on location to begin emergency packing and moving. Within a time span of five hours we had unloaded the complete house into our warehouse and began preservation treatment prior to vaulting in 12 vaults for storage.

With this expedient treatment the total household contents were restored for approximately one-third of the homeowners contents insurance policy. All restoration services were performed under one roof without any outside contractors.



Photograph # 2 shows the potential dangers of house hold structure parts that can cause accidents by falling tembers. Other photos will also note the possible dangers of falling dry wall, nails and foot punctures due to falling shingles. Other considerations that must be made are rain, cold, heat, and water that not only gets the feet wet but damages the furniture.

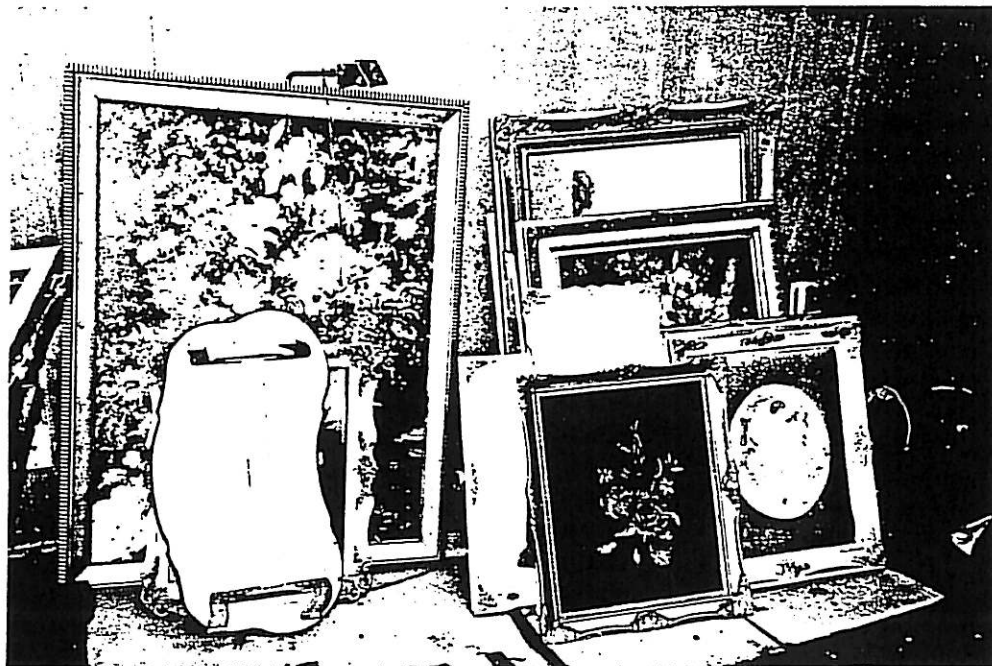
Time is of the essence in quick removal of the contents for safety and salvage.



Photograph # 3 shows valuable oil paintings. Quick action is needed to protect items such as oil paintings. These paintings have been removed from the walls, given careful removal of charcoal and debris and placed on top of cardboard cartons to keep off the wet carpet. After this, corner protectors are affixed, they are wrapped in protective wrapping and boxed.

Any items that are wet are noted and placed in a rush system to eliminate any or further damage to the oils or canvas backing.

Careful attention is also given to the frames.



To expedite moving, pack contents of chests and dressers in one room first. Be very careful that your packing boxes are resting on a dry surface. The base pieces can then be placed into the moving van with the boxed items placed around them. Photograph # 4 shows 1.5 cu. ft. boxes are the fold-out type with the bottom automatically popping in place upon opening the carton. They are equipped with handles and only the top requires taping.



The kitchen area is one of the last places to pack because the cabinets usually are built-in and will not be moved. The most experienced personnel should pack in the kitchen because of the fragile glass ware and china.

Usually the refrigerator/freezer requires special attention if there is an ice maker. Make sure the water is cut off and protect the motor and glass shelves.

Careful attention should be given to microwave ovens and removalbe ranges. Use extreme caution when disconnecting either gas or electric ranges. Turn off gas and electric service. It is a good idea to turn off the water at the meter.

Other considerations are to discard open food stuffs after inventory.



Breakfast and bar areas often times have fragile and expensive crystal and/or glassware. Use a strong dish pack, placed on a clean table or flat surface that is dry and safe from falling ceiling. Extra careful packing of these type items is of extreme importance to prevent breakage.

Seal, with tape if necessary, any containers of liquids that have been opened to prevent loss or leakage.

Wrap all broken items separate and note on the wrapping "damaged due to fire." That protects the restorer from being accused of improper handling.

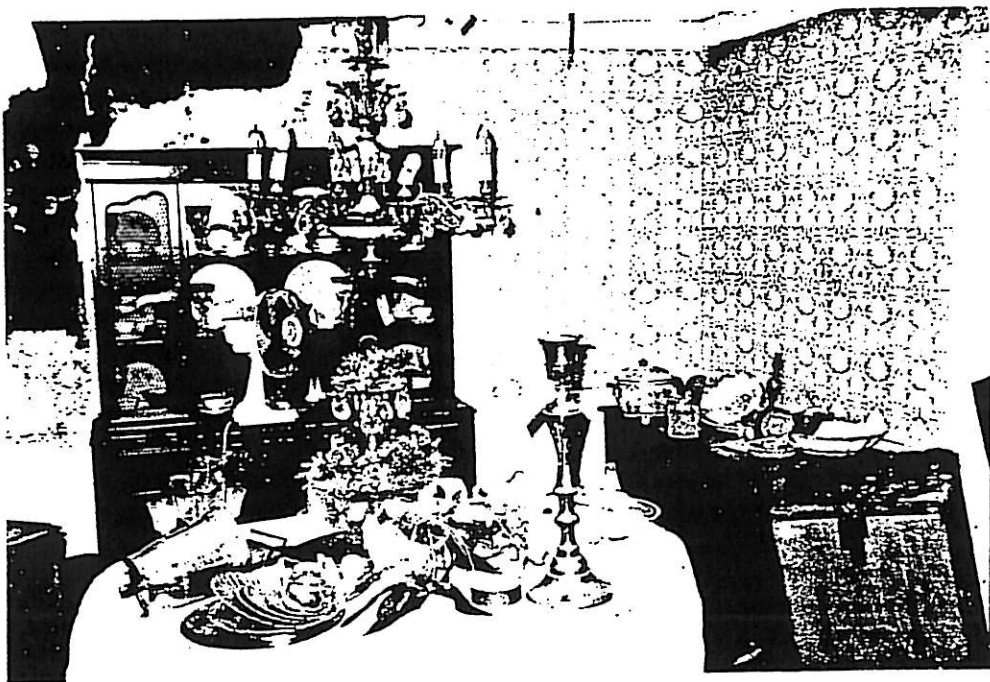


Photograph # 7 of the dining room is a very good example for the need of photographs. Note the broken bowl, a very expensive piece from France, broken during the fire and not the responsibility of the restorer. The chandelier also shows damage.

The picture now only shows the damages, but is a record of actually what is in a given room and in some cases, the possible value of a piece. This is helpful if a piece needs to be replaced.

Observe the tag on the brass flower vase. It shows the job number and item number. If it is boxed, it will also show the room it was in and the person who packed it. All boxes are marked with this information.

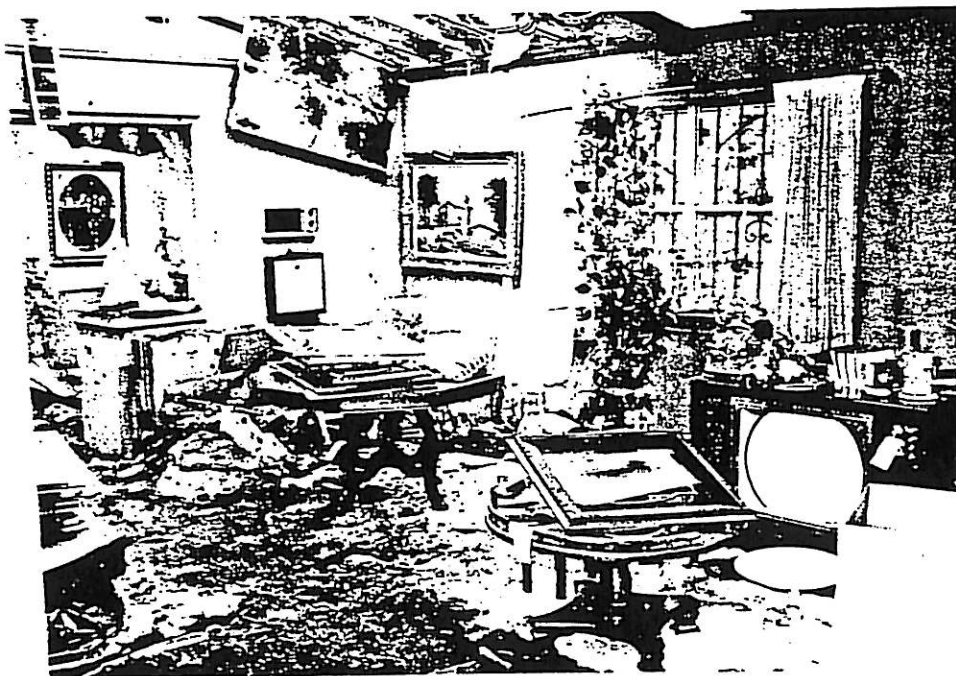
The estimator will record on his estimate the damages to the furniture and necessary steps to restore as well as costs for these services.



Photograpn #8 of the den and living area shows plants, their size and condition. We do not remove any plants, animals or fish.

Rug damage here can very easily be explained at a later date if the insured or insurance company does not remember, or if there is any doubt as to their condition after the fire.

In most cases, lamp shades are considered a total loss. They hardly ever escape getting wet, bent or creased.

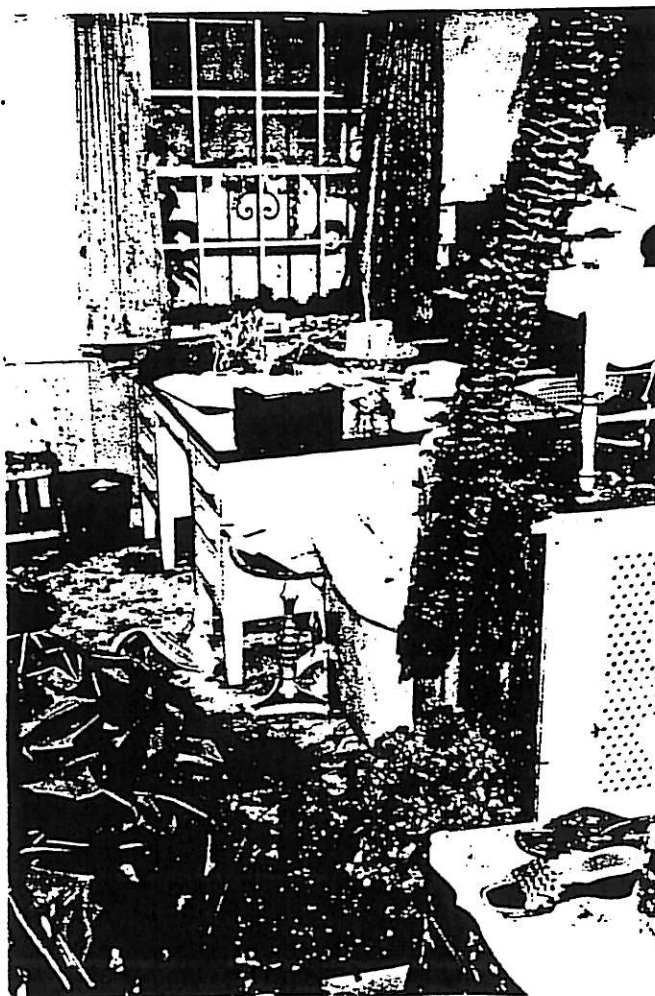


Photograph # 9 shows an office area. The contents of desks and files are very important. They usually include checks, I.R.S. papers, mail, etc. Note these and set aside for fast return. Sift through the debris for objects that have fallen on the floor.

Give special attention to wet papers and books.

Marble tops, glass table or desk tops as well as mirrors need special handling. First use corner protectors, wrap with par-pak, then place in container. If there are any cracks or chips, photograph and make a note of same.

Observe and note condition of furniture. For example, leather with holes punctured through by falling debris or burn holes.



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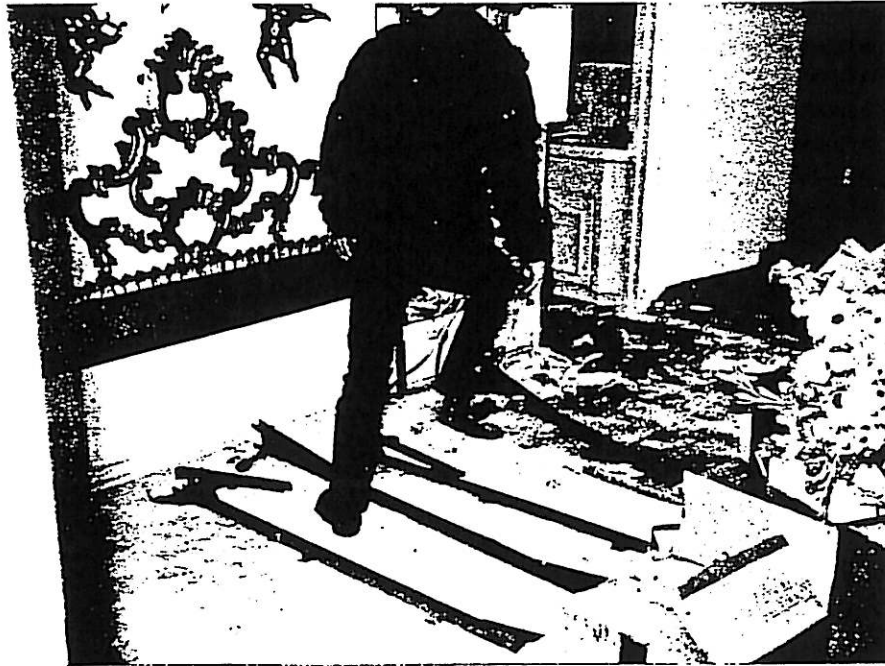
Photograph # 10 shows a bedroom where the mattress and box springs are not wet.

If the mattresses and box springs are wet, they should be noted and sent out for renovation to prevent mildew.

Place all bed nuts & screws in a small bag and tie to the bed frame.



Photograph # 11 shows men moving dry mattress and box springs and bed room furniture. This dry area gives available space for supplies and packers to work. It could be any room where the carpet is not wet or dangerous hanging debris.

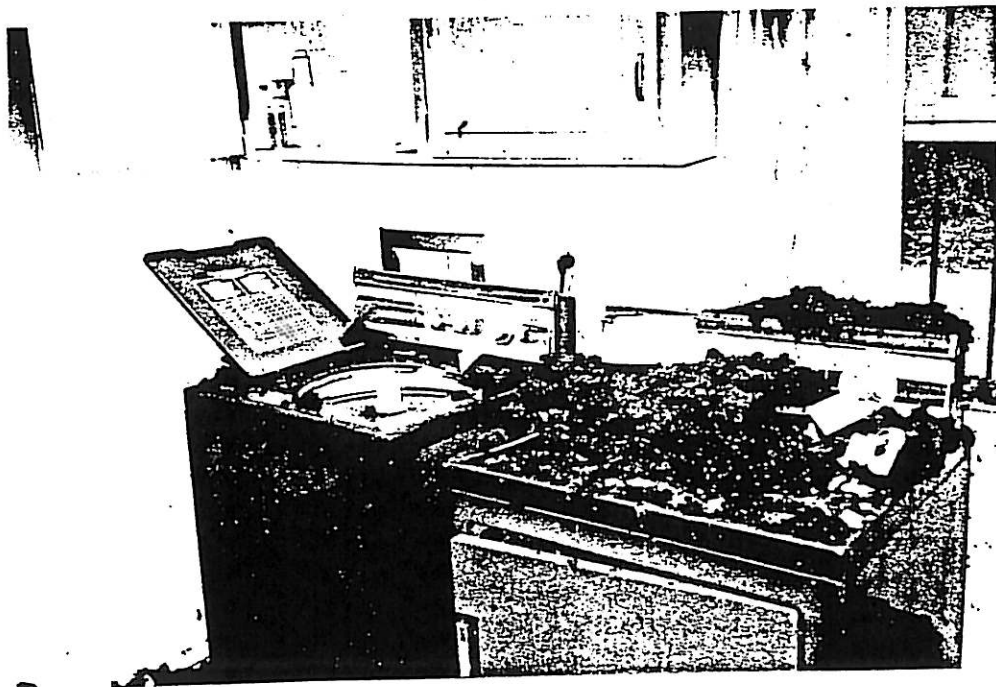


Washers and dryers need quick attention to the chrome parts to prevent chemical soot damage.

Remove all water, clothing, and/or debris from inside the washer and dryer. Cut off water, gas and/or electricity and properly disconnect. The motors and tubs should be properly anchored.

Most washers and dryers can be restored very inexpensively. Always replace washer with new hoses and gaskets.

Any flammable solvents in cabinets should NOT be moved, but should be discarded safely.



Clothing is always an important item to the insured, sometimes being their most prized possession.

We have found the safest way to care for the clothing is to separate and carry to a truck designed to transport them in a hanging position. The clothing is rushed in, dried, deodorized and cleaned as soon as practical. All other clothing is boxed, transported, dried, deodorized and cleaned promptly.

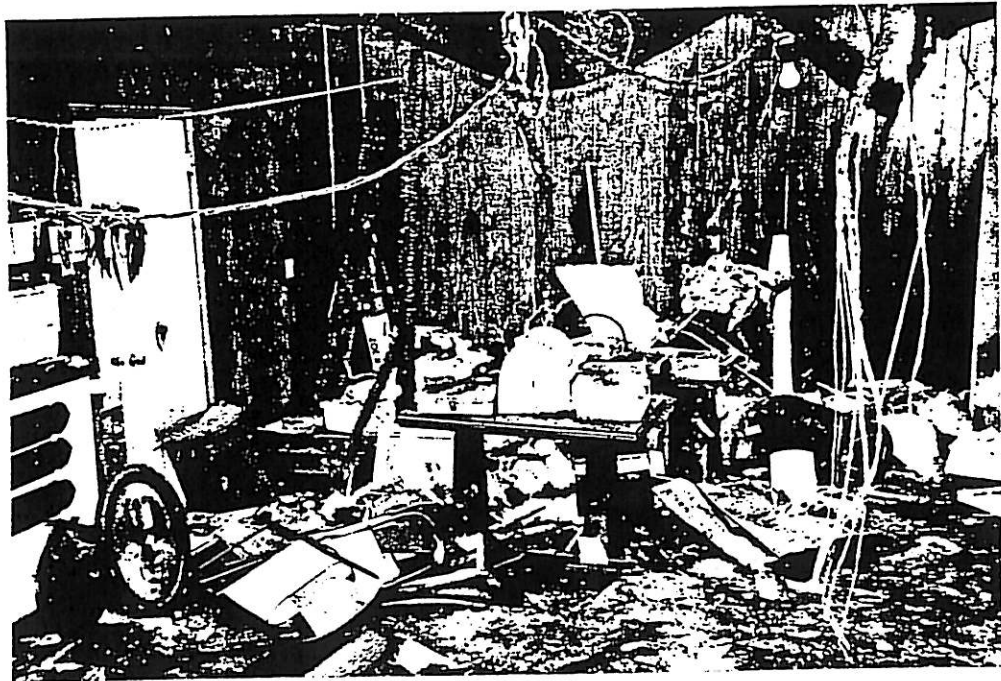
The insured must have clothing and shoes for the next few days. Have them select several rush items that can be returned to them as soon as possible.



In the garage and work shop areas the man of the house may have his prized tools, fishing gear, lawn equipment, etc. that he wants restored. Of the various items found in these areas, some need only to be stored. For example, hoes, rakes, brooms, etc.

Care must be taken in going through debris. Watch for open ceilings that might fall. In your final check, don't forget the attic areas.

Any items that are total loss, do not waste time packing or moving. Leave for the insured to inventory for their loss records.



PART II Typical needs for packing and moving a three
bed room house.

Basic supplies to take are:

- 150 book packs
- 50 #3 cubic boxes
- 20 #5 cubic boxes
- 60 dishpack cartons
- 10 rolls of white packing paper
- 2 rolls of ten-ply parpack
- 1 case of 24 rolls of brown tape
- 80 corner protectors for glass, mirrors & pictures
- 6 mattress covers

In cold weather, or where there is no electricity,
send a 3,000 watt gasoline powered generator, 5 gallons
of gasoline, lights and extension cords. Diesel fired
electric heaters and 5 gallons of diesel fuel.

Supplies for the moving truck:

- a two wheel dolly
- a four wheel dolly
- 120 furniture pads.
- a ramp for rolling items into trucks.
- Ropes, tiedowns and support bars to prevent load from shifting.
- Tool box with various tools for taking apart beds, washers,
dryers, refrigerators, icemakers, ets.

Boots for all personnel, water coolers or thermos of
coffee, depending on the weather. Personnel doing the packing
will carry with them a tool box. In each tool box will be:

- manila tags
- safety pins
- marks-a-lot pens for each employee
- "fragile" stickers for items or boxes of extreme fragility
- yellow tape for "special attention" items or boxes
- "rush" stickers for immediate processing.
- general purpose soap, cleaner & cloths for spot testing to
determine if items can be cleaned or will need to be
refinished.

A supervisor with four or five additional people drive an econoline van with the afore mentioned supplies to the house that is to be packed-in. The supervisor takes the work order and any other necessary information, meets with the customer, explains to the customer the process of inventory, packing and transporting all of the contents to the warehouse in our moving trucks.

Meanwhile the other personnel is moving all of the supplies to a centralized location in the house out of the way of hallways and walkways. An area near the living room/dining room, front door is preferable.

The first thing for the personnel to do is affix a manila tag to every item in the house either with a rubber band or a safety pin. They will write on this manila tag with a black marks-a-lot the job number, such as job #100. Example: every sofa cushion, pillow, bolster, etc. will be tagged with this job number along with the sofa structure itself. Every item should be tagged, each chair, table, bookcase, etc.

The supervisor will have been putting a number identification on each room. Example: #1, living room.

Working in pairs, the personnel pack all household contents into appropriate sized boxes. As the boxes are sealed with tape, the job number is written on the tape and a description of the contents. Example: Job #100, items from triple dresser plus the signature of the person who packed this box. The furniture is emptied first so it can be moved. Items from built-in's is packed next, then wall hangings, etc. last.

The purpose of the manila tags on all furniture items is to allow the estimator to place a sticker tag on the manila tag. The application of the sticker tag on the manila tag insures that the sticker tag will not fall off the smoked damaged pieces. These smoked damaged pieces seem to repel the adhesiveness of the sticker tags, whereas an item attached with a rubber band or pin cannot fall off. The manila tag also makes it easier to identify the location of the sticker tag for inventory purposes in the warehouse as it is being processed.

While personnel are packing household goods, moving men arrive with either a 24 foot cab-over truck or a 40 foot tractor trailer rig. Movers first break down beds, remove mattresses and box springs in order to provide more operating room. Secondly they remove heavy base pieces of furniture such as buffet, triple dressers, etc. and load into moving van. Lighter items and boxes are stacked on and around these base pieces. All items are loaded and stacked safely and tied off in the moving van and transported to the warehouse where they are unloaded and checked off as they are moved into the warehouse area.