

# **Whole House Move-Out**

**Donald Kristofferson, CR**

**February 1983**

## WHOLE HOUSE MOVE-OUT

In the middle of a busy morning your telephone rings. It is Frank Smith, adjuster for Underwriters Insurance Company. He is calling from the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Jones who have had a fire start in the wiring of their refrigerator in the early morning hours, doing moderate damage to the kitchen and spreading up into the attic. Considerable damage has been caused to the trusses and roof structure and the remainder of the house has been filled with smoke and smoke residues.

The fire department responded promptly and has saved most of the house and contents, but in the process they flooded the carpets as well as some clothing and other content items. The adjuster wants to know how soon you can arrive at the location to meet with him and the insured and begin move-out proceedings.

### PRE-PACK OUT AND ASSESSMENT

Now begins one of the most important phases in whole house move-outs: Assessing the job and securing the confidence of the insured who is perhaps in some degree of shock. The insured may not have heard of you or your company before, and after the disorienting experience of the fire, may be feeling helpless and alone. Without proper orientation, there can be a tendency to feel that what was not utterly destroyed is going out the door under their noses never to be seen again. It is therefore very

important to arrive on the site promptly with the necessary equipment, and with a brochure explaining who your company is, what it does, where you are taking their belongings, and what will be done with and to them. You must assure the insureds that their items will be well cared for in a clean spacious environment in your warehouse where they will be safe. Assure them repeatedly that they are welcome (even expected) to visit your plant to see where their goods are being stored and confer with you as to their restoration. They need to be made aware that, with proper advance notification, they can have returned to them any necessary items prior to the general move-back. They also need to know they will not be required to accept anything back that cannot be restored to its pre-fire condition.

Bring with your equipment at least one flashlight. The home may already be boarded up and dark inside. Also bring several dry chemical sponges and a few other chemicals in a test kit to help determine the degree of restorability of a few key items.

At this point, a walk-through with the adjuster and insured is imperative to determine the scope of the job: Will your company be moving out all of the rooms or only those where the ceiling will be replaced? (Often contents determined to be left behind at the start will be moved out by your company a week or so later as the insured sees the security of his belongings in jeopardy). Will you be moving out the clothing or is the insured going to handle it himself? Are you going to pack out "total loss" items? Are they going to be left for salvage company pickup, or are they to

be hauled away by the general contractor? What clothing and general household effects is the insured going to take with him. Be sure to make careful notes of any instructions given by either the insured or the adjuster during this initial walkthrough.

While the adjuster is present is the best time to get a Work Order/Assignment of Insurance Benefits signed. The presence of the adjuster will help assure the homeowner that this is a routine procedure, one that is necessary before work can begin (for which you might otherwise never receive payment).

Meanwhile, your office staff is assembling and instructing your emergency crew, your move-out van is being readied, and standard equipment being loaded. They will wait to hear from you as to the scope of the move-out and what unusual supplies are needed so they can get underway. An extraction unit and crew should be dispatched to the fire site at this time if it is needed to extract the carpets, upholstered furniture, hard floors, etc. to prevent further water damage. This will also make life more pleasant for the insured and your workers who would otherwise be sloshing around in the house.

While waiting for your crew and van to arrive is an excellent time to take photographs of the dwelling and contents. Many companies also use this time to take inventory of the contents to be packed out. Our experience, however, is that both the insured and adjuster are more comfortable with a thorough and detailed inventory that can only be done by the packers at the time the items are being packed. The adjuster normally would rather pay



the additional expense for this service than run the risk of being caught in the middle of a hassle at the move-back if questions arise over items the insured remembers having before the fire that have "mysteriously disappeared," for which your company claims no responsibility because you have never seen them.

#### PACKING CARTONS

Contrary to most articles written on moving, it is not a good idea for a fire pack-out crew to use a conglomeration of boxes gleaned from the local supermarket (even if they are sturdy and have lids that can be taped shut). Such a mixture of boxes will be hard to organize and stack without crushing both boxes and contents. Neither will these boxes enhance your image as a professional. As soon as economically feasible, have your own boxes made up and imprinted with your company logo. Meanwhile, move-out boxes can be obtained from almost any local moving company or truck rental firm.

U-Haul Corporation has prepared a guide to the average box types, size and quantity needed for a complete move-out based on their customer experience. The table of recommended boxes reproduced below is found on pages 18-19 of U-Haul's Moving Guide, copyrighted 11/81.

#### **RECOMMENDED BOXES**

	NUMBER OF BEDROOMS					2 ROOMS	PERSONAL GOODS
	5	4	3	2	1		
WARDROBE	12	10	8	6	3	3	1
LARGE BOX—HEAVY-DUTY	20	10	8	6	3	1	1
DISH PAK WITH DIVIDERS	4	4	4	3	2	1	1
MEDIUM BOX	54	51	30	21	17	10	8
SMALL BOX	30	25	20	14	10	5	4
TOTAL	120	100	70	50	35	20	15

**MIRROR/PICTURE BOXES—AS NEEDED**

Our professional experience has been that this quantity is not adequate, particularly as it relates to dishpacks with dividers and small (book) boxes. One might be well advised to double the number of book boxes and triple the dishpacks.

The U-Haul "wardrobe box" (with a hangar bar) measures 24" x 20" x 45" and enables clothing to be taken directly from the closets still on hangers and transported to your plant or directly to the cleaners with a minimum of time and effort, and a maximum of protection. This box is also valuable for transporting and storing bedspreads, drapes and curtains.

The "large box" is 24" x 18" x 18" and is too large for heavy items but is best used for lightweight bulky items such as lampshades, pillows, blankets, linens and towels.

The "dish pack" (either with or without dividers) measures 18" x 18" x 28", is extra strong, and provides maximum protection for china, dishes, glasses, stemware and other fragile items.

The "medium box" is 18" x 18" x 16" and can be used for a variety of items such as shoes, purses, games, pots and pans, kitchen utensils, garden supplies, stereo components and a host of other medium weight articles.

The "small box" or "book box" measures 16" x 12-5/8" x 12-5/8". This is exactly the right width and height for packing stereo records in their jackets. Books, tools, and other small but heavy items fit well into this size box.

"Mirror/picture" boxes are made in two parts with a bottom box and a slip-over top measuring 40" x 4" x 30" and are specifically

designed to protect mirrors, paintings and framed pictures, glass and marble table tops, etc.

Another handy box supplied by U-Haul but not listed in the above chart is the "lamp box" measuring approximately 13" x 13" x 40" high. It is useful not only for packing tall lamps, but also for such items as brooms, mops, rakes, fishing poles, baseball bats, curtain rods and similar items.

Be sure, whatever cartons you use, that they are sufficiently sturdy. Most cartons list their construction specifications. Use only those that have a burst strength of 200 pounds per square inch or stronger. If the carton volume is six cubic feet or larger, the burst strength should be at least 275 pounds. Dish packs also should be at least this sturdy.

Do not try to cut corners on box sealing tape. Masking and other paper tapes, including those supplied by some moving and van rental companies, are not sturdy enough and prove to be false economy. Two-inch-wide mylar tape is recommended. This tape should be applied at right angles to the box flaps as well as along them. Tape applied only in the flap direction will allow the box to burst inwardly when weight is applied to the top center of the box.

It is recommended that the tape be applied to the new cartons, while still flat, in the following manner: Apply one strip directly on either side of the imaginary center line from top to bottom of all four sides of the carton, extending over the top and bottom flaps. This serves as added strength for the box. If it is

intended for the boxes to be reused, it also serves as a base for the sealing tape, allowing the sealing tape to be removed without unsightly damage to the box. Many boxes designed specifically for moving and storage have room designations printed on one side of the carton with appropriate squares to check off (see illustration below).

<u>BEDROOM</u>			<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> MASTER	<input type="checkbox"/> LIVING ROOM	<input type="checkbox"/> BATH ROOM	
<input type="checkbox"/> GUEST	<input type="checkbox"/> DINING ROOM	<input type="checkbox"/> BASEMENT	
<input type="checkbox"/> GIRLS	<input type="checkbox"/> KITCHEN	<input type="checkbox"/> GARAGE	
<input type="checkbox"/> BOYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ATTIC	

If the boxes are to be reused, this room designation area should be covered with clear mylar tape and the designations marked with a china marker or "grease" pen. Any other writing or designation that is necessary should be similarly written on the tape strips with china markers. This enables the writing to be erased so current messages do not become confused with warnings and instructions from previous jobs.

Box numbers and colored pressure-sensitive job designation labels should also be affixed to a strip of clear mylar tape applied to a designated area of the box, such as the upper right hand corner of one end of the box. The label will stick to the mylar tape much better than to the box surface, lessening the danger of the label falling off.

Ordinary newspapers make adequate packing and stuffing materials in most cases. However, these have the decided drawback of appearing to lack professionalism. They might plant doubts in the homeowner's mind as to your company's capabilities and experience. A better choice of material is unprinted newsprint roll-ends. These can usually be obtained from one of the local newspaper printing plants, either free or at a moderate cost. These rolls can be slit into appropriate sized sheets. If printed newspaper is used, precautions must be taken to protect those items that could be soiled by ink transfer. The print is likely to rub off on fabrics such as lampshades, curtains, bedspreads, linens, etc. It can even stain plastic items like Tupperware and Melmac. Particular caution will have to be taken using printed newsprint around any items being packed in a damp condition.

Excelsior (shredded wood) was once regarded as the material used by professional packers and movers. Stay away from it. It adds needless weight to the boxes, is extremely messy and generally does not give fragile items as much protection as could be afforded by another choice of materials. Neither excelsior or shredded paper should ever be used to pack motors or electrical appliances containing motors. The small shreds can penetrate the motor cavity causing malfunctions and damage.

Plastic "peanuts," "Bubble Pak," or even soft quilted paper towels and padded plastic dry cleaning bags can be utilized

to pack extra fragile small items. These small items are best packed in small irregular boxes which are in turn packed inside one of your larger regular cartons.

Plastic bags are also a must. One needs a variety of these on a well-executed move-out. These range in size and usage from large heavy duty mattress bags, made especially to fit and protect the various sizes of mattresses and box springs, to garbage bags for containing trash, to small "baggie" sizes for storing and identifying screws, bolts, and other small hardware items from dismantled furniture and small appliances.

Other necessary accessories for move-outs include the flashlights mentioned earlier, together with light standards, heavy extension cords, two-wheeled hand trucks or appliance trucks, three or four-wheeled furniture dollies, and quilted furniture pads.

Light standards are often necessary due to interior rooms and closets that are dark because of boarded up windows and power shutoff. A good workable light standard can be readily constructed using a six-foot 4'x4' which slips into a removable 2'x4' stand. A two-tube fluorescent fixture is mounted on the side of the pole near the top. If there is no electricity on the premises, you will need either a portable generator or an extension cord running to a neighbor's outlet. Electricity for such a light will only cost a few pennies per day.

Hand trucks or appliance trucks are a convenience for moving heavy boxes and a must for safely loading refrigerators, freezers,

washing machines, etc. from the house to the truck. Of the two, the appliance truck is preferable as it stands taller, is more sturdy, and has an adjustable strap enabling one to secure the appliance to the frame portion of the appliance truck.

Furniture dollies are low mobile platforms that roll on casters and support pianos, heavy chests of drawers, and the like, so they can be rolled, not carried, from the house to the moving van.

Quilted furniture pads can be purchased in varying price ranges from local suppliers and are well worth the price. They protect the finish of valuable furniture and appliances from becoming chipped, scratched, or marred in the move-out. These are another outward sign, to the insured, of professionalism.

#### PRELIMINARY WORK

After the emergency extraction crew has arrived and completed its deflooding procedures, if the carpet is to be saved, a dry compound cleaner should be sprinkled down and worked into the carpet. This compound will begin absorbing the smoke residue and counter any further tracking of residues and ash onto cleaner areas of the carpeting.

If you brought a truck-mounted extraction unit to the job, it can be utilized to drain any water bed mattresses in the home or building. If not, have your extraction crew begin gravity draining of the beds through garden hoses. Inasmuch as this is a slow process it should be started as early as possible.

## PACKING BOXES

Once the moving van and crew arrives, it is important to have part of them start to work immediately in the kitchen, as this room generally takes much more time to pack out than any other room in a home.

The first thing to do in the kitchen is to clean off an adequate working space. Either the kitchen table or a countertop works well. To reduce fatigue, have your packer stand on a dry cushioned mat on the floor and make sure the packing surface is high enough to avoid stooping. If the packer is working from the table and it is too low, one or more mirror cartons laid on their side can build up the height to a more appropriate level.

Next, lay out a large stack of packing paper on the packing surface and select a dishpack with dividers or other appropriate sturdy carton. Be generous in your use of crumpled newsprint. Several layers should line the top and bottom of every carton you pack. The sides and any open areas must be similarly padded. Each carton must be filled tightly, level to the top, but never packed above the top edge of the carton. Tightly packed boxes stack and store easily. Rounded ones do not. Underfilled boxes may crush when stacked, with possible resulting damage to their contents.

Remember that in packing fragile articles, the heaviest ones should be packed toward the bottom of the carton with lighter ones on top, but never mix heavy skillets and pots and pans with



glassware. Be sure to inspect each piece of breakable kitchenware and list any chips, cracks or other damage on the inventory sheet.

In the kitchen, plates are a good starting item. Place one plate in the approximate center of your packing paper. Using two or more sheets at once, pull one corner completely over the plate, covering it. Nest the second plate directly over the first plate, and repeat the process with the second corner. Stack the third and fourth plates consecutively, following the same procedure. Next turn the wrapped stack of plates upside down onto the packing paper and rewrap from the corners as before using two or more sheets. For extremely valuable or fragile plates, a third wrapping is suggested.

Place the bundle of plates in the bottom of the carton on edge between openings of the cardboard dividers. Continue, filling the layers of the box. A flat sheet of cardboard should be placed horizontally between each layer of inserts.

Smaller dishes, such as saucers and bread and butter plates are treated the same way as the dinner plates, except that upon completion of the first wrapping of the bundle, set it aside and wrap a second bundle. Then, nesting the two bundles together, turn them upside down and rewrap the combined bundle, placing it on edge between the dishpack dividers as before.

Glasses may be nested, one inside the other, but only after first using two or more sheets of paper as padding between each glass. Without this padding, glasses can stick together, and break upon attempted disengagement. Continue wrapping and double wrapping each stack, tucking the excess paper into the glass opening

to give added rigidity against external pressures. Then carefully place the glasses into the divider compartment. The stack must not be taller than the compartment. Excess space, whether at the top or sides, must be filled with crumpled paper to prevent movement. Expensive and/or fragile glasses should be wrapped separately. Glasses must always be packed standing with the rim down, never on the sides.

Always pack goblets and stemware singly. Never attempt to nest them. Follow the same wrapping procedure with them as you did with the glasses, except for the additional step of adding support to the stem by wrapping crumpled paper around it, completely filling the cavity between the base and the bowl before the final wrapping. Bubble pack works well for wrapping of stemware and goblets.

Cups have a very fragile element, their handles. It does not take much pressure to break the handle of a fine china cup or even a ceramic mug. For this reason, they should not be nested as glasses are. Instead, wrap each cup separately, first applying crumpled wrapping paper, tissue, soft paper toweling, or bubble pack to both sides of the handle, completely encasing it. Then wrap the cup much as you would a glass and place it in a cavity of the dish pack divider. Stack additional wrapped cups into the same divider cell again completing the filling of the cell with crumpled paper.

Be sure to advise the homeowner that crystal and fine china which has been subjected to intense heat may possibly shatter at any time, regardless of the extreme care taken by your company in packing and handling.

Soft flexible plastic items are generally packed without the benefit of individual wrapping or padding. In fact, the value of many of these items is such that, with the possible exception of "Tupperware," you should do no more than list the number of pieces rather than inventory each item separately.

Small kitchen appliances should be packed together in boxes of a size to accommodate them without becoming excessively heavy. If possible, no carton should weight over 50 pounds. Wrap each appliance individually with two or three sheets of wrapping paper before placing in the box. Some appliances are of such irregular shape as to defy wrapping. In these instances, place the appliance directly into the selected carton upon several layers of crumpled paper, and completely surround the appliance with additional crumpled paper, thus separating and protecting it from other appliances in the carton. Additional space in the box can be utilized for lighter pots and pans, or lids and similar items. Again, be sure the fill all existing cavities in the carton tightly with crumpled paper to prevent shifting of the contents or box crushing.

Pots and pans and other similar kitchenware normally require little cushioning. However, such utensils will lose their shiny look from abrasion unless the interiors are padded with packing paper before nesting, and then wrapped to protect the exterior of the outer pan.

"Teflon," or "Ironstone," and similar surfaces must be carefully padded and protected to avoid scratching and other damage.

Lighter pots and pans can be placed in dishpacks without dividers. Heavier ones, to avoid excessive weight, should be placed in sturdy medium sized cartons. Be sure to check inside the automatic dishwasher for additional dishes.

Flatware and everyday silverplate, etc. usually does not require much special packing. If it has been kicking around in a drawer with no obvious steps taken to prevent scratches or protect luster, all that is needed is to take a careful count of each type or set, and wrap them together in small bundles so nothing gets lost. Sterling silver is a different matter entirely. If specially treated cloth or paper for the protection of silver is not available, each piece should be wrapped individually in soft paper toweling to prevent scratching or abrasion. In many instances, the insured will want to (or can be convinced that he wants to) keep these items in his own care and custody along with expensive jewelry, coin or stamp collections, and such other valuable items.

Boxed foods such as cereals, flour, powdered milk, cookies and crackers, etc. should be discarded after listing them on a destroyed list. In most cases the smoke will have permeated even the unopened boxes to such an extent as to render them unpalatable, if not dangerous, to human consumption. No attempt should be made to bring them into your plant or warehouse. Similarly, the food in canister sets is usually not worth the risk of contamination or the difficulty of cleaning the canister with the food still inside. The contents should generally be listed on the destroyed

list, dumped out, and the canisters packed with other light kitchen items.

Canned and bottled goods, due to their weight, should be placed in small sturdy boxes such as book boxes. Of course, if they have been subjected to extreme heat, add them to the destroyed list. Any bottles that might tend to leak should have their tops sealed with tape as should containers of spices and condiments.

If the food in the refrigerator and freezer is still good, it should be removed immediately by the insured to his new location or to a neighbor's house where it can be preserved. If not still safe, it should be quickly listed on the destroyed list and discarded, and the refrigerator/freezer doors propped open to prevent odor problems from developing.

Dish towels, wash cloths, aprons, tablecloths and other launderable items should be packed together, separate from all other such items. Resist the temptation to use them as protective padding for breakable items. Sharp corners may chafe holes in the cloth. Additionally, the ensuing confusion in your plant when items have to be separated out to be sent to the cleaners or laundered, will more than negate any benefit you might have gotten from using them as packing protection.

Clothing is another priority packing item. Some clothing will be needed by the insured almost immediately. It should be segregated and packed first and, if possible, sent on its way for processing even before the moving van is loaded and leaves for the day. Both this emergency clothing and the rest to follow

later, should be individually tagged with dry cleaners tags, either pinned or stapled to appropriate places on the garments. The number on the tag is then recorded on your move-out inventory. Your dry cleaner will probably supply you with these tags as he will be saving time by your tagging the garments for him.

Your benefit will come from a positive identification of the garments, so the insured will not be able to say "Yes, this is a coat, but it is not the coat I sent; mine was much more expensive."

If possible, dry-clean-only items should be separated from launderable items right at the time of the pack-out. Dry cleaning should be put into wardrobe boxes. Laundry can usually be put into medium or large cartons. Nothing else should be packed with these items. This will avoid time consuming and inventory-confusing sorting later at your plant. Check in the washing machine and clothes dryer for additional clothing.

Other than the emergency clothing referred to above, or wet clothing, priority should be placed on packing the clothing from dresser drawers. Working space is usually at a premium at the start of a packout, and the sooner the dressers can be emptied, the sooner they can be hauled out of the way and loaded on the moving van.

Do not utilize drawer space of dressers for the transporting of clothing, bedding or any other items. Such utilization not only risks a drawer bottom falling out but, even more importantly, it will create inventory confusion as the dresser goes one way in your plant to be cleaned or restored, and the contents have to be

sent another for their own cleaning and deodorization.

Shoes in boxes should be left in their boxes and the boxed unit packed into a larger carton. Loose shoes generally do not need to be individually wrapped before packing into cartons. However, be aware that there are designer originals costing \$600.00 or more a pair. These, of course, must be individually wrapped and treated with the care you would give fine china. Special T.L.C. must also be given to any item specially pointed out by the insured as being of particular value to him, whether that value be monetary or sentimental.

Stereo records must be packed in their jackets so they are standing upright. Never lay them flat as they will be more susceptible to warpage and breaking. These will fit exactly into the book and record cartons described above, requiring no padding except to fill the box if not enough records are available. If the box requires filler paper, divide it so that either one-half of the paper is at each end, or divide the records so that half of the weight is at either end with the crumpled paper in the middle. A heavy box with all the weight at one end is apt to flip out of the hands of the person lifting it. The records need not be listed by title on the inventory, but a count should be made of the number of single and double albums, etc. Be certain that each jacket contains a record and that none of them are broken.

Books should be packed in a manner similar to stereo records with the inventory reflecting the number of hardbound books, paperback books and pamphlets, etc. Sets of books such as encyclopedias

should be listed by the name of the set and number of volumes. If any volumes are missing, this must be carefully noted on the inventory. Packing books flat rather than vertically will reduce the chance of damage from broken spines. Pack books compactly but do not jam them together forcing the corners of one book to extend into the pages of another. Any spaces remaining in the carton between books must be filled with crumpled paper.

Small dresser lamps can be wrapped securely in several layers of packing paper or in bubble pack and packed in regular cartons along with other items of compatible size and weight.

Lamp cartons with their tall narrow configuration, are ideal for packing the taller lamps. Place a generous amount of crumpled paper padding in the bottom of the carton, then place the lamp (without shade) centered in the carton and fill the remaining space with crushed paper padding. The box can be cut down in height. In the rare case that the girth of a lamp might be too big for a lamp carton, use a dish pack. In any case, separate the shade from the lamp. If the shade has not been rendered uncleanable, or otherwise destroyed by the fire, pack it separately in an appropriate sized carton. Some preliminary cleaning by blowing or light dusting should be done before packing to reduce the chance of grinding the smoke residues into the fabric. In order to more fully utilize empty space in the carton, lamp shades can sometimes be nested. Use clean tissue or unprinted newsprint smoothly laid between each shade. Hats can be placed in the center of the shade if they can be cleaned in your plant but, again, do not pack



any items that will have to be sorted out later to be sent to the cleaners or that will have to be returned in a separate carton. In this one instance, do not attempt to pack the carton tightly with crumpled paper as it will tend to crush the shade. Mark the carton with a red china marker "lamp shades" on the mylar tape strip provided for that purpose, so no heavy cartons will be placed on top.

Small pictures can be wrapped in several sheets of packing paper and placed standing on edge in any appropriate carton. Never lay any picture or mirror flat. Larger pictures, mirrors, etc. should be wrapped in several layers of newsprint taken directly from the roll (pre-cut sheets are generally too small) and placed in special mirror cartons. Oil paintings, and any others which could be damaged by the corner of an adjacent frame pressing onto their surface, should be further protected by sheets of double sided corrugated cardboard cut to fit the size your are protecting and taped in place to each other before wrapping. The cardboard must not come in contact with the painting itself. Fill the remaining cavities in the mirror box with enough crumpled paper to keep the items from shifting, but do not overpack. If a painting or a mirror is too large to fit in a mirror box, a usable container can be created by opening the end of both the bottom and cover parts of two mirror boxes and arranging them so as to make a telescoping larger box. Telescope to the appropriate size for the item being contained and tape the new box securely.

Extemporaneous picture cartons can also be devised by

choosing a flattened carton a little larger than the picture to be packed, and sealing the bottom flaps together while still in the flattened position. After wrapping the picture as before, slip it into the improvised carton and seal the top flaps. The drawback of this method is that the resulting container is of an irregular size, not fitting in with anything else, and its knife-edged bottom makes it likely to be laid on its side inviting damage to the contents. But if these are handled carefully throughout the move, this method will work.

House plants, if they appear to have survived, are usually moved and taken care of by the homeowners. If this is the case, be sure to warn them that the leaves of the plants must be cleaned and polished at the earliest possible moment to prevent the smoke residues from severely damaging or even killing the plants. In the unlikely event that your company is requested to transport the plants, this can be done safely with a little imagination. First choose an appropriate sized carton, line the inside with a trash bag, then place a dish pack divider in the bottom of the box. Dampen newspapers or packing paper and wrap the base of the pot and the undersides of the leaves. Position the plant into the divider. A sheet of corrugated cardboard larger than the box, with a pot-sized hole(s) cut in it and folded so the excess protrudes downward, as legs, will also work. Make sure the pot fits snugly against the bottom of the carton so it cannot settle later. Check to see that the limbs are securely cushioned with damp paper. Finally, loosely place dampened paper around the top of the plant

and close the top of the trash bag around it. Do not seal. These boxes should be marked with an "open immediately" designation.

Any clothing, books, papers or other items that are damp should also be placed in plastic bags before being included in packing cartons and marked with an "open immediately" designation. Any other item needing immediate attention should also be marked.

Cosmetics, vitamins, prescription medicines, etc. are usually included on the list of "total loss" items and thrown away. Normally, the time spent cleaning the containers exceeds the cost of the contents. In the case of prescription medicines, they may no longer be safe to take, due to the action on them of the heat and smoke residues.

Long-handled garden tools, as well as brooms, mops, and even curtain rods, should be packed together in a lamp box, the top of the flaps of the box taped in a vertical position extending the length of the box, with the packed items protruding from the top. Either lash the items together or insert enough crumpled paper to prevent the items from shifting, or both. Small garden tools and other loose tools such as hammers, pliers, etc. should be packed in book boxes. Individual wrapping is not usually necessary but the unused spaces in the box should be stuffed with crumpled paper.

For your protection, do not pack such items as ammunition, matches, paint thinner, turpentine, paint, cleaning fluids, gasoline or any similar flammable or explosive items. Even used propane torch tanks are a potential hazard. Empty out and air out campstoves,

lanterns, power mower fuel tanks, etc. before loading.

#### LOADING THE VAN WITH APPLIANCES, FURNITURE, BOXES

As soon as practicable, start loading the van. Back the truck as close as possible to the entrance of the door you will be using. This will usually be the front door, although an arcardia (sliding glass) door works well in some cases. Do not get so close you lose headroom under the eaves while ascending the ramp. Before any appliance or furniture item is moved to the truck, it must be carefully checked for pre-existing damage. Both general and specific information as to the condition of the piece must be listed on the inventory. A copy of the inventory goes to the insured before the van pulls away. Due to the "heightened awareness syndrome," the insured is apt to blame even manufacturing defects on the fire or more likely on your restorer's workmanship, if there is no record to prove otherwise. The photographs secured before the move-out began, if carefully taken, can be valuable in corroborating the inventory in the event of question. The inventoried item must be correspondingly tagged in an area that will not damage the finished surface.

If the van you are using has a "cab over" area, load this with lighter items such as mattresses and box springs. These should be protected by covering with plastic mattress bags. Waterbed mattresses should have a mildecide placed in them, and then be rolled, rather than folded. Similarly, do not fold a waterbed heater. Either ship it flat or, at most, gently roll it in a

very loose roll and place into a box. Once the "cab over area" is full, divide the remainder of the van into four approximately equal areas and load the van one quarter at a time, solid from the floor to the ceiling.

The refrigerator, freezer, stove, washing machine, and heaviest pieces of furniture are to be loaded first and put against the front wall nearest the cab. Dry the interior of the refrigerator and freezer thoroughly and remove the trays and shelves before loading. Any spring mounted motors on appliances should be secured before loading. These occur on older models and can be secured by wedging blocks of wood between the motor and the appliance side. Refrigerator and freezer doors often have to be removed to get them through the door and out of the house. An alternative method, if an arcadia door is available, is to lift out the sliding door. Even the adjacent stationary glass panel can be easily removed by taking out a couple of screws.

Washing machine tubs must be braced to prevent them from bumping against the timer. This can be done by stuffing heavy fabric or padded blocks in the space between the tub and side walls. Sometimes styrofoam inserts can be used. On stoves, loose pieces should be packed. Burners, elements and trays should be secured with tape. Doors should be taped shut on all appliances and the tape removed promptly after unloading and refrigerator-freezer doors blocks open to avoid odor buildup. All loose hoses and electrical cords should be taped out of the way. All appliances must be carefully protected by quilted moving pads. Washers, dryers, refrigerators,

etc. are generally trucked from the side being careful that the handtruck is padded so as not to mar the appliance's finish.

In moving spinet pianos, care must be exercised to protect the fragile front legs from breakage. No weight can be put on them as the piece is moved. Furniture moving dollies should be placed under the piano to move it. If these are not available, the piano can usually be transported by a handtruck placed carefully at the center back. This maneuver requires at least one strong man on each end of the piano as well as a hefty individual operating the hand truck to keep the piano from tipping, particularly as it is trucked up the ramp into the truck.

On heavy chests of drawers, it is often advisable to remove the drawers while carrying the piece to the truck. The drawers should be returned to their respective places before finally securing the chest in the van. If drawers and doors are taped shut for transit be sure to remove tape promptly at the destination to avoid damage to the finish. Long chests of drawers and couches can sometimes be moved out of rooms and through tight corners in halls only by turning the pieces on their ends on heavy moving blankets, then pulling the blanket through the tight-fitting area. Be careful to steady the piece to keep it from tipping. While carrying pieces of furniture out of the house through doorways, keep your hands in such a position that if anything moving strikes the door casing, it will be your hands. One tends to be more cautious of his hands than of the inanimate object he is carrying, and besides, a skinned knuckle will heal more readily than a skinned

piece of wood or fabric.

Mirrors should be removed from dressers, as should glass or marble dresser tops and packed according to the instructions given earlier for mirrors and pictures. Large marble tops should be transported only after first strapping them securely to a sturdy piece of plywood or particle board. Excessive heat can cause marble to lose its strength. Table legs should be removed from tables. If this is not practical, then the table should be packed on its back in the van with the legs pointing up in the air, being sure adequate padding has been placed under the table top to protect the finish from damage. In some cases, knobs and handles should be removed from the furniture pieces. In all cases, all the pieces should be well covered with quilts to protect from scratching and chafing against each other while the van is in motion.

When the first quarter of the truck is filled with the heaviest items, use rope or tie-down cinch straps that can be purchased from motorcycle accessory dealers, to secure these items to the tie-down rings set in the van side walls. Then stack cartons containing lighter items on top until all the available space has been utilized.

Next build another tier adjacent to the first by again starting with the heaviest remaining boxes and furniture items. Again, tie these down and fill the upper space with lighter cartons. Couches can sometimes be turned on end to better utilize the space. If this is done, be sure to pad the area underneath the couch arm. All the cloth parts of the couch must be protected,

as well as any wood trim, to prevent chafing during the trip. Any remaining extra-long items, such as mattresses, box springs, large mirror boxes, table tops, headboards, etc. should be leaned against the side walls of the van and lashed to the sides. Table leaves ride best tied together, with the finish sides in, and padded externally as well as between the leaves. Bed rails should be lashed together with rope or masking tape. Mark all pieces so you know which goes with which headboard. Rolled up carpets and rugs, if they are not wet, can be placed in the center of the van with cartons stacked around and above them. Wet carpets should be sent to your plant by other means of transportation so as not to leak water on surrounding boxes and furniture.

Small television sets and record players should be packed in boxes with great care taken to pad them thoroughly. Be sure to secure the tone arm and turn-table of a record player. Place the box up off the floor, preferably on some soft item such as a couch or upholstered chair, and wedge in place so it cannot shift. For larger sets, enclose in heavy moving quilts and try to set the piece up off the floor on top of heavier objects and wedge it securely in place with boxes or other items that will not damage it.

The last quadrant of the van is left for light and hard-to-pack items like power mowers, bicycles, exercycles, tricycles, ironing boards and the like. Sometimes removing the handle from a lawn mower and turning bicycle handlebars sideways can make packing them easier. Don't forget to plan space to load your own equipment, unused boxes and other supplies that you brought to the job.



As you and your crew(s) prepare to drive away, reinforce the impression you've been building that, although you are a very busy company, professional and efficient, you care also about the welfare of your clients. Remind the insured to keep your business card and brochure in a safe place so he can contact you by phone. He will need to let you know where he and his family will be staying (for deliveries of emergency items), and otherwise advise you of his special needs. Good rapport established with the insured during the packout opens the way for a good relationship all the way through and a satisfied insured (and insurance adjuster) at the conclusion of the job.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BEKINS VAN LINES CO. *What You Should Know Before Relocating.* Los Angeles. 1982.
- BERMAN, C. "Moving? Here's News That Can Save You Money." *Good Housekeeping*, 192 (March 1981), 254.
- BRASSARD, G. "Planning to Move?" *American Home*, 59 (March 1958), 20-21.
- COLVIN, B. "It's Your Move." *American Home*, 65 (September 1962), 11+.
- ELAM, F. L. "Its Moving Day!" *Popular Mechanics*, 109 (April 1958), 121-4.
- FIELD, R. "Scientific Method Reduces Headaches When You Move." *Science Digest*, 83 (May 1978), 79, 80.
- FLANAGAN, W. "Moving Experience." *Esquire*, 89 (June 6, 1978) 87-8.
- FOX, M. W. "Avoiding Problems When You Move." *McCalls*, 108 (March 1981), 61+.
- HERTZ SYSTEM, INC. *Moving Guide: Everything Smart Do-it-Yourself Movers Need to Know.* New York. 1981.
- "Household Moving." *Consumer Reports*, 38 (December 1973), 390-2.  
39 (December 1974), 390-2.  
42 (December 1977), 366-8.
- HUFF, P. "A Step-by-Step Guide to Packing Like a Pro." *Mademoiselle*, 84 (May 1978), 108+.
- JARTRAN, INC. *Ten Easy Steps to Move From One Home Sweet Home to Another.* Florida. Rev. 1982.
- JARTRAN, INC. *The New Way to Move Yourself. Inside Tips on Packing, Loading & Moving.* Florida. Rev. 1981.
- KING, Martin L. "The H. A. Syndrome." *Voice*, 20 (August 1982), 25.
- KING, Martin L. *National Institute of Fire Restoration Certification Program IV Furniture & Accessories.* Arlington, VA.: AIDS International, 1980.
- LOUVIERE, V. "Moving Without Getting Shook Up; Moving Consultant Program of United Van Lines." *Nation's Business*, 62 (October 1974), 41.

- "Make Moving Easier." *Glamour* 78 (July 1980), 94.
- MARKOVICH, A. "A.B.C.'s of Taking the Misery Out of Moving," *Mechanics Illustrated*, 65 (June 1969), 56-8.
- MOORE, Roy, and F. T. Smith. *Insurance Work Building & Content Cleaning: Professional Cleaning Series*. Santa Clara, CA.: Professional Chemicals Co., 1977.
- "Move Yourself." *Consumer News*, 7 (May 15, 1977), 3-4.
- "Move Yourself and Save." *Changing Times*, 34 (May 1980), 36+.
- "Moving? Here's What You Should Know." *Good Housekeeping*, 185 (August 1977), 208.
- "Moving Your Prized Possessions." *Changing Times* 35 (August 1981), 48-50.
- NIRENBERG, S. "How to Move From Here to There." *House Beautiful*, 109 (August 1967), 70+.
- "Packing Off." *Newsweek* 49 (June 24, 1957), 90.
- RYDER TRUCK RENTAL, INC. *Put Some Pleasure Into Moving It Yourself With Ryder: Mover's Guide and Handbook*. Miami, Fla. Rev. 1981.
- SEEBOHM, C. "How to Make Your Best Move." *House & Garden*, 149 (October 1977), 144-5+.
- STARZINGER, P. H. "Making a Move." *House & Garden*, 153 (April 1981), 15-16.
- STEWART, J. M. "Moving? Here's How to Pack Up." *Better Homes & Gardens*, 55 (April 1977), 220+.
- SULLIVAN, George. *Do-It-Yourself Moving*. New York: Collier Books, 1973.
- TILLING, T. "Moving (Without Being Taken for a Ride)" *Parents*, 55 (April 1980), 18.
- U-HAUL INTERNATIONAL. *How to Assemble and Pack a U-Haul Dish Pak*. Phoenix, AZ. 1979.
- U-HAUL INTERNATIONAL. *Moving Guide*. Phoenix, AZ. 1981.
- U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY. *It's Your Move*. Washington, D. C.: Naval Supply Systems Command. 1972.

- U. S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION. Federal Supply Service.  
*Federal Handbook for Preparation of Household Goods for Shipment  
and Storage.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office,  
1958.
- U. S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION. *Shipping Your Household Goods:  
A Guide for Employees of Civilian Agencies.* Washington, D.C.:  
Government Printing Office, Rev. 1965.
- U. S. INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION. *Summary of Information for  
Shippers of Household Goods.* Washington, D.C.: Government  
Printing Office, Rev. 1972.
- WALTZ, G. H., Jr. "How to Ease Those Moving Day Headaches." *Popular  
Science*, 172 (June 1958), 142-5.
- "Your Year to Move? Here are Ideas, Facts, Cautions." *Sunset*, 156  
(May 1976), 128+.