

Military.com's PCS Guide & Moving Checklists

Table of Contents

- Permanent Change of Station (PCS): Overview 3**
 - Be Early, and Be Vigilant 3
- Five Things to Do When You Get Your PCS Orders..... 4**
 - 1. Set up a meeting with your base transportation office 4
 - 2. Contact the family center at your new location 4
 - 3. Notify your government housing office of your move date 4
 - 4. Make an appointment with your finance office at your current installation 4
 - 5. Use the PCS Moving Checklists in this guide 4
- Saving Money for Your PCS 5**
 - What to Do Now: Make a Budget 5
 - What to Do Before You Leave: Prevent Moving Mishaps 5
 - What to Do After You Arrive: Fine-Tune Your Finances 6
 - Tips for Valuable Possessions 6
- The Personally Procured Move (PPM) Option 7**
 - Advantages of the PPM Move 7
 - Important PPM Notes 9
- Top 10 PCS Mistakes11**
- PCS Weight Allowances12**
 - PCS and NTS Weight Allowance (Pounds)12
 - Grade12

With Dependents	12
Without Dependents	12
Weight Tips	13
Shipping Your Car Overseas	14
Restrictions	14
Size Limitations	14
Type of POV's You May Ship	14
Leased POV	14
When to Ship Your POV	14
What You May Leave in Your POV	15
What You May Not Ship in Your POV	15
Tracking Your POV	15
Top 10 Tips for Packing Yourself for a PCS.....	16
PCS Responsibilities	17
At Origin	17
Upon Arrival	17
Links for Filing Claims	18
Top 10 Ways to Prepare Military Kids for a PCS.....	19
The PCS Move Checklist	20
Moving Checklists	
Three Months Before Your Move.....	21
Two Months Before Your Move	22
One Month Before Your Move.....	23
Three Weeks Before Your Move	25
One Week Before Your Move	26
Final Days Before Your Move	27
Moving Day	29
After Arrival	30

Permanent Change of Station (PCS): Overview

Everyone in the military is subject to worldwide transfer based on the needs of the service. Despite this fact, many service members and their families are not clear on what getting PCS orders really entails. Getting a PCS order means moving household goods, shipping vehicles, meeting weight limits, covering airfare and lodging, per diem rates, and on and on.

Unlike other “temporary” travel orders, PCS orders are just as they sound: permanent (or, typically two to four years). Many service members look forward to getting PCS orders, which can mean a change of scenery, new responsibilities, new missions and new opportunities. But military families are not always as excited about leaving a familiar community. The thought of finding a new home, making new friends, finding new jobs or starting new schools can be overwhelming. Keep in mind as you prepare for the big move that your transfer is what you make of it; each new duty station can bring new and exciting opportunities.

For most military families, the biggest issue with PCSing is the move itself. Packing, housing inspections, house hunting, the waiting list for government housing and traveling with pets, just to name a few tasks, can make the process daunting. The burden of understanding your rights, responsibilities, benefits, allowances and the impact on your pay can elevate the anxiety of “getting orders.” This guide was designed to help you understand all the aspects of military transfers by providing easy-to-follow checklists, links to important resources, and helpful tips and insights that can make your move a smooth one.

Be Early, and Be Vigilant

1. Don't wait for orders first. It is a mistake to wait on official orders before starting to get ready for your move. Go through the moving checklists featured in this guide, and get as many items checked off as you can. A headstart now can save on headaches later.

2. Don't be lax about your inventory. Your possessions are important. Don't sit back and expect that they will be properly organized by movers. Be proactive in labeling and keeping track of your boxes and shipments, and double-check everything with your movers.

Five Things to Do When You Get Your PCS Orders

Once you have your PCS orders in hand, what should your priorities be? Here are five steps to take:

1. Set up a meeting with your base transportation office. Depending on your service branch, the name of the government office that handles your relocation varies:

- Department of Defense: Joint Personal Property Shipping Office
- Air Force and Space Force: Traffic Management Office
- Army: Installation Transportation Office
- Navy and Marine Corps: Personal Property Shipping Office
- Coast Guard: Transportation Office

You can access information about your specific installation's transportation office at the [Military.com Base Guide](#). Make sure you make an appointment with your transportation office as early as possible. At your meeting, make sure you find out about all the moving options available to you, including a Personally Procured Move (PPM), and start making preliminary arrangements for your move.



2. Contact the family center at your new location. Family centers offer relocation assistance programs that provide moving information to you and your family. Ask questions, and learn about your new community and what it offers.

3. If you're living in government quarters, notify the housing office of your projected move date. Make sure you also know all the regulations about cleaning your home before you move out.

4. Make an appointment with your finance office at your current installation. Making a move will be a drain on your bank account. The finance office can give you information on your options as well as relocation benefits that you're eligible for.

5. Use the PCS Moving Checklists in this guide (Page 21). In making preparations for a move, it's easy to be bogged down with all the details and things to do. Stay on top of it all with these checklists, which cover everything from packing to setting up in your new location. These ready-to-print lists will remind you what you need to do. If you plan to do a Personally Procured Move, see the PPM section in this guide for more information, which will help you during your preparations.

Deducting PCS Costs From Your Taxes

If you are a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and you move because of a permanent change of station, you can deduct your unreimbursed moving expenses on [Form 3903](#). For more guidance and information, see [this Military.com article](#).

Saving Up Money for Your PCS

When you combine moving costs with the difficulty of uprooting your life every few years, relocations can take a big toll. While some moving hassles are unavoidable, you can ease the financial pain of PCSing with a little advance planning:

What to Do Now: Make a Budget

Whether your move is days or weeks away, develop a moving budget in advance to keep your finances on track and avoid last-minute costs.

1. Find out exactly what the military will cover and what costs fall on you. You can visit your family center and base transportation office for more information.
2. Budget for shipping charges, temporary housing expenses and start-up fees for utilities.
3. Make a list of things you'll have to buy when you move in, and estimate those costs.
4. Use this budget to determine how much you should save for your next move.

What to Do Before You Leave: Prevent Moving Mishaps

Some moving horror stories result from damaged or lost property. When you PCS, insurance can mean the difference between disappointment and financial disaster.

1. Find out how much of your personal property the government movers will insure. If it's not enough to provide full protection, a temporary renters insurance policy could be an affordable way to cover the difference.
2. If you're shipping a vehicle, review your auto insurance policy to find out if moving-related damages are covered. If they're not, ask your insurer about purchasing shipment coverage.

What to Do After You Arrive: Fine-Tune Your Finances

Once you settle into your new place, consider fine-tuning your finances to make your next move easier. The stop-and-go that comes with a PCS – stopping everything and starting over again in a new area – can be a shock to your finances. Military members can find some relief by working with companies that “move with you” and serve your needs wherever you go. Consider using online banking so you don’t have to worry if there’s a branch bank near your new home. You can also set up automatic bill payments to make your life easier during future transitions.



1. Choose an insurance company that offers coverage in all 50 states and abroad so you don’t have to change providers with every move.
2. Open a separate savings account and contribute enough each month to ease the cash crunch before your next move.
3. Set up automatic transfers for investment accounts to ensure your savings habits won’t slip.

Tips for Valuable Possessions

- Have expensive and valuable items (e.g., artwork, collectibles, heirlooms) appraised. This isn’t paid for by the government, but it’s a wise investment in case of loss or damage. Hold onto your receipts for more expensive items, and keep them separate from the rest of your shipment.
- Use a video camera, or take close-up pictures, to record the condition of your furniture, television and other expensive and/or valuable items prior to packing and pick-up. This will help if you need to file a Loss/Damage Claim.
- Do not ship small, extremely valuable items such as stocks, bonds, jewelry, coins/coin collections and items of great sentimental value such as photo albums. Pack them in your suitcases and hand-carry them, as well as your purchase receipts, pictures and appraisals.

The Personally Procured Move (PPM) Option

The Personally Procured Move allows you to be reimbursed by the government for moving your belongings yourself. You're eligible if you make a permanent change of station (PCS), temporary duty (TDY) or temporary additional duty (TAD) move, or separate, retire and move to or from government quarters under orders. The program is voluntary.

Advantages of the PPM Move

At first glance, a PPM might seem like more trouble than it's worth. After all, you have to take care of your own moving arrangements and expenses rather than have the government do it for you, and for some, keeping track of all the receipts in a PPM is a major hassle by itself. But if you do a little planning and put forth a bit of effort, a PPM may offer advantages over a normal military move. For example:

Money. In the PPM Program, you receive a government payment of 100 percent of what it would cost the government to move you. In addition, you receive the standard travel allowances for you and your family. If you end up spending less than the 100 percent payment the government provides, you get to keep the rest. This may sound difficult, but if you take advantage of moving company discounts and other special offers, you'll find that you can make money for yourself. You should especially consider a PPM if you have limited items that need shipping or moving; you may be able to take care of all the packing and transport yourself.

Total Control. While it's nice to do without the headaches of planning a move, many military personnel have had bad experiences when the government took care of their moves. With a PPM, you're in control every step of the way, from deciding which moving services you want to how much of the actual move you want to handle yourself. If you're ready to take advantage of the PPM program, make sure you follow each of the steps below:

Step 1. Apply for the PPM move by scheduling an appointment with your base transportation office. This is your opportunity to ask questions about your move and get information on the PPM program. A transportation office representative will provide you with all forms and instructions you need. Foremost among these is the Form 2278 (Application for Personally Procured Move and Counseling Checklist).

Other forms you may need to fill out or provide include:

- [Standard Form 1038](#), Advance of Funds Application and Account (for advanced operating allowance)
- Certified empty weight ticket for each shipment with your name, your Social

Security number and the signature of the weight master

- Certified loaded weight ticket for each shipment with name, your Social Security number and signature of weight master
- Original [DD Form 1351-2](#), Travel Voucher or Subvoucher (ask your transportation office representative if you have specific questions about this form)
- Copy of registration for your boat(s) and/or trailer(s) if applicable

Only after applying for and being authorized for a PPM can you proceed with the move. If you make a partial PPM (i.e., shipping only a certain amount of household goods), make sure you work out all the details with your transportation office representative. Note that you will not receive full government payment for your PPM until after your move.

Step 2. Decide on your type of move. Will you be doing this all yourself? Will you have packers help? Will you have a moving company take care of the actual transport? Nail down these arrangements as soon as possible.

Step 3. Arrange for any rental equipment or moving services you need. You can either do it all yourself, have a professional handle tasks, or do some of both. Packing materials can be purchased from commercial suppliers.

Step 4. Confirm your insurance coverage. Make sure you are up to date on your car and accident insurance. If you use a trailer, check your auto insurance policy to make sure you're covered. State laws regarding liability for accidents during a PPM vary, so if you're involved in an accident while performing a PPM, you should contact the legal office at the military installation nearest the accident site as soon as possible.

Step 5. Receive your operating allowance from your local dispersing office.

Step 6. When your moving vehicle (whether you own it or are renting) is ready, calculate the total weight of what you are moving. You should weigh your vehicle both fully loaded and unloaded. This is extremely important, as your PPM payment will be based on this weight ticket. To calculate the weight of your shipment, follow this formula:

- Loaded weight = Your vehicle with a full tank of gas + all of your property loaded + no drivers or passengers inside
- Empty weight = Your vehicle with a full tank of gas + no drivers or passengers inside
- Loaded weight - empty weight = net weight of property

Each weight ticket should have the following information:

- Name, grade, Social Security number
- Name/location of scales
- Vehicle/trailer identification
- Date of weighing

- Weigh master's signature
- Legible notation of weights

Step 7. Get receipts for all moving expenses. All costs associated with the move are not taxable and will be deducted from the allowance you receive from the move to determine your actual financial profit. Only your profit will be taxed, so be sure to keep track of everything to maximize your profit. Authorized expenses include:

- Payment for rental vehicles/trailers
- Packing materials
- Moving equipment (including hand trucks and dollies)
- Gas and oil expenses
- Highway tolls, weight tickets and any other transportation expense directly related to the PPM

Step 8. Make your move, and submit your settlement. Once you complete your actual move, consult your transportation office before submitting a claim for full payment of your PPM allowance. This should include the following:

- Empty and loaded weight tickets (two copies of each)
- DD Form 2278
- PPM move certification (attach all receipts for moving expenses)
- PPM move expense sheet
- Change of station orders
- Advance operating allowance paperwork (if you are renting a truck or trailer)
- Vehicle/trailer rental contract (if you are renting a truck or trailer)

More specific details can be obtained from the transportation office at your installation.

Important PPM Notes

Your base transportation office must approve a PPM. Without approval, your payment could be limited or denied.

- Any actual moving costs that exceed the government cost will be at your expense, including overweight costs or expenses not covered.
- An advance allowance may be permitted to help pay for upfront costs. Regulations differ by service branch; check with your base transportation office.
- Some expenses are not authorized. These include tow dolly rental, insurance fees and sales tax. Again, check with your transportation office for specifics.
- Temporary storage may be available with a PPM. Check with your transportation office for more information.
- Be sure to file any loss or damage claims directly with your commercial moving

company before you file with the government. Claims are usually not paid unless the loss or damage was due to circumstances beyond your control, such as an accident.

- Payments more than your actual moving costs may be taxable. Read IRS Publication 521 for more information.



Top 10 PCS Mistakes

- 1. Tackling the do-it-yourself move at the wrong time.** We all know there's a season for everything, and the same thing goes for moving yourself. A reader did a PPM while she was six months' pregnant. "Turns out I'm not invincible," she said. Of course, we know that a PPM can be a great idea ... sometimes.
- 2. Putting too much stock in your orders.** When the military tells you you're moving somewhere, it certainly seems definite. But we know that can change, a lesson a reader learned when orders to Alaska changed at the last minute to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, after the household shipped their vehicle north and bought a lot of cold-weather gear.
- 3. Not grabbing a hard copy of your medical records.** Sure, the clinic says your medical records will follow you to your next duty station. But the time to find they didn't is not after you've already moved five states away. Avoid this by hand-carrying your records and those of your kids station to station.
- 4. Renting out your home from far away.** Military families often find themselves with a rental property on their hands. Buying a home while in the military has many pros and cons, but one thing is sure: Renting it out from across the country or world is a pain.
- 5. Going back to work too quickly.** Military spouses know that if you have the good fortune of finding a job, you should definitely not turn it down. But jumping back into work too quickly after a PCS, a reader told us, was her biggest PCS mistake.
- 6. Not knowing where your pets are.** We asked some military movers at Fort Campbell about the weirdest thing they'd ever experienced during a pack-out. The answer? Pets, which can get accidentally boxed away.
- 7. Letting the movers take the furniture parts.** If all of your furniture parts go into a box that disappears, you're in trouble. "Finding new hardware for a desk and bed is a pain," a reader said. She wished she had taped the pieces to the furniture they belonged to.
- 8. Forgetting to empty the trash before pack-out.** The rumors are true. If you don't empty it first, the movers will pack your trash can with whatever is in it.
- 9. Putting too much faith in your movers.** Several readers told us of times they put too much faith in the movers' ability to not break or damage their furniture or valuables. The best policy? If you really don't want something scratched or broken, don't own it, or leave it at your parents' house for safe keeping.
- 10. Not doing enough research.** A reader said she wishes she had looked for reviews on her family's future landlord. "Just because you found them on AHRN.com doesn't make them good businesspeople ... or good people in general!" she said.

PCS Weight Allowances

Joint Federal Travel Regulations set the maximum permanent change of station (PCS) and non-temporary storage (NTS) weight allowances for shipping and/or storing at government expense, based on rank and dependency status. Allowances don't include professional books, papers and equipment or required medical equipment.

PCS and NTS Weight Allowances (Pounds)

Grade	With Dependents	Without Dependents
O-6 to O-10	18,000	18,000
O-5/W-5	17,500	16,000
O-4/W-4	17,000	14,000
O-3/W-3	14,500	13,000
O-2/W-2	13,500	12,500
O-1/W-1/Academy Grads	12,000	10,000
E-9	15,000	13,000
E-8	14,000	12,000
E-7	13,000	11,000
E-6	11,000	8,000
E-5	9,000	7,000
E-4	8,000	7,000
E-1 to E-3	8,000	5,000
Aviation cadets	8,000	7,000
Service academy	n/a	350

Weight Limit Exceptions

The military services limit the weights or items members may move to certain locations.

Weight Tips

You are responsible for staying within your weight allowance. Get an early start on estimating the weight of your household goods before you visit your transportation office, which will require an estimated weight for each shipment you intend to make.

Weight estimates are not official. They are planning tools only. You can never use weight estimates to refute excess weight charges.

Excess weight adds up to big costs. Exceeding your authorized weight allowance on a move can end up with you getting overcharged several hundred to several thousand dollars. Contact your local transportation officer for additional information regarding excess costs.

If you're moving overseas. Some overseas areas impose administrative weight restrictions. If the area to which you are assigned provides government furniture, for example, you may get a weight restriction, which would prevent you from shipping your full weight allowance overseas. If you are administratively weight restricted, you have the option of storing the remainder of your HHG in long-term storage (NTS), or you may ship your household goods to a designated location within the Continental U.S. (CONUS) for the duration of your overseas tour. Be sure to check with your transportation office about your options.

If you're transporting a vehicle. PPM moves require you to weigh your vehicle empty and loaded before departing and once again upon arrival at your destination. Weigh stations that issue official certified weight tickets can be hard to find; make sure you know exactly where to take your vehicle before you leave your old duty station, or you may have to delay unloading your household goods when you get to your new home. See the "Shipping Your Car Overseas" section for more vehicle transport tips.

Shipping Your Car Overseas

If you receive PCS orders that require international relocation, you're entitled to ship your privately owned vehicle (POV) from or between locations overseas.

Restrictions

Your owned or leased POV may be shipped to your new duty station at the government's expense. If you want to make your own arrangements to ship your POV, consult your sponsor and transportation office for any restrictions. You may have to pay an import duty on a second POV. Your local transportation office has information on the host country's restrictions.

Size Limitations

The government will pay for the shipment of a POV that does not exceed [20 measurement tons](#). A compact car averages 9 tons, and a full-size car is about 15 tons. Measurement tons can be determined by multiplying the length (in feet) by the height by the width, then dividing by 40. Here's the formula:

L in feet x **H** in feet x **W** in feet = **Total Cubic Feet** divided by 40.

Type of POVs You May Ship

Only self-propelled, wheeled motor vehicles can be shipped. This includes automobiles, motorcycles, motor scooters, vans and pickups. Other passenger-carrying, multi-purpose motor vehicles may qualify. However, they may require a written certification stating the vehicle is for personal use.

Leased POV

To ship a long-term (12 months or longer) leased POV, you must provide a written authority from the leasing company. All requirements stated in the lease remain your responsibility.

When to Ship Your POV

Each branch of the military has different limitations for shipping a POV. A few of those limitations for the Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy include:

Army and Air Force personnel POVs will be accepted for shipment if delivered to the port within 90 days after the service member departed for an overseas tour of more than one year, or within 30 days after the service member's departure on a tour of duty of one year or less.

Navy and Marine Corps personnel POVs will be accepted when at least 12 months remain to be served at their current overseas duty station at the time the vehicle is delivered to the loading port.

What You May Leave in Your POV

Only authorized personal articles may remain in your POV when it's turned in for processing. All household items and camping equipment must be removed. You may ship the following:

- Tools, which cannot exceed \$200 in value
- Jacks, tire irons, tire chains, fire extinguisher, tire inflator, first aid kits, jumper cables, warning triangles, trouble lights
- One spare tire and two snow tires with wheels (mounted and unmounted)
- Portable cribs and children's car seats
- Luggage racks
- Small items such as thermos bottles, bottle warmers and car cushions if they can be packed entirely within a carton provided by the port
- Catalytic converters, catalyst components (pallets), oxygen sensors and pipe segments used to replace converters in overseas areas

What You May Not Ship in Your POV

The following items may not be left in a POV during shipping:

- Televisions and DVD players
- Accessories not permanently installed
- Flammable or hazardous substances such as waxes, oil, paints, solvents and polishes
- Citizen Band (CB) radios. Importation and operations of CB radios are prohibited in most overseas areas

Violating these restrictions may result in your POV being held at the port of discharge until the equipment has been removed and shipped out of the country. All costs associated with removing your CB radio from your POV and shipping will be at your expense.

Tracking Your POV

You can track your POV through the [PCSMYPOV](#) website. Just enter your name, Social Security number and order number, and you can find out where your vehicle is in the moving process.

Top 10 Tips for Packing Yourself for a PCS

- 1. Get organized.** Organization includes taking pictures of your more valuable items, saving money and bookmarking it for moving expenses, and keeping an inventory of your boxes.
- 2. Plan ahead.** Time is another thing you have to organize. You probably don't realize how much stuff you really have. And packing is very time-consuming.
- 3. Do a pre-packing purge.** A move is the perfect time to toss all that unnecessary and unused junk that's been hiding in the attic and under beds and in kids' drawers. As a reader put it, "Always purge before the move. Why pack/lift/move things you don't intend to keep?"
- 4. Recycle.** If possible, stock up on boxes you don't have to pay for. Get packing boxes and paper from people who just had their stuff delivered. You can also get boxes from behind stores that recycle them.
- 5. Choose packing materials wisely.** Unfortunately, not all packing materials can be re-used like boxes. And not all materials are as good as others. Don't pinch pennies when it comes to packing materials, especially for precious items, but for some items, it is OK to use your towels and sheets. Get plastic covers for your mattresses. Space Saver Bags and Stretch Wrap can be handy for wrapping and packing.
- 6. Pack strategically.** Use one color of marker for "unpack right away" boxes and another color for "when we get to it" boxes. As tempting as it is to have fewer boxes, don't pack them too heavy. Pack plates standing up, not lying flat. You can also use patterned duct tape on the outside of boxes, with a different pattern for each room.
- 7. Get the kids involved.** Kids love feeling helpful and being a part of the moving process. If young kids are involved, get them excited for the move, and let them label their boxes or put a sticker of their choice on the box which identifies it as theirs.
- 8. Accept help.** If you have friends or family willing to put in the time and sweat to help you pack, then consider yourself incredibly lucky and accept without hesitation.
- 9. Look into PODS.** PODS (Portable On-Demand Storage) can help with both your moving and storage needs. It also offers a military discount. [Click here](#) to learn more.
- 10. Don't do it.** Know your limits. Sometimes it's better to pay for professional moving help and save your sanity.

PCS Responsibilities

Keep these responsibilities in mind as you prepare for your PCS.

At Origin

- 1. Keep your transportation office informed of any change in your orders** or other changes, such as a current phone number or e-mail address where you are available until you leave your old duty station.
- 2. Rules for shipping any engine power-driven equipment (motorcycle, dirt bike, lawnmower, snowmobile, moped, boat).** Ensure equipment is free of dirt or grease. Disconnect the battery cables, and tape the leads so they do not make contact with the battery terminals. Batteries with acid or alkali are prohibited from shipment. Disconnect lead from spark plug, and tape the wire lead. No fuel can be in the tank when shipping a motorcycle/dirt bike. Lithium batteries can be shipped in limited quantities depending mode of transportation.
- 3. Do not change your shipping dates unless necessary.** Changing moving dates, especially during the summer months, can mean a lengthy delay in getting your move rescheduled. Contact your transportation office immediately if rescheduling the shipping dates is necessary.
- 4. If the transportation service provider (TSP) has not contacted you** a few days prior to your scheduled pick-up date, contact the origin transportation office.
- 5. You or a designated representative must be home** when the TSP arrives to pack and remove your belongings (between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.).
- 6. Your residence or pickup location should be organized enough** so it does not hinder the job performance of the crew that packs your property.
- 7. Separate your professional items and any authorized additional consumables.** Be sure they are identified on the inventory as “PBP&E/Pro-Gear” or “Consumable Items” and ensure they are weighed separately or a constructive weight has been annotated on the inventory.
- 8. Do not argue with the TSP’s representative.** If you have a problem, call your transportation office at once.

Upon Arrival

- 1. Contact the destination transportation office and/or TSP delivering your personal property** as soon as possible after your arrival. The TO/TSP need a phone number and/or

address where you can be reached on short notice.

2. As soon as you have a delivery address for your personal property, call the transportation office again and provide this information.

3. If possible, be prepared to accept delivery of your property as soon as it arrives. This will prevent additional handling, reduce the chance of loss or damage, and reduce or eliminate storage expenses.

4. You or your representative designated in writing must be home on the day of delivery.

5. Know in advance where you want each piece of furniture placed in your new residence. You are allowed a “one-time placement of goods” by the TSP upon your request.

Links for Filing Claims

Air Force and Space Force

<https://claims.jag.af.mil/>

Army

<https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/USARCS>

Navy and Marine Corps

<https://clclaims.jag.navy.mil/>

Coast Guard

[FINCEN_CGCC_PPM_Claims](#) (app)

Department of Defense Household Goods Portal

<https://my.move.mil/sign-in>

Top 10 Ways to Prepare Military Kids for a PCS

The planning that goes into a PCS move can stress even the best military parents to their limits, and our kids are right there beside us going through their own emotional ride. What can we do to help make the moving adventure less stressful on our kids?

1. Tell them about the move ASAP. It's really easy to keep putting it off because it's not really a fun conversation to have. But you want to make sure the kids hear it from you, not from the neighbor or the moving checklist you left on the kitchen counter. Plus, if you're stressed, they probably sense something is going on.

2. Communication is key. Encourage your kids to talk about their feelings and ask questions. If they're not talkers, have them write in a journal or draw pictures. Sharing your own feelings helps to open the lines of communication, so talk about what's going through your head, too.

3. Empower them. Find age-appropriate ways to get the kids involved in the moving process. Let them help you look at houses online. Encourage them to pack their own stuff. Even decisions like what to label boxes can help kids feel involved.

4. Use online support. Sometimes kids are more receptive to new ideas when they hear it from someone other than their parents. That's where websites such as Military Kids Connect step in with age-appropriate categories and a wealth of kid-friendly advice.

5. Read books about moving. Books are some of the best teaching tools a parent can have, especially for younger children. They educate through fun stories and illustrations and also act as conversation starters. Visit your local library or hit up Amazon to find some good ones about moving.

6. Visit your new home. Take the whole family on a road trip to your new destination. Explore the area, including the high points such as schools, the base you'll be stationed at, parks, restaurants and other attractions. Moving too far to visit? Explore virtually.

7. Use your imagination. Let your kids imagine what their new life will be like. How do they want to decorate their new rooms? What kinds of activities do they want to try? What do they think their teachers will be like? Have fun with it.

8. Put aside special items. Household goods arrival times are rarely set in stone. Because you never know when you'll see your possessions again, help your kids put aside those special must-haves they can't live or travel without. The familiarity of their prized possessions will help them feel more secure in their new environment and keep them occupied while traveling.

9. Smile! Kids follow your lead. Not thrilled about having to move for the 512th time to

the most remote location possible? It's OK to be bummed, but at some point, you to stay upbeat around the kids. Think of five positive things about the move, and go from there.

10. Give them a chance to say, 'See ya.' Another reason to give kids an ample heads-up is to allow them a chance to say their farewells. This doesn't just mean saying "goodbye" to friends. Visit their favorite restaurant one last time; drive around the neighborhood; stop by favorite parks. Is "goodbye" too hard to say? In military life, it's never, "goodbye." It's, "See ya later." It's a small military world, and it's not uncommon to be stationed with friends for a second time at a different base.



The PCS Move Checklists

In preparing for a move, it's easy to get bogged down with all the things to do. Stay on top of all that with these checklists. Be sure to take care of all the items. If you're one month away from your move and use these checklists for the first time, make sure you've already taken care of the items in the "Three Months Before Moving" and "Two Months Before Moving" checklists.

Moving Checklists

Three Months Before Your Move

To Do	Done?
If you are an active service member, make an appointment for a counseling session at your base transportation office.	
Decide whether you want to make a Personally Procured Move (PPM) or have the government handle everything for you.	
Start saving for non-reimbursable moving expenses.	
Discuss the moving process with your children to overcome their fear of relocation.	
Start planning for special moving needs if you have an infant.	
Notify your landlord you will be moving, but do not give an exact date right now.	
Begin making shipping arrangements for your vehicle(s) if necessary. If you are using your base transportation office, schedule a counseling session.	
Start keeping track of tax-deductible moving expenses such as the cost of pre-move house hunting.	
Make an inventory of possessions and valuable items (take pictures or video). Get appraisals for antiques or collections.	
Start organizing personal records such as birth certificates, insurance papers or warranties.	
Make a list of whom to notify concerning your move and forwarding address.	
Let clubs/organizations that you belong to know you are leaving. Transfer your membership if possible.	

Obtain your records or find out how to forward them later.	
Have a power of attorney or letter of authorization drawn up for unforeseen circumstances.	
Go through closets and drawers to sort through clothes and other items to give away or sell.	
Make sure all stickers from previous moves have been removed from furniture.	
Do not place any more mail order purchases.	

Two Months Before Your Move

To Do	Done?
Begin sorting and disposing of items you don't need. Hold a garage sale and/or sell off items through an online marketplace such as eBay or Craigslist.	
If you are buying a new home at your new location, you should choose one as soon as possible, arrange financing, and set tentative closing dates.	
If your family members have jobs, they should give required notice of termination and get a referral letter. They should also update their resumes for finding a job at your new location.	
If you require child care at your new location, start looking into options.	
If you have school-age children, check school schedules and enrollment requirements at your new location.	
If you plan to take a vacation on the way to your new address, make all your reservations as soon as possible.	
If you have a car, truck or other auto, take care of maintenance and repairs.	

Be sure you still have your proof of insurance for the car.	
Contact your insurance company about protection for auto(s), home and household storage, and high-value items.	
If you are using your base transportation office, let it know if you plan to ship your vehicle, and provide the estimated shipping weight.	
If you have pets, have them checked by a local vet, and ensure all vaccinations and inoculations are up to date.	
Get a copy of your pet's medical records.	
Close out any local accounts.	
If necessary, open up an account and a safe deposit box at a bank at your new location.	
If you need help organizing your finances, visit your military base finance center, or seek a private financial adviser.	
Check expiration dates on credit cards you plan to use during travel.	
Contact the Department of Motor Vehicles at your new location for information on a new driver's license and registration.	

One Month Before Your Move

To Do	Done?
Schedule pickup and delivery dates with your mover, and arrange for storage if needed.	
Verify your move-in schedule with real estate agents and landlords; arrange for temporary housing if needed.	

If you haven't found a new residence yet, obtain a post office box or forwarding address for your mail until you have a permanent address.	
If you haven't done so already, visit your military financial center or private adviser for financial counseling.	
If you are on active duty, check to see if you are entitled to advanced pay or other benefits.	
Get rid of any unwanted items around your house (furniture, clothes, etc.). You can sell them online, hold a garage sale or donate them to charity. Keep any receipts from your donations for tax purposes.	
Arrange to pick up your children's school records or get the proper procedures for sending the records to their new school.	
Arrange for letters of transfer from your church and clubs, including Scouts or other national organizations.	
If you or someone in your family is employed, arrange with your employer to forward tax withholding forms.	
Ensure that all health, life, fire and auto insurance is up to date, and inform these companies of your new address.	
Return library books and other borrowed items.	
Ensure that your vehicle(s) are in good running condition and that all required maintenance has been completed.	
Record serial numbers of electronic and other important equipment.	
Fill out an IRS change of address form.	
Have appliances serviced for moving.	
Dismantle outdoor play equipment and outdoor structures (utility sheds, playhouses, swing or gym sets).	

Three Weeks Before Your Move

To Do	Done?
If you are an active-duty service member, contact your military pay office to recertify Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and have sign-off on your PCS.	
Reconfirm your packing, pick-up and delivery dates with your mover.	
If you have a military ID card, check the expiration date, and update it if necessary.	
Notify your credit card companies of your new or temporary address.	
Notify your stock broker or investment counselor of your new or temporary address.	
Transfer bank accounts and your safe deposit box.	
If possible, settle all your outstanding bills.	
Cancel all local deliveries and services, such as newspapers.	
Retrieve all items you have loaned out.	
Confirm your change of address with the U.S. Postal Service.	
Plan menus from what you have remaining in the freezer and cabinets.	
Remove all old moving company markings and stickers from furniture and boxes.	
Have drapes and carpets cleaned; do not leave in plastic wrappers.	
Clean up your current living space or quarters.	
Clean out your attic, crawl space or similar storage area within the residence.	

Renew and pick up any necessary prescriptions. Obtain prescription slips in case you need refills on the road. Pack medicine in leakproof, spillproof containers.	
If you are an active service member making use of military weight allowances, separate your professional books, papers and equipment (PBP&E). These items will be weighed and listed separately on your shipping inventory. Make sure the packers know these are your professional items; their weight will not be counted into your weight allowance.	

One Week Before Your Move

To Do	Done?
Close out your safety deposit box if you have one.	
Buy a bunch of Ziplock bags. These will come in handy when packing large sets of small items, such as silverware, or for components of furniture that need to be broken down (screws, bolts).	
Make copies of any important documents before mailing or hand-carrying them to your new address.	
Remove wall accessories such as drapery rods, small appliances, and food and utensil racks.	
Pull out all items from beneath stairways, attics or any other area that does not allow full standing room.	
Drain garden hoses.	
Drain oil and gas from lawn mowers and other gas-operated tools.	
Disconnect spark plugs.	

Dispose of flammables such as fireworks, cleaning fluids, matches, acids, chemistry sets, aerosol cans, ammunition, oil, paint and thinners.	
Refillable tanks must be purged and sealed by a local propane gas dealer. Discard non-refillable tanks. Some carriers and the military do not permit shipment of any propane tanks.	
Disassemble electronic components.	
Place original packing boxes (if they are in good condition and you want the movers to use them) by the equipment.	
If you decide to pack the item in the original carton yourself, leave the boxes opened so items can be inventoried.	
If you are using your vehicle, make sure that it is in good running condition and that all required maintenance has been completed.	
Give a close friend or relative your travel route and schedule so you may be reached if needed.	
Set aside cleaning materials to be used after packing and loading.	
Ensure personal property items are free of soil/pest infestation (gypsy moths, brown tree snakes). Complying with requirements of the USDA and state laws is your responsibility.	

Final Days Before Your Move

To Do	Done?
Separate items that will not be packed, including suitcases.	
Ship as “unaccompanied baggage” items that will help you set up housekeeping at your new address, such as linens, dishes, etc.	
Keep a household inventory list on hand, and carry it with you.	

Make a complete inventory of all the boxes you will move to your new location; you will need to check this after you move in.	
Attach colored stickers to your boxes to correspond with rooms in your new home where you want your boxes to go. If you are using movers, prepare a color-coded map of your new house, so they'll know exactly where to take your belongings.	
Secure your cash, jewelry, important documents, checkbook and other valuable items, and carry them yourself.	
If you are renting a truck or other vehicle for your move, check it over to make sure everything is running properly.	
Accurately note the condition of belongings. If anything is marked "scratched, dented or soiled," note the location of the problem.	
Clean your refrigerator, freezer and clothes washer, and dry them for 1-2 days with doors open. To avoid musty odors, place several charcoal briquettes in a stocking or sock in the appliances.	
Discard partly-used cans/containers of substances that may leak. Carefully tape and place in individual waterproof bags any jars of liquid you plan to take with you.	
Disconnect and prepare all electronic components such as stereos, computers, printers and televisions.	
Disconnect gas and electrical appliances; moving companies are not required to perform disconnects or reconnections.	
Remove hanging objects scheduled for shipping from the walls, ceilings and cabinets. This includes curtain rods, kitchenware (kitchen utensil, food racks), mirrors and pictures.	
Remove outside TV antennas; disconnect satellite dishes.	
Remove air conditioners from windows.	
Switch utility services to your new address.	

Moving Day

To Do	Done?
Get up early and be ready for movers to arrive. Do not have dirty dishes in the kitchen or dirty clothes in hampers or lying around the house. Take all trash out of the residence.	
Have coffee, cold drinks and snacks for yourself (and packers if you wish). This is going to be a very long day.	
Be sure that you or someone assisting in your move is at home at all times. Most moves are conducted during normal business hours.	
Make sure cash, jewelry, important documents, checkbook and other valuable items are secure (carry them with your personal belongings). Do not ship jewelry.	
Get pets under control before movers arrive. If necessary, ask a neighbor to keep them for you if you haven't made boarding arrangements.	
Double-check closets, drawers, shelves, the attic and the garage to be sure you have packed everything.	
Have a marker handy to make extra notes on boxes.	
If you are hand-carrying any boxes with you, be sure to mark "DO NOT MOVE" on them clearly.	
Carry a box of "basics" you'll need on move-in day (tools, paper products, housecleaning supplies, emergency kits, etc.).	
Verify that the mover's inventory is detailed, complete and accurate.	
Watch loading and unloading, and examine all items carefully before signing a receipt.	
Accurately note the condition of belongings. If anything is marked "scratched, dented or soiled," note the location of such problems.	

If the military is taking care of your move, be sure to obtain a copy of the household goods inventory from the packers before they leave the residence. Ensure the inventory is accurate and complete, and keep a copy with other important records you are hand-carrying.	
Check the entire house before releasing the packers, to make sure that nothing has been left behind.	
Leave all the old keys that are needed by the new tenant or owner with your realtor or a neighbor.	
Hand-carry finance, medical and dental records.	

After Arrival

To Do	Done?
If you are an active service member, you will be given the telephone number of the transportation office at your new duty station. You should contact the office as soon as possible and provide a phone number where the member or designated representative may be reached.	
If you are making use of the destination Household Goods Office, contact it to arrange for delivery of personal property.	
Arrange for phone, gas and electricity to be connected. Check the pilot lights on the stove, water heater, incinerator and furnace.	
If you are moving to a new state, register your car and get a new driver's license as soon as possible.	
Register your children in school.	
Connect with medical services in your new location, such as doctors, dentists, etc.	
Before the moving van arrives, clean your new residence.	

<p>When the movers arrive, check their inventory against the one you made prior to departure; they should match.</p>	
<p>Know in advance where to place each piece of furniture. The mover is required to place each piece only one time.</p>	
<p>At time of delivery, you are entitled to the reassembly of all items that were disassembled by the carrier.</p>	
<p>In addition, you are entitled to have everything unpacked, with packing materials removed from the residence, unless you specifically waive this service.</p>	
<p>If you discover that you are missing some items or items have been damaged in transit, you must list these items on your DD Form 1840. You should ensure that three legible copies of this form are received. This is not a claim, only a record of loss or damage. Any additional loss or damage discovered after the carrier has completed delivery should be noted on the reverse side of DD Form 1840, which is DD Form 1840R.</p>	

