

MANAGING UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS

Sometimes the inevitable occurs and an unexpected problem complicates your moving day. Don't worry, you'll get through it! Keep reading for our tips on planning a move and managing 6 common moving day problems:

1. ILLNESS & INJURY

If you're incapacitated by illness or injury, the most important thing is to **take care of yourself!** Don't make big decisions, don't exacerbate injuries, and don't try to power through something serious like pneumonia or a broken foot. Go to the hospital if it's an emergency, and don't be afraid to let someone else take the lead or reschedule if it's unavoidable.

If your kids get sick, the best thing to do is assign or ask someone to look after them. In the event that no one is available, set up a comfortable spot out of the way where they will have access to everything they need and you can easily check on them.

It's best to try to avoid getting injured or sick to begin with.

Preventing Illness

- Get lots of rest and fluids.
- Stock up on tissues, throat lozenges, and any other necessities you might need.
- See your doctor for a diagnosis and prescription if necessary.
- Keep everything clean and sterilized to prevent others from getting sick.
- Enlist the help of others.
- Don't tax your system - start packing early and in small increments so you don't wear yourself out.

Preventing Injury

- Don't rush!
- Keep pathways clear and eliminate tripping hazards.
- Keep pets locked in a safe spot where they won't be underfoot or at risk of injury.
- Dress appropriately in comfortable clothes that won't get snagged, and wear work gloves and shoes with good traction and protection.

2. INCLEMENT WEATHER

The best way to deal with unexpected weather is to have a plan in place for any possible condition and be aware of the policies your moving company has for bad weather. Here are our tips for dealing with common weather events:



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Extreme Temperatures

If it is extremely hot or extremely cold, you might need to reschedule.

Intense heat can cause heat stroke, sun burns, dehydration, hyperthermia, and exhaustion. If it's not so hot that you need to reschedule, just remember:

- Stay hydrated
- Wear sunscreen
- Dress in light-colored, lightweight clothing and layers
- Take breaks regularly
- Stay out of the sun when possible
- Move large and heavy items early in the day before the sun and temperature rise
- Keep temperature-sensitive items inside of vehicles with environmental controls

Freezing cold temperatures can cause frostbite and hypothermia.

If the temperature is so cold that people are at risk of frostbite, reschedule your move. Otherwise:

- Check your car battery and make sure it is charged
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle.
- Dress in layers
- Keep your feet, hands, and ears covered up and warm
- Have warm drinks on hand
- Keep temperature-sensitive items inside of vehicles with environmental controls

Your emergency kit should include:

- Blankets or a sleeping bag
- First aid supplies
- Bottled water and nonperishable high-energy food
- Windshield scraper
- Shovel
- Matches and candles
- Warm winter clothing, including boots
- Road salt, sand or kitty litter
- Jumper cables
- Cell phone charger
- Flashlight

Rain

Moving in the rain is inconvenient, but not impossible. Keep these tips in mind:

- **Check the weather report** - some showers pass through very quickly, and you may be better off waiting 20 minutes.
- **To avoid slips and falls**, wear shoes with good grip and put carpets, tarps, or towels down on the floor of your home.
- **Cover loose items and cardboard boxes** with tarps or plastic bags to prevent water damage.

Thunderstorms

Torrential rain, hail, lightning, and strong winds can make moving dangerous and cause damage to your items. If it doesn't look like it's going to let up, you might need to reschedule your move. If it's safe to start, remember these rules:

- **Wear shoes with a good grip** and put carpets or towels down on the floor of your home (old and/or new).
- **Cover loose items** and cardboard boxes with plastic bags to prevent water damage.

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Ice & Snow

Roads and walkways become extremely slippery, and snow-packed roads are both unsafe to drive on and difficult to traverse. You can easily plow and salt your own driveway, but if conditions are severe, the highways and roads may not be safe. If you feel confident enough to continue your move, or have no other option:



- Shovel and salt all walkways and your driveway.
- Dress in layers.
- Keep your feet, hands, and ears covered up and warm.
- Have warm drinks on hand.
- Keep temperature-sensitive items well-wrapped or place them inside vehicles with environmental controls.
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle.
- Before leaving, check weather and traffic reports so you can avoid dangerous areas and accidents.
- Drive slowly and carefully.
- Leave space between your car and the vehicle in front of you.

Fog

Fog can make driving impossible and carrying items in and out of your home dangerous. If it's an early morning fog, the sun will typically burn it off as it rises. Otherwise, work with your moving company to set up an alternate moving date. If you're still set on moving, make sure to:

- Wrap items to prevent damage from moisture.
- Be patient.
- Drive slowly and carefully.
- Employ all the safety options your vehicle is equipped with, such as fog lights or low beams, and windshield wipers.
- Try to avoid low-lying areas where fog will be more dense.
- Be mindful of animals and other vehicles on the road and be prepared to stop quickly.
- Leave extra space between your vehicle and the car in front of you.

3. TERRIBLE TRAFFIC

Movers have a lot of experience driving large trucks, and many have access to GPS data that can help them avoid traffic jams. If you're managing your own move, you may want to invest in a GPS system and plan more than one route to your new place in case there's a traffic jam or accident on the way. Even with this technology, you'll likely encounter some traffic, so try not to stress out about it.

PRO TIP: As tempting as it is, don't move on a Friday. Traffic is often worse, especially in the summer, and many people prefer to move on this day because it gives them a few days to unpack without missing work.

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Accidents & Breakdowns

If it's your moving truck that breaks down or is involved in an accident, you'll have to wait for a new truck to arrive and for your items to be transferred. There is little you can do to avoid this scenario when planning a move, but there are actions you can take to limit the damage:

- Keep important documents and items with you at all times.
- Have a suitcase prepared with essential items so you can still get changed, make your bed, brush your teeth and shower even if all of your stuff is delayed.
- Make sure to carefully package important items.
- Select a reputable moving company that has a protocol in place for these types of situations. Familiarize yourself with what the protocol is and what will happen to your stuff.

4. BAD MOVERS

Bad movers can result in unnecessary delays, damaged items and property, emotional stress, and in the case of scam artists, even having your belongings held hostage until you pay an additional fee that was not part of the initial agreement.

The best way to deal with this frustrating scenario is to avoid it entirely. Follow these tips to make sure you book with a reputable moving company:



- **Research moving companies carefully** before making your selection, ensuring that they are licensed, experienced professionals.
- **Read reviews.** Check more than one site and read with a critical eye. Some disreputable moving companies pay for fake positive reviews.
- **Be skeptical of extremely low bids** and avoid bids based on cubic footage rather than weight. This practice is illegal, and is often a good indication that this is not a reliable company.
- **Get insurance.** Even after you've done the research, it never hurts to have a backup plan.

If you've already found yourself the victim of a moving scam, there are a few things that you can do:

- **File a formal complaint** with the moving company. It's important to get the complaint on paper.
- For an interstate move, contact the **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)** at 888-DOT-SAFT (368-7238). They can fine moving companies for every day they hold your stuff.
- For an intrastate move, reach out to **State and Local Agencies** and **State Movers Associations**.
- Notify the **Better Business Bureau**.
- If the company has broken any laws, such as holding your stuff hostage (this is actually theft), **local law enforcement** can get involved and help you resolve the issue.

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5. ISSUES WITH YOUR NEW HOUSE

Most unexpected issues with your new home have simple solutions and are easy to prepare for:

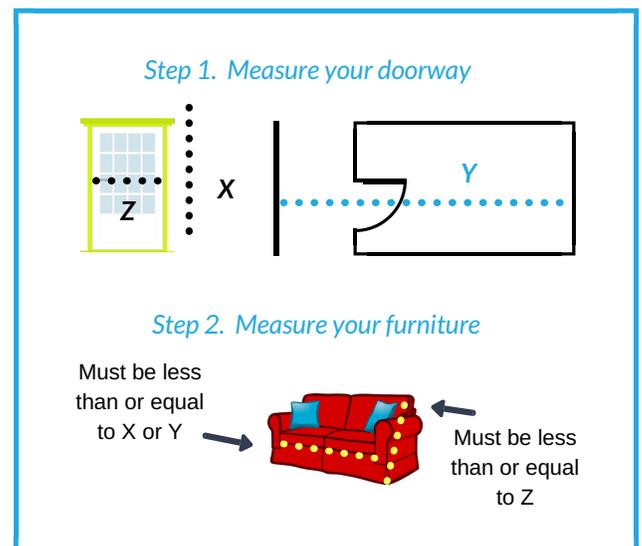
- Have the contact information of your utility providers on hand in case there's an issue with your electricity or gas, or if you forgot to have it connected.
- If you need to go a few days without electricity or water, keep an emergency kit that contains candles, flashlights, water, and nonperishable food items.
- Have the number of local handyman or your landlord in case there is an emergency with your new home.
- Keep some essential supplies readily available in case you run into snags or need to check into a hotel.

Other issues can require more effort. **What if your furniture won't fit through the door?** Here's what to do:

- **Check if your furniture can be dismantled.** If it can, take it apart and rebuild it inside your house. If it can't be dismantled, you'll need to find another way in, such as through the window.
- **Measure your furniture,** as well as all entryways and windows when you first start planning a move, even the second floor, to see if you can fit the item inside your house.
- If it just isn't possible, you'll need to **store the item** in your garage or find a local storage facility until you can figure out what to do with it.

Parking can be another major issue, especially when you're moving into an apartment building or a house with no driveway. This can be inconvenient, but if you're working with professional movers, it may even cost you. Hauling items from an inconvenient distance can result in a long carry fee. Here's how to avoid it:

- Know the parking situation before you move and plan accordingly.
- If your new home or apartment doesn't have a driveway or designated parking area for moving vans or trucks, reserve a parking space in a nearby lot.
- Talk to your neighbors about the parking situation and work it out with them.



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6. DAMAGED OR MISSING ITEMS

Damaged or missing items can be especially complicated if you've moved to a different city or state. There are several steps you can take before, during, and after your move to make resolving the issue of a damaged or lost item easier.

Before

- Take an inventory of all of your items while you pack.
- If you are getting rid of items to lighten the load, keep an inventory of them as well. It's easy to forget in the chaos of a move that you have actually given something away rather than misplaced it.
- Make note of any existing damage and take pictures of important or fragile items so you have an image to compare or show in the event it goes missing or gets damaged.
- Carefully wrap, package, seal, and label fragile items.
- Pack one room at a time and label the boxes with their location and contents.
- Do a few sweeps of the house after everything has been packed up to ensure that nothing is being left behind.

During

- Keep your most important documents and possessions with you during the move.
- Check the truck personally to ensure all of the boxes have been unloaded.
- Number your boxes and don't sign for them until after you've verified their delivery.

After

Damaged items should be photographed and documented. If you can, determine the cause of damage. If your item was lost or broken by a moving company, any reputable mover will take action immediately to help you recover the item or, if the original terms of agreement included insurance or compensation, cover the cost of the item or its repair. If you acquired insurance independently, you will need to contact them separately.

For **missing items**, take the following steps:

1. Double check that it isn't still packed or that you haven't accidentally placed it in the wrong box or room.
2. Gather a detailed description and images (where possible) of the item.
3. If you used a professional moving service, file a claim with the company providing the description and images. If you moved with the help of friends and family, share the description and image with them so they can search their vehicles and homes for the item.