

A CONSUMERS GUIDE TO CHOOSING A MOVER:

Thinking of a summer move?

Start planning now



Many families consider the summer months to be the best time to relocate to avoid disrupting their children's education. As a result, the summer is the period of peak demand for moving companies.

If you are thinking of moving during the summer, you should start planning for your move now. For a summer move, be prepared to compete for the services of reputable movers and to pay premium rates during this busiest time of the year for the moving industry. (These principles also apply to moving at month-end.) Booking early will let you reserve your preferred company. Here are a few tips that will help to ensure you get a reputable, professional mover and your summer move goes smoothly.

PLAN EARLY

Avoid the rush and start planning now. You have plenty of time to do your homework and that is to follow the four basic principles of choosing a mover:

1. Find a reputable mover. Contact the following agencies to get useful information about a prospective mover:

- The Better Business Bureau (BBB) at 416-621-9184 (Toronto area) or 1-800-459-8875 (toll free),

- Ontario's consumer protection agency, the Ministry of Government Services, at 416-326-8800, and/or

- The Canadian Association of Movers (CAM) at 905-848-6579 or 1-866-860-0065 (toll free), or visit www.mover.net.

2. Ask at least three movers for estimates (the lowest esti-



mate is often the most expensive move).

3. Make sure you have adequate insurance protection for your goods.

4. Get the terms and conditions of your move in writing.

Contact the mover you've selected periodically to ensure that your move is still on schedule.

TRY TO AVOID PEAK TIMES

Rates will generally be lower if you move off peak times, that is, during the fall, winter or spring, and in the middle of a month. The last few days of June and August are the busiest moving days of the year. If you must move during the summer, try to move mid-month and mid-week.

ANTICIPATE HOT WEATHER

Think ahead about possible problems relating to the coming hot weather. On hot days in the summer, asphalt driveways may become too soft for a heavy moving van. Special shuttling from the house to the van or vice versa to avoid soft asphalt

will prevent damage to the driveway, but will add time and cost.

CONSIDER SPECIAL NEEDS

There are basic steps to prepare for moving day, at any time of the year. Warn the mover of any special items, like garden implements or statuary, or obstacles you know they'll likely encounter, like low hanging branches from trees, large plants and shrubs. This information will be useful when the mover prepares your estimate and plans your packing needs. As soon as the weather warms, have a garage sale to help reduce how much you move or store, and therefore your cost.

ATTEND TO KIDS' NEEDS

Moving can be a major upheaval for children. Involving children in the move can help to calm their fears. Make sure young children understand where their belongings are going. Contact the prospective schools in the new community and discuss plans with the kids.

When you arrive in your new community, you're likely to find that organized summer activities are already under way, and it may be too late for your children to participate. Neighbourhood kids may be away on vacation or at camp, making it difficult for kids to make new friends immediately. Find out about summer programs in the new community as early as possible and try to make arrangements for kids well before the move.

CONSIDER THE PETS

Plan for the special needs of your pets and arrange care for them on moving day.

With any endeavour, planning ahead and doing your research will bring successful completion. This applies as well to finding a professional, reputable mover to safely move your worldly possessions. Before choosing your mover, make sure you get information from your BBB, provincial consumer protection agency and/or CAM about the mover's reputation.