

Moving Yourself: Understanding Personally-Procured Moves

A personally-procured move, or PPM, may be right for you if you don't mind the extra work. The program is open to active-duty and retiring service members, but you must have prior approval from your service's transportation office.

Why do a personally procured move?

In general, if your shipment is a manageable size, you might want to think about packing and moving yourself. You can find more details and information on a PPM by visiting [Move.mil](https://www.move.mil). Following are the reasons service members consider a PPM:

- **Saving money** – The government will pay up to 95 percent of the cost it would have paid to a commercial moving company to ship your goods. This could result in a profit once your costs are deducted.
- **Having more control** – You maintain more control over your household goods by being involved in the packing, loading and transportation. You decide which moving services you want to hire out and which ones you want to do yourself. With that control comes the added responsibility of planning and executing your move. A poorly planned move could lead to higher expenses or damage.

Good to know

A PPM is not for everyone. More work, planning and responsibility are involved. With that in mind, there are several things you'll want to consider as you decide whether or not to do a PPM, including the following:

- **To calculate your distance, check rates and find other benefits**, access the [Defense Travel Management Office](#) website.
- **The transportation office must provide counseling and approve a PPM.** If you don't get approval, your payment could be limited or denied.
- **Any actual moving costs that exceed the government cost will be at your expense.** This can include overweight costs or expenses not covered. A PPM does not eliminate the possibility of excess costs.
- **An advance allowance may be permitted to help defray up-front costs.** This depends on your service branch's regulations.
- **Some expenses are not authorized.** These include tow dolly rental, insurance fees and sales tax.
- **Temporary storage may be available in conjunction with a PPM.** Check with your transportation office for more information.
- **You must 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.

Getting started

Here are the steps you'll need to take to get started with your PPM:

- **Make an appointment with the transportation office.** A representative can tell you if you are authorized a PPM and provide you with information on how it may benefit you. Be prepared with an accurate estimate of the weight of your household goods. For help estimating your shipment use the weight estimator on the [Move.mil Before Your Move](#) page.
- **Decide what kind of help you'll need.** Will you need packing help? Will you have a company take care of the actual transport? Determine your level of involvement and check into rental vehicles or moving services. Compare rates with at least three rental companies. Be sure to ask for a military discount when you talk with them.
- **Procure the necessary equipment, including trucks, packing materials and hand trucks.** Make your reservations early and be sure to carefully review all rental agreements. Don't forget about supplies, such as a dolly, padding and boxes.
- **Plan your schedule so you have plenty of time to pack before moving day.** Before you begin, read the safety information in [10 Tips for Safely Completing a Personally-Procured Move](#).
- **Locate weight scales to get certified weight tickets.** Get tickets for each shipment covered, both empty and full. Even if you hire a moving company, you will need to provide certified weight tickets.

Packing tips

With a little care, planning and common sense, you can reduce the stress of moving day and make sure that your property arrives in good condition. Here are some tips:

- Pack one room at a time, labeling each box with a description of its contents and its destination. Be as specific as you can; it will make unpacking that much easier.
- Don't skimp on packing materials. Be sure you have sturdy boxes, packing tape and bubble wrap. Pillows, blankets and even clothing work well to cushion fragile items.
- Keep the weight of your boxes reasonable – less than 50 pounds, if possible. Put heavy items in small boxes to make them easier to carry.
- Pack audio-video equipment in their original boxes. Label cables and tighten transit screws. If removing screws, tape them to the objects from which they were removed.
- Put hardware from disassembled items in separate bags and label the bags.
- Wrap the sofa and chair cushions in sheets or plastic bags to use as extra padding for other large items you transport.
- Move dresser drawers without removing their contents to avoid repacking.
- Don't apply tape directly to polished or painted wood finishes. Removing the tape could ruin the surface.
- Pack the things you'll need on arrival, like bedding and towels, last.
- Pack a small tool kit to reassemble items that couldn't be moved whole.
- Lock the truck in transit and park it where it can be seen at night.
- Don't pack hazardous materials or perishable items.

Arrival tips

Once you've arrived at your new home, you can look forward to unpacking and setting up your new home. These tips will help you prepare:

- **Do you have any helpers?** It's typically easy to find friends to help with loading, but it may be more difficult for unloading. With luck, your new neighbors will at least come over to meet you and may volunteer to help. Your truck rental company and the destination transportation office may also be able to point you in the direction of paid helpers. Whoever helps, make sure you offer them snacks and drinks to show that you appreciate their efforts.
- **Don't forget about the children and pets.** Be sure you make plans to keep them both safe and entertained.
- **Open your truck with care.** Sometimes items can shift against the door, making it tricky and even hazardous to open. Go slowly and get help if necessary.
- **When placing boxes and other items in your new home,** remember that you may very well be living with those boxes for weeks before they are unpacked. Try to arrange them so that you can get around. Position them so the labels are easily seen.
- **Keep track of all your receipts.** Detailed records and receipts will be used to verify the move and to determine the taxable portion of your payment. These include receipts for vehicle rental, gas, oil, boxes, packing supplies, hand truck rental, tolls and weight tickets. Meals and other travel expenses are not included as part of a PPM, but may be reimbursed separately under your travel claim.
- **Submit a settlement claim to the destination transportation office, if necessary.** You'll need a [DD Form 2278](#), two copies of your empty and loaded weight tickets, permanent change of station orders, vehicle rental contract and other receipts.