



Moving Planner

Your room-by-room, week-by-week guide to a calmer, more organized move

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Faith Nance, REALTOR® — FN Home Group

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Reading Time

~9 minutes

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1 Packing Timeline Overview

A move feels overwhelming when everything happens at once. It feels manageable when you break it into small, scheduled steps.

The single biggest predictor of a smooth move isn't how much you own or how far you're going — it's how early you start. Packing under pressure leads to mismatched boxes, missing labels, and items that turn up broken (or missing) on the other end. Give yourself more runway than you think you need, and build in slack for the days life inevitably gets in the way.

- Start with rooms you use least often (guest room, storage closet, garage) and save daily-use rooms for last.
- Pack one room at a time rather than jumping around the house — it keeps your brain, and your boxes, organized.
- Use uniform box sizes where you can. Small boxes for heavy items (books), larger boxes for light, bulky items (linens, pillows).
- Label every box on at least two sides with the room it belongs to and a one-line description of contents.
- Keep a running inventory list, even a simple one, so you always know roughly what's in each box.
- Set aside an 'open first' box for each major room — the items you'll want within the first 24 hours in your new place.

Faith's Tip

Number your boxes and keep a master list (box #1 = kitchen mugs and dish towels, box #2 = kitchen pantry items, etc.). It takes an extra thirty seconds per box and saves you hours of hunting later.

Did You Know?

Color-coded labels — a different color sticker or marker for each room — let movers or helpers place boxes in the correct room at a glance, without you having to direct traffic all day.

2 8-Week Moving Schedule

Use this week-by-week outline as your backbone. Adjust the timeline to fit your actual move date, but try to keep tasks in roughly this order.

Timeframe	To Do
8 Weeks Before	Create a moving folder (paper or digital) for receipts, contracts, and records. Research and budget for moving help. Start a decluttering pass through closets, the garage, and storage areas. Begin using up pantry and freezer items you won't want to move.
6 Weeks Before	Start collecting moving supplies — boxes, tape, markers, bubble wrap. Begin packing out-of-season items and rooms you rarely use. Research your new area's schools, if applicable, and note any enrollment deadlines. Order any moving supplies you can't gather for free.
4 Weeks Before	Notify your current landlord or finalize closing details if you're a homeowner. Begin the address-change list (see the next section) and start updating anyone who mails you something important. Schedule time off work for moving day if needed. Continue packing non-essential rooms.
2 Weeks Before	Confirm moving-day logistics (date, timing, access at both properties). Submit school records requests if you're transferring students. Arrange transportation for pets if they won't be riding with you. Start packing everything except daily essentials.
1 Week Before	Pack a personal 'first night' bag with clothes, toiletries, medications, chargers, and important documents. Confirm all address changes are submitted. Defrost and clean out the refrigerator/freezer a day or two before. Set aside cash or a card for moving-day incidentals.
Moving Day	Do a final walkthrough of every room, closet, and cabinet before you leave. Take photos of the empty property. Keep essentials, valuables, and documents with you rather than on the truck. Check in with anyone helping so everyone knows the plan.
After Moving	Unpack essentials first, then work room by room. Locate your circuit breaker, water shutoff, and any other utility basics. Register your vehicle and driver's license if you've moved states or counties. Introduce yourself to neighbors when it feels right.

3 Address Changes

A little organization here prevents a slow trickle of misdirected mail and missed bills for months after you move.

Rather than trying to remember every account you've ever opened, work through your mail and inbox from the last few months and make a list of everyone who sends you something. Most people are surprised by how long the list ends up being.

Who to Notify

- ☐ United States Postal Service mail forwarding
- ☐ Employer or HR/payroll department
- ☐ Banks, credit unions, and credit card companies
- ☐ Insurance providers (auto, home or renters, health, life)
- ☐ Voter registration
- ☐ Department of Motor Vehicles (driver's license and vehicle registration)
- ☐ Subscription services (streaming, meal kits, magazines, memberships)
- ☐ Doctors, dentists, and other healthcare providers
- ☐ Loan servicers (student loans, auto loans, personal loans)
- ☐ Family and friends who mail cards or packages
- ☐ Online shopping accounts with saved addresses
- ☐ Any clubs, associations, or professional organizations

Faith's Tip

Do your address changes in batches over a couple of evenings rather than all at once — it's a lot less tedious, and you're less likely to miss one when you're not rushing through the list.

4 School Transfers

Moving with kids adds an extra layer of planning, but a little advance work makes the transition much smoother for them.

Every district handles enrollment a little differently, so your first step should always be reaching out directly to your new school to confirm exact requirements and deadlines. In general, plan on needing the following.

- A records request submitted to your current school, ideally a few weeks before your move.
- Proof of residency for the new district (a lease, closing documents, or utility bill in your name are common examples).
- Copies of immunization records and any individualized education plans or health accommodations.
- Birth certificates or other identification typically required for new enrollment.
- A general sense of the enrollment window — some districts have specific cutoff dates, so don't wait until moving week to start this process.

If you're moving mid-school-year, ask your current school about transferring records directly to the new school rather than relying on a printed copy — it's often faster and more complete.

 Faith's Tip

If school district boundaries matter to your move, ask about them before you fall in love with a specific house. Boundaries can be surprisingly precise, sometimes changing from one side of a street to the other.

5 Utilities

Getting utilities switched on time keeps your move-in day from starting in the dark.

Utilities deserve their own careful attention — from electric and water to internet and trash service — so we've covered the full details separately in the companion Utility Transfer Guide. As a quick reminder here: start scheduling your utility transfers about two to three weeks before your move, and aim to have service active at your new address a day or two before you arrive.

 Faith's Tip

Ask about your new home's specific utility providers early — in some areas of Southern Middle Tennessee, options can vary quite a bit from one neighborhood to the next.

6 Moving with Pets

Pets can sense when something big is happening, so a bit of extra planning helps keep them calm.

Moving day is chaotic even for humans — for pets, it can be genuinely stressful. Doors open and close constantly, strangers may be carrying furniture through the house, and their familiar smells and routines are suddenly gone. A little preparation goes a long way toward keeping everyone, two-legged and four-legged, comfortable.

- Keep pets in a quiet, closed-off room (or with a trusted friend) on moving day so they're not underfoot or at risk of slipping out an open door.
- Update the microchip registration and ID tags with your new address and phone number as soon as you know your moving date.
- Pack a clearly labeled 'pet bag' with food, medications, a leash, waste bags, bedding, and a favorite toy for easy access.
- Locate a veterinarian in your new area ahead of time, especially if your pet has ongoing medical needs.

- Keep your pet's routine (feeding times, walks) as consistent as possible in the days before and after the move.
- Set up a familiar-smelling space with their bed and toys in the new home as soon as you can, even before everything else is unpacked.

Did You Know?

Pets often adjust to a new home faster when their food and water bowls, bed, and a few familiar toys are set up in the same relative spot (like near the kitchen) as they were before — it gives them an anchor point in an otherwise unfamiliar space.

7 Moving Day Tips

With the planning done, moving day is really about staying organized in the moment.

- Do a final sweep of every room, closet, cabinet, and drawer before leaving your old home for the last time.
- Take photos of each room once it's empty, both for your records and in case there's ever a question about the property's condition.
- Keep a clearly marked box or bag of essentials (chargers, snacks, water, toiletries, a change of clothes) with you rather than on the truck.
- Carry important documents, medications, jewelry, and other valuables yourself rather than packing them with the rest of your belongings.
- Confirm utilities are active at the new address before you arrive, so you're not moving in without power or water.
- Keep your phone charged and easily accessible — you'll be using it more than you expect for directions, confirmations, and coordinating with helpers.
- Set out cash or a card for tips, last-minute supplies, or unexpected expenses.

Faith's Tip

Load the truck or vehicle with a plan: heaviest and largest items first, boxes labeled for the same room grouped together, and anything you'll need immediately loaded last so it comes off first.

Did You Know?

Many people find it easier to keep a simple written or phone-note checklist of tasks for moving day itself — packing, cleaning, load, walkthrough, keys — rather than trying to remember everything mentally on a day that's already full of moving parts.

8 After Moving

The truck is unloaded, but the move isn't quite finished — a few smart habits now make settling in much easier.

Resist the urge to unpack everything in one exhausting push. Instead, work through your home with a plan, starting with the rooms and items that matter most for daily life.

- Unpack your 'open first' boxes and essentials bag before anything else.
- Set up the kitchen and bathrooms early — they make the rest of the unpacking process much more livable.
- Locate the circuit breaker, water shutoff valve, and any other important home systems as you settle in.
- Break down and recycle boxes as you empty them so they don't pile up and take over a room.
- Work through the rest of your address-change list for anything you didn't get to before the move.
- Register your vehicle and update your driver's license if required by your new location.
- Take your time exploring the neighborhood — nearby grocery stores, parks, and everyday spots will start to feel familiar quickly.

Faith's Tip

Give yourself permission to feel settled in stages. Most people find that the first two weeks are about function, and the next month or two are about really making a house feel like home.

YOUR SPACE

Notes

Every move has its own details — appointment times, box counts, measurements, questions for your next walkthrough. Use the following pages to jot down whatever's useful to you as you go.

There's no wrong way to fill these in. Some people keep a packing inventory here, others track address changes as they complete them, and some just use the space for a running to-do list. Make it work for you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How far in advance should I start packing?

Most people benefit from starting around eight weeks before their move, beginning with rarely used rooms and working toward daily-use spaces as the date approaches.

Q. What's the best way to keep boxes organized during a move?

Label every box with its destination room and a brief contents description, and consider numbering boxes with a master inventory list so you always know roughly what's inside.

Q. When should I start the address-change process?

Aim to begin about four weeks before your move so you have time to work through your list in manageable batches rather than all at once.

Q. How do I minimize stress for my pets on moving day?

Keep them in a quiet, closed-off space away from the activity, stick to their normal routine as much as possible, and set up familiar bedding and toys in the new home as soon as you can.

Q. What should I unpack first in the new home?

Start with your labeled essentials bag, then focus on the kitchen and bathrooms — getting those functional first makes the rest of the unpacking process much more manageable.

Moving Day Checklist

- ☐ Do a final walkthrough of every room, closet, and cabinet
- ☐ Take photos of the empty property
- ☐ Keep essentials, valuables, and documents with you
- ☐ Confirm utilities are active at the new address
- ☐ Load heavy and large items first, room-labeled boxes together
- ☐ Keep pets in a quiet, closed-off space during the move
- ☐ Set aside cash or a card for moving-day expenses
- ☐ Confirm keys, garage remotes, and access codes are ready for both properties
- ☐ Charge your phone and keep it accessible
- ☐ Do a final check of mailboxes and any outdoor storage areas

KEEP LEARNING

Continue Your Learning

The FN Home Group Resource Library is a growing collection of free guides designed to help you feel informed and confident at every stage of buying, selling, or owning a home in Southern Middle Tennessee. Explore the full library any time at www.fnhomegroup.com/clientcenter.html.

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**Understanding Your Home
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FOR MOVERS

Utility Transfer Guide

FOR MOVERS

**Moving Planner (You're
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FOR BUYERS

Final Walkthrough Guide

FOR BUYERS & SELLERS

Closing Day Guide

REFERENCE

**FN Home Group Real Estate
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FOR BUYERS & SELLERS

Transaction Roadmap

FOR HOMEOWNERS

Home Maintenance Guide

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FOR BUYERS

First-Time Homebuyer Guide

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FOR RELOCATION CLIENTS

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Here for You, Before, During & After Closing

"Whether you're buying your first home, preparing to sell, relocating, or simply have questions about today's market, I'm here to be your trusted resource before, during, and long after closing."

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