

A Six-Month Guide to Office Moves



By Brookline
Transportation, Inc.

usa
mover

Introduction

An office move has four key numbers—6, 3, 2, 1 and 0ish. Those refer to the months leading up an office move or relocation. The 0ish refers to one month or less. What gets done and not done during those key months will have a tremendous impact on a successful move. And by success, we mean being up and running for business on day one at your new space. This short guide offers a brief review of the activities that should take place during that time span.

That amount of time might seem like an eternity. Yet it is, without a doubt, the most key month in the entire process. Largely because this is the month you will decide to move. The key activities leading up to that decision and the steps following include:

Six months before the move

- **Review your current lease** – This is an important step to make sure you're not on the hook for a deposit or fee. You will also want to check and see if you're responsible for any fees for potential damage during your move. According to Commercial Real Estate Expert Jay Nuss, many leases require a commitment (12) months prior to the end of the lease to lock in terms for the next three, five, seven years or more.
- **Moving companies** – As part of your decision, you may want to get quotes from at least three moving companies. This can help you determine a budget and make the ultimate decision.
- **Create a moving team** – This is an internal team of people within your organization to help plan your company move. It should include a point person who will coordinate with the mover. The point person should also coordinate with the team and the mover to attain the proper type and amount of insurance coverage for the move.

Why we say four is that this is when you need to notify your landlord and lock in your moving date. You will want to refer to your lease as terms may be different. The sooner you do that the better. That starts a number of activities that are better to begin at least four months before your move. Those include:

Three (but really four) months before you move

- **Confirm your moving date** – That requires two pieces: confirming with your new location that you can move in on that date and with your moving company that they can move you on that date.
- **Tell your current landlord** – Formally give your notice to your current landlord that you will be moving out on your determined date. Also, notify the project management team for your current location of your move date.
- **Communications plans** – Notify staff of the move and move date and develop a plan for both your employees and your local partners and affiliates.
 - *Internal* – This should include assigning team leaders, creating a checklist for the move and action items for each person/department with deadlines.
 - *External* – Let your external partners know of your move and your new contact info and how the move may impact any current projects. Take this opportunity to update social networks, and use the move to create excitement with existing and potential customers.

Three (but really four) months before you move

- **Special arrangements** – You may have pieces of equipment or office furniture that require more care and attention. Those items should be addressed now rather than closer to the move. This is particularly key if customized crating or containers are needed. Or, if items cannot be moved through the traditional freight elevators or loading docks. This is also true of hazardous materials that may require special permitting to move.
- **Your Neighbors** – Let the management team at your current building know of your moving plans. They can alert the other businesses in your building that you may need to reserve elevators and loading docks or grant movers special access to the building on moving day. Some jurisdictions require noise permits that have to be approved when working at loading docks after normal business hours.

Two months before your move (and not a day later)

You want to create a floor plan of what your future office will look like. That starts with mapping out a floor plan of your current space. This will help you map out a floor plan for your new space to determine where to place equipment, desks and furniture.

As part of the mapping, you will need to think about the number and location of ethernet connections, power sockets and common areas. This part of your plan will make it easier to know where to situate the big items immediately, minimizing shuffling things around later. Other planning that needs to take place at this time:

- **Schedule phone and internet installation** – Some full-service movers offer this as part of their package of services. You can also work with a local company to set up your installation.
- **Setting up computers and IT systems** – Is this something your IT staff can handle on their own or will additional help be needed to be hired?
- **Audit keys, parking passes, and access cards** - Create a master list of every employees' keys and passes and refer to it when you need to collect outstanding access cards before moving day.
- **Notify vendors** – Landscapers, security, cleaning services, delivery, coffee or water service, pretty much any service your company contracts will need to be alerted to your move date and whether or not you will need their services at your new location.

Two months before your move (and not a day later)

- **Business insurance** – A move can present a great time to review your policy, particularly if you can't transfer your current policy. Research should start now.
- **New furniture or equipment** – Will you be buying new furniture or equipment for your new space? What will you do with the old stuff? Many full-service movers offer furniture decommissioning services if you are getting new furniture for your new location. Those same movers might also put together and install your new furniture and workstations as well. If you're moving because of growth of your company or planned future growth, be sure to buy extra desk chairs and buy desks in bulk.
- **Offsite storage** – Not all of the items from your old office will make it to the new office. For example, archived files. You may want to secure offsite storage space for those items you will eventually get rid of. Your mover would be a good source for finding storage space. They might even offer it as part of their services.

Countdown to Move: One Month

This is the key part of the move. You will need to inventory and tag furniture, equipment, and office supplies. Special items like company awards can often get lost or damaged in transit. In most cases, rental crates, labels, keyboard bags and packing supplies are delivered one week before. It's not a bad idea to take photos while cataloguing items in the move in case you need to file a claim later. At the one-month mark, you will want to start collecting or purchasing moving supplies if staff are packing up their own desks. You will need boxes, packing tape and labeling materials. From an operations side of things, now would be the time to transfer utilities by setting up a cancellation date at your current office and start researching utility options for your new location.

For external communications, there's a long list of things you need to communicate externally, including. Those should include:

- Vendors and online directories.
- Business accounts
- Your website and social media channels
- Banks and financial institutions
- Accounts receivable and payable
- Magazine and newspaper subscriptions
- Listings on Google, Yelp, and other review sites

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Will your employees need parking permits or building passes for the new office?

These are details you will want to take care of in advance of move-in day. Extras to plan on now:

- First, you may want to arrange a final cleaning of your office after the move as a nice gesture. Your current landlord may be planning to take care of that on their own. But it's a nice touch.
- While many businesses are now in the cloud, you will want to ensure that all old files are archived and backed up before the move.

Two weeks and counting

The two weeks leading up to your move involve a lot of “I” dotting and “t” crossing.

That includes:

- Finalizing plans with your moving teams with an itinerary of details leading up to and during the move.
- Ordering keys and pass cards and, if necessary, parking passes.
- Confirming your Internet and phone installation and computer setup. By now, you should have confirmed whether or not it will be your team or an outside firm conducting the setup. Remember, the goal is to be operational on Day One.
- Backups – This reminder is in here again simply because it is something you want to make sure is done.

The week before your move

Last minute details abound. You will want to check out your new, actually more like inspect, your new space to make sure there aren't wires dangling from the ceiling or lights that don't work. Review your moving schedule and confirm arrival times with the mover.

The week before is also when you need to get on employees about packing up personal belongings. In fact, it may be a better course of action to make your staff responsible for personal items. If you provide employees with laptops, monitors, and other IT equipment, you may want to save these for your IT department or your professional movers.

Other one-week-to go considerations

Can you load up too much on packing materials? No. Get what you think you might need and then double it. Save receipts and return later if unused. You will also want to stock up on surface protectors, moving blankets or other preventative safeguards.

Your move will have the rental crates, labels, bubble wrap, computer wraps and special boxes to handle just about anything your moving

One day more – Day Before the Move

Finally, don't forget to set up your mail forwarding. This can be done at the post office or online at USPS.com/move.

This is when you finish all your packing and labeling. If you have any items that need special care—e.g. state-of-the-art copier—let the mover or move manager know.

Some copiers under lease can only be moved by the lessor.

Other day before activities should include collection of parking passes, security cards and keys. Be sure to cross-reference with your inventory list.

You will also want to visit or check on the new space to make sure the lights are working, water is running and everything else is in working order. If it's not, call the new landlord or the utilities companies. Nothing worse than moving in with no power.

D-Day or M-Day

Setting up your office.

As part of your moving process, you should have an outline or blueprint of how things should go in the new place. Some moving companies like BTI will set up the office for you. This can include installing workstations and putting together new furniture.

Plug in phone, internet, and IT systems.

Again, in the 21st century, this item on your to-do list must be confirmed in triplicate.

A final look at your old space

You will want to do a final walk-through of your vacated office to see if anything has been left behind or if there was any damage. Any damage should be reported to the landlord.

Post move

As you settle into your new space, you want to make sure everything works as it should, specifically your phones, computers, Wi-Fi, cable connections, and IT systems. In today's business world, you are only in business as long as your technology is online and working. Test everything and troubleshoot as needed.

You will also want to check back with your landlord. There's no harm in double- and triple-checking that your lease was properly terminated and your current address updated.

Unpacking:

Many movers will handle unpacking. But if you want to avoid that expense and have your staff take care of the unpacking, assign a team (e.g. one or two people to handle the supply cabinet, a few others for kitchen/breakroom). You will want your new office to be as close to operational as possible as soon as possible.

Rental crates are usually picked up one week after the move is completed. To avoid additional charges have your team empty the crates and stack them in a common area 20-high with rental dollies 10-high.

Conclusion

The secret to an office move is planning. The key to planning is give yourself time. By following these guidelines and sticking to this schedule, you can minimize the missteps that will happen along the way.

For additional information on how to prepare and organize your staff for an upcoming mood, you can download this checklist from our website.

Reviews

"Brookline Transportation did an outstanding job moving my family and scientific laboratory halfway across the country. George and Sara worked with us every step of the way and found us cost savings. The moving crews were punctual, efficient, careful and professional. BTI is the best in the business!"--*David Pincus*

"I have been working with George from BTI for over 25 years for our office moves. George and his boys do a wonderful job and they are the best in the moving industry. I have moved offices in other states, and I can tell you it's like night and day. No other mover even comes close to what the team from BTI does for GZA. I would highly recommend BTI to anyone moving their office and or lab." — *Kenneth R. Johnston, Chief Administrative Officer, District Office Manager, Senior Principal, GZA*

"Meticulous packing. Exceptional customer service. Awesome experience. Very professional. Highly recommend! Thank you!"-- *Amy Tripp-Ariagno*

Need an estimate?

Are you planning an office move within the next year?

Call BTI at 800-766-7724 or click the button below.

All BTI moves follow a COVID-19 protocol.

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