

Office Relocation Guide

Moving your office without a checklist is asking for trouble. Instead of planning as you go — which is really not planning at all — create a checklist that will help you stay within budget and on deadline.

The best way to avoid moving pitfalls is to be prepared. The list is likely to change over time, and that's OK. The goal is to have before you a blueprint that you can refer to again and again. Here's a model to work with. Your checklist may look slightly different depending on the size and type of office you're moving:

- Create a moving task force. You shouldn't have to shoulder the entire burden yourself. Establish a task force consisting of key employees who can offer assistance and guidance during the entire moving process.
- Meet with a space planner and/or interior designer. Your new landlord will usually have provisions for this. Trying to fit everything into a new space with little or no expertise is asking for trouble. Make sure you enlist the help of professionals. Remodeling of some sort will usually take place. Don't forget about proper voice and data cabling.
- Take inventory and toss what you don't need. Moving can be an excellent time to clean house. As you're taking inventory (do this so that you can make sure everything has arrived safely following the move), consider getting rid of extraneous equipment, papers, and other items that the office has amassed.
- Interview moving companies. It's never too early to begin collecting information about moving companies and then following up with interviews. Be sure to thoroughly check references, too.
- Meet with communications staff. Knowing how the phone system and IT facilities will operate at the new location is a must. It's incumbent on you to make sure that service will not be interrupted. The best way to ensure minimal disruption is to meet with communications staff on a regular basis. Plan 90-days minimum before the move to finalize plans with your carrier. Plan 60-days minimum with your phone and IT vendor (that's E-TEL, of course) for the move. Ask your vendor if they have a cabling division (yes we do).
- Many moving companies will say they can move equipment, but remember that is all they can do. They usually won't have the expertise to uninstall and reinstall at the new location.
- Note: a move is always a good time to wipe the slate clean. Budgets usually open up a little, your landlord likely built-in some TI (tenant improvement) money in the lease. This can usually be used for just about anything you want. Look into new systems/equip for the new place. An opportunity to check off some "wish-list" items.
- Contact appropriate utilities. You'll need to contact your local utility companies for various services like phone, electricity, and water. Provide them with stop and start dates and schedule any necessary appointments that will require your presence. Plan 90-days in advance.
- Take care of the details. Remember to make changes to office stationery and alert your customers that the company is moving with change-of-address cards. This is an excellent opportunity to remind your customers that the company is always looking for ways to improve and this move is just one example of the firm's commitment to excellence. Let your vendors know as well.
- Provide employees with orientation. Meet with employees before, during, and after the move to explain how any new functions such as the security and phone systems. Also, offer guidelines for any new procedures that will be put in place as a result of the move.