



Shipping.LifeTips.com



Category: Automotive and Vehicle Transport

Subcategory: Automotive and Vehicle Transport

Tip: Fleet Relocation

Moving a large group of vehicles from one place to another can be done either by truck, or by hiring drivers to bring the vehicles to their destination. A reputable auto shipping company can handle the trucking, but you may save money by going through a drivers-for-hire organization. If your business is using a relocation consultant, this person should be able to help you select the best option for moving your fleet. You will also save money if you are willing to be flexible in the delivery times of the vehicles. If you need them all moved in, say, a single weekend, be prepared to pay a premium for deadline service.

Tip: Having Your Car Driven

The cheapest way to find a driver for your car is to advertise at local colleges for someone who's headed toward your vehicle's destination at the next school break. This isn't the safest option -- you're trusting your vehicle to someone who may be young and inexperienced -- but the cost savings may be worth it to you, particularly with a less valuable vehicle. Some professional auto transporting companies also offer drivers to transport cars, which costs less than hauling your car by truck. The drivers are screened and the company's insurance helps cover you against any problems. These companies depend on the availability of drivers -- often students or retirees -- and you will have to pay a premium for deadline service.

Tip: If Your Vehicle is Damaged

When you receive your vehicle, whether you're at a shipping terminal or at your house, you and the driver should go over it carefully to check for any damage. If you have notes and photos from the pre-loading inspection, these may be helpful in determining whether a specific scratch or ding is old or new. In particular, check the undercarriage, and be sure the vehicle runs (if it ran before you shipped it). If you find any damage which you believe occurred during the shipping process, note it on your inspection report, obtain the driver's signature, and report it to the company.

Tip: Insuring Your Vehicle Shipment

You have insurance for your vehicle. Your auto shipper has insurance. So you're covered, right? Maybe not. Most reliable auto shipping companies have policies that cover damage during shipping. However, some policies only cover certain parts of the vehicle, or require a deductible. Ask to see your shipper's insurance certificate. Check with your own insurer to see whether your own policy covers the vehicle during

shipment. Find out whether your own insurance would be considered "primary" or "secondary" in the event of a damage claim -- it could make a big difference to your driving record and your deductible if something goes wrong. When you receive the vehicle from the shipper, inspect it carefully, including the undercarriage, and start it to make sure it runs. If there is any damage, note it on the bill of lading before you sign for the vehicle. When sending your vehicle by ship, be aware that most vessels' insurance only covers a total loss -- for instance, if the ship sinks. Your insurer can help you obtain full coverage for any damage during the voyage.

Tip: International Vehicle Shipping

Before making the decision to take your car with you overseas, investigate the laws of the receiving country. Some places may require you to make modifications to your vehicle, or may charge extra for insurance on vehicles imported from abroad. Most vehicles can be easily shipped aboard cargo containers or roll-on-roll-off ("ro-ro") vessels, which allow vehicles to be loaded without cranes. The cost of your shipment will depend in part on the size of your vehicle, so be sure the measurements you report to the shipping company are accurate when requesting a quote. In dealing with foreign ports, your shipping company should be able to help you with required paperwork. The receiving port may have documentation and loading fees, and in some situations you may have to pay an import tax.

Tip: Preparing Your Boat for Shipping

Drain fuel and water tanks to no more than 1/4 of their capacity before shipping. Depending on the size of your boat, you will need to take steps to reduce its height and width while in transit. These include disassembling masts and in some cases removing cockpits to prepare the shipper for a boat transport. Stow and secure all loose items aboard the boat. Disconnect the battery and close and lock all ports, hatches and windows. If your boat is to be delivered to a launch site, check the hull thoroughly for watertightness before launch, and be sure you have all required safety equipment. Whenever possible, step the mast and fit the rigging in the landing area before the boat enters the water.

Tip: Preparing Your Motorcycle for Shipping

Before you ship your motorcycle you'll be asked to fold back mirrors or other protruding equipment prior to motorcycle shipping. However, in most cases you will not have to drain your gas tank or remove the battery. Give the bike a good cleaning before it is shipped, and take photographs so you can document its condition before shipment. Be sure your shipping company knows about any mechanical problems with the bike. Especially, notify them about any leaks that could damage other vehicles in the truck. If they know a bike is leaky, drivers will stow it in the bottom of the carrier to prevent such damage.

Tip: Preparing Your RV for Shipping

Your RV serves a variety of purposes, but when you need to transport a RV, secure all doors and windows by taping or tying them down. This includes cabinet doors in the kitchen and bathroom. Remove all hazardous substances, including gas and oil tanks and any kind of firearms or ammunition. Remove all pictures and other hanging items on the walls, and remove any antennas atop the vehicle. If the RV will be shipped in subfreezing temperatures (for instance, on a cold cargo ship in the North Atlantic), prepare it as you would for winter storage, with water drained from plumbing systems and antifreeze in place.

Tip: Shipping a Car

The easiest way to get your car from one place to another is, of course, to drive it. However, shipping a car using a vehicle shipping company to your next destination might be easier. There are many companies that will ship your car, usually aboard a large truck. If you are moving your entire household, it may be a good idea to start by asking your moving company if they will also transport your car (some will). Auto shippers vary in their services and prices, so it's an excellent idea to get several quotes before making your choice.

Tip: Shipping a Motorcycle

Because motorcycles are relatively small compared to other vehicles, it's often easier and simpler to hire a company to transport a motorcycle. While most trucking companies will accept motorcycles for shipment, it may be worthwhile to find one that specializes in such work. Motorcycles are more vulnerable than other vehicles to road damage, so it's best to look for a hauler who uses an enclosed rather than an open truck. Experienced bike haulers will secure your bike on its own skid and cover it within the truck. If you are shipping a bike as part of a household move, or want extra protection, look for a "pop-up" motorcycle crate. These cost about \$400 and can be assembled by one person.

Tip: Shipping a Recreational Vehicle

Unless your RV is very small, it will be difficult to ship by traditional car-carrier. However, there are hauling companies that will drive or trailer your vehicle to its destination. Use the same care in selecting an RV transporter that you would for any shipping job. Ask questions about insurance, DOT licensing, and damage claims, and seek references from past customers. Some RVers enjoy taking their vehicles on vacations in Europe and elsewhere. Some RVers enjoy taking their vehicles on vacations in Europe and elsewhere. For a long stay (two months or more) this can be cheaper than renting a car and staying in hotels, even with the shipping cost. A

professional freight forwarder can arrange shipment on a "ro-ro" (roll-on-roll-off) carrier, the same sort used to ship cars.

Tip: Shipping a Trailer

Shipping a trailer can be as simple as having someone tow it to its destination. Be sure the towing vehicle is equipped with a compatible hitch with functioning electrical systems, and that it is powerful enough to handle the load. Depending on the size of your trailer, you may also be able to send it in a freight shipment. If your trailer is new or particularly valuable, this may be worth the extra cost, which will certainly be higher than the cost of having it driven. The freight shipment will be more expensive if you pack the trailer full of heavy goods. Depending on how much stuff is moving to the same place, you may wish to pack the trailer full, or remove all portable parts.

Tip: Shipping from Hawaii

The auto-shipping business is a necessary part of relocating to or from Hawaii, since no roads go there. The state also has some stringent rules about vehicles leaving the island. If you are shipping your vehicle from Hawaii, the owner must present present proof of ownership and current registration. If owner cannot be present, he or she must provide a notarized letter of authorization for the vehicle to be shipped. In addition, vehicles leaving Hawaii must be cleaned to avoid the spread of agricultural pests. If you do not do so thoroughly before departure, the vehicle will have to be steam-cleaned on the mainland at the owner's expense.

Tip: The Importance of Inspecting

It would be nice to believe that your vehicle move will go smoothly and safely with no damage or problems. However, not all moves go this way. In order to take up a damage claim with your shipper or insurer, you will need a record of what changed between the time you handed the vehicle over for shipping and the time it arrived at its destination. Begin by cleaning the vehicle before shipping (so that you can see any existing damage easily). Document its condition with a camera and date the pictures; make notes of any existing scratches or dents. When you pick up the vehicle, bring your camera and photograph it again. Go over your notes and make sure no new points of damage can be seen.

Category: Focus on: Shippers

Subcategory: Focus on: Shippers

Tip: Rating Reputation & Price

When hiring a shipping company, you should consider the company's reputation, along with their price. It's important to rate the value of your items, and interview shipping companies for their bids. In most situations, reputation supercedes price. Some items are expensive, and some are priceless, so using a moving company with an excellent customer satisfaction record will guarantee your item is safe in transit. Consider purchasing insurance for your shipped items, too. It is advisable to read the shipping company's terms and conditions carefully before committing to one insurance option. In the end, trying to save money may end up costing you.

Category: Freight Shipping

Subcategory: Freight Shipping

Tip: Common Freight Problems

If you are shipping LTL (less than a full truckload), be sure you understand the route your goods will take, where and when they will switch trucks, and how long it will take them to reach their destination. Choose a shipper that will give you a tracking number, or at the very least a cell phone number, so that you can be sure of where your items are. Before you commit to a carrier, ask about their policies in case a shipment is lost or damaged. Check with your insurance company about whatever coverage you may need. Be sure you follow your shipper's recommendations on packing your shipment. Some shippers reserve the right to charge you for repacking a shipment that appears to be insecure.

Tip: Factors that Affect the Price of Your Shipment

When you're mailing a birthday present, it's relatively easy to figure out the delivery charge. Freight shipments are much more complex. The American Trucking Association publishes a National Motor Freight Classification system, which rates shipments on a scale from 50 to 500 according to their density, value, fragility, and storage requirements. Higher numbers indicate a higher per-pound shipping cost. To find out the NMFC classification for your shipment, you'll need to know its dimensions and at least its approximate weight. Ask your shipper to help you determine the proper number. Including your NMFC number on your labels will help ensure your shipment is properly treated and billed.

Tip: Freight in a Hurry

Most LTL (less than a truckload) carriers operate on a hub system, taking each load to a designated city and then shipping it out from there with goods going to nearby destinations. If you are willing to pay a premium, you can find a carrier that will bypass the hubs and bring your shipment straight to its destination. Often, though, your best bet

will be to choose an air freight forwarder to get your shipment there on time. Of course, the most cost-efficient strategy is to plan so that you don't need to use a rush service. In some cases, however, such as perishable goods, it is worth every penny.

Tip: Saving Money on LTL Freight Shipping

Major manufacturers and other companies can have annual freight shipping costs well in excess of a million dollars. If those companies are able to save ten to twenty percent on the transport of the items they ship, those savings go right to the bottom of the balance sheet as profit. You do not need to be a freight broker or transportation expert to realize substantial savings if you understand how freight is classified and how weight can play an important part in your overall shipping costs. When items are shipped in less than truckload (LTL) quantities, the trailer can contain many different types of items. The National Motor Classification is a reference guide that assigns a class to every item shipped. The class can range from 50-500. A lower number means that the item is shipped at a lower rate per pound. If you are able to ship an item at a lower classification, you will pay a lower freight bill. Rates for each classification are further broken down into weight categories. You will pay more per pound if you ship 500 pounds than if you ship 5,000 pounds. When you have a load that is close to the next weight break, it is often cheaper to ship the item by its "as weight." For instance, if you are shipping 9,500 pounds of a class 70 item, it might cost you \$12.50 cwt (cost per hundred pounds) at actual weight, but only \$10.00 cwt if you ship it "as" 10,000 pounds. Calculating the actual shipping charges at actual weight, it would cost you \$1,187.50 (9,500 x 12.5 cwt). If you shipped the 9,500 pounds as 10,000 pounds, the same freight would only cost you \$1,000 (10,000 x 10.0 cwt). A second twist on using "as weight" instead of actual weight, is to add another item that has a low classification to your shipment to boost the weight of the main shipment up to a higher weight break. For instance, if you are shipping 3,000 pounds of a class 300 item, you can add another item that weighs 20 pounds and is a class 50 item. If you use the "as weight" and push the load up to 5,000 pounds, you will pay the lower class 300 rate on the 3,000 pounds and the remaining 2,000 pounds will be rated as class 50, a much lower rate. Every situation is different and you have to do some quick calculations to see if it is worth boosting the weight to the next level. Depending on the class of the item and several other factors, it becomes advantageous to go to the next higher weight level when your actual weight is about 80 percent of the next higher category.

Category: General Shipping/Packing Details

Subcategory: General Shipping/Packing Details

Tip: Basics of Shipping Labels

If you have an account with the U.S. Post Office, UPS, Fedex, or many other popular shipping companies, you can use the shipper's Web site to print bar-coded shipping labels on your own computer, saving you time and trouble at the shipping counter. You can buy special label stock for printing, or simply print the label on regular paper. Tape paper labels down well with clear tape, to prevent moisture from obscuring your information. For extra protection, include a copy of the label inside the package. If you're hand-writing a label, use a large, dark marker, and write in large, clear letters. Use caution in listing the specific contents of boxes. Most shipping company employees are honest, but if your package says "Joe, here's the digital camera I bought you" it may provide too much temptation.

Tip: Choosing an Art Shipping Agent

Sometimes, you may need to ship a work of art that has significant importance, size, or value. If you don't trust such a work to your standard shipping methods, it may be worth hiring a company that specializes in shipping art. Get several quotes for this work -- it is expensive enough to merit shopping around, but the lowest price may not provide the best protection for your art. An experienced art shipper will be able to answer all your questions about crating, packing, climate control, and communication during transit. It may be especially useful to consider an agent for shipping art internationally. A reputable art shipping company will be able to meet other countries' requirements for customs, crating, and paperwork.

Tip: Crating and Boxing Furniture and Art

Crating is the most expensive way to transport a piece of art or furniture, but also the safest. Many art and antiques shippers will take care of crating your pieces for you, but if you are confident in your handiwork you can do this yourself and save some money. First, wrap the piece well in a shock-absorbent material. Bubble wrap may be sufficient, or you may prefer blankets -- not the kind on your bed, but special oversized quilts which provide cushioning for large items in transit. You can get these at truck rental companies or from any vendor of moving supplies. (Note: Keep bubble wrap away from painted surfaces with a layer of paper or cloth.) For extra protection, use heavy-duty stretch film to hold the shock absorbers in place around the item. In most cases, you don't need to build a solid wood crate. Instead, build a frame of 1/4-inch wood or strandboard (OSB) with an open top and line it with a solid cardboard box. Line the box with solid 1/2-inch polystyrene foam (you can buy this and cut it to size for each side of the box). Add a layer of packing peanuts, place your item inside, and fill with peanuts. Top with a layer of polystyrene foam, then a layer of cardboard, both taped into place. Finally, construct the top of the crate and nail it into place. If all this sounds like a lot of work, hire a professional packing company to do the work for you.

Tip: How to Ship Paintings

Very valuable paintings should be shipped by a professional art moving company, but a great many works, however beloved by their owners, do not require the white-glove treatment. Fortunately, there are less expensive options available. If possible, ship paintings unstretched and unframed, to provide the maximum protection against damage. Instead, roll the canvas around a sturdy cardboard tube, paint side in, then wrap it in bubble wrap, then encase the whole in a second, larger tube. If this is not possible -- for instance, in the case of paintings on board -- you may be able to use a "mirror box" available from most moving-supply stores. Pad this with corrugated cardboard or bubble wrap. Another inexpensive solution comes from the Airfloat company, which makes boxes with foam layers that can be easily customized to the exact size of your framed art and a protective layer that can be placed on glass to prevent damage from breakage. When you uncrate or unpack a painting, save the crate or packing material in case you need to ship it again.

Tip: International Art Shipping

If you are shipping art to another person or institution -- for instance, to a museum, gallery, or private buyer -- begin by clarifying responsibilities with the person on the other end. Are they willing, for example, to travel to a warehouse to pick up the item, or will you or your shipping agent need to transport it to the door? Depending on the value and rarity of your art, you may find it useful to employ an art shipping agent. There are many companies offering this service, from basic crating and packing to full "white glove" treatment with satellite communications and security personnel. Obtain a range of quotes before making your choice. If you choose to transport your art yourself, be very sure you are aware of all customs and documentation requirements for bring art into your destination country. Failing to follow these can result in your artwork being delayed or seized at the port of entry, or even losing your privilege of importing art into the country.

Tip: Shipping a Camera

Most cameras can be shipped with no more than the same care you would give to any valuable device. However, antique or fine photographic equipment demands extra attention. When shipping a modern camera, remove the batteries and memory card before packing. Seal the camera in a plastic bag to keep dust and packing material from coming into contact with lenses. If you are shipping your camera to be repaired, many companies ask that you obtain an authorization number by phone or e-mail before shipping a product back to them. Be sure to include your address, phone number, and a complete description of the problem.

Tip: Shipping a Pool Table

It's a bad idea to just get some friends and a pickup truck and try to move the pool table. Doing this risks cracking the slate and popping the table joints. Hiring a professional to

crate and move the table may be the best way to go. If you are experienced at dealing with furniture, have several people with strong, healthy backs, and have access to a truck that can carry at least 1,000 pounds, then it may be worth trying to move it yourself. First, measure both the table and its intended destination to be sure it will fit. Take all normal safety precautions, such as wearing a support belt, when lifting the heavy pieces. Disassemble the table carefully, marking each piece so that you know exactly where it will go. First, remove the bolts that hold the rails in place, then remove the pockets. Use an electric drill with a screwdriver bit to remove the slate. Transport the slate vertically, not horizontally. If necessary, remove the legs. Once your table is at its destination, if at all possible, hire a pro to level and square it off so it provides the best possible playing surface.

Tip: Should You Use a Drop Shipper?

For those who enjoy selling products online, drop shippers sound like an ideal solution. They stock and ship your products, and you do the selling and order-taking. Unfortunately, fake drop-shipping companies are an all-too-common scam. They take would-be retailers' money (in "membership" or "setup" fees) and then place orders with real drop shippers or distributors. Because these middlemen take a cut of the revenue without performing any actual service, their clients find they have to charge higher-than-market prices. Beware of companies that offer to set up your Web site with products chosen by them (YOU should be in charge of choosing products that will sell), and of any drop shipper that wants you to pay a fee up front. When checking out a potential drop shipper for your business, make some inquiries. Will you have a tracking number for every shipment? Are there any complaints against the shipper on file with the local Better Business Bureau? How long will it take them to ship your items to your customers? To protect yourself, you may wish to use more than one dropshipper and compare prices and delivery times. Order a couple of products from each shipper yourself to test their promises.

Tip: Types of Shipping Boxes

A box is a box is a box, right? Not necessarily. Using the right box can make a big difference in the ease of packing and unpacking, and in the safety of the items being shipped. For household moves, wardrobe boxes -- which have a bar inside on which clothes can be hung, closet-style -- can be very convenient. The structure of the box is meant to support the bar, so be sure not to overload the bottom of the box with shoes or heavy items. Mirror boxes, available at truck rental facilities, can also be used for paintings, while super-sturdy boxes are available for large or heavy shipments. While many boxes can be reused, avoid shipping in boxes that have been used for liquids. Any spillage in transit will have weakened the box. Be sure to use a permanent marker to hide any bar codes on the box, to avoid confusion in transit.

Category: Home and Furniture Moving

Subcategory: Home and Furniture Moving

Tip: How to Move Your Computer

First, make backup files of everything! It's unlikely that anything will go catastrophically wrong during your move -- but what if it did? Simply copying your most valuable files -- family pictures, that novel in progress, your tax records -- onto a CD can save you all kinds of grief. PCs have a utility called SHIPDISK.EXE which can "park" the heads of your hard drive to prevent problems in transit. Once you run this program, turn the computer off and unplug it from the power source. When you plug it in and turn it back on, the heads will unpark themselves. If you have the original carton in which your PC was shipped, use it. If not, pack your PC with plenty of padding (particularly on the monitor screen) in a sturdy box.

Tip: Insurance for Your Move?

Your homeowner's insurance covers the cost of your goods while they're in your hands, but not while your movers have possession of them. So if you're using professional movers, even if they have insurance, it may be worth purchasing some additional protection to cover your furniture freight during transit. Even if you're not purchasing separate moving insurance, it's a good idea to create an inventory of the items you're moving. This will be a useful reference to make sure everything arrives safely at its destination. On your inventory, describe the item, note its approximate weight and estimate its replacement value. For antiques or other much-valued items, it may even be worthwhile to have a friend with a digital camera document the item's condition before being loaded.

Tip: Saving Money During a Move

Traditionally, moving is a time to find out who your true friends are. For a very small move, you may need nothing more than a friend with a truck (and some cash to treat your friend to food and drink!). If someone wants to help, but is not physically up to helping you move boxes, he or she might be able to care for your kids or pets on moving day, or help with cleaning your old place. If hiring movers is too expensive, you may be able to hire helpers to load and unload a rented truck that you drive yourself. Consider low-cost options -- a friend's house? camping? -- to save on lodging during the move. Plan and pack a cooler of healthy picnic food to save money and care for your family's nutritional needs in transit.

Tip: Smart Unpacking

It's over! You've moved. Now what? If you packed sensibly, you should be able to look

at your labels and figure out easily what's in each box. You won't have to dig through six boxes labeled "Stuff" to find a can opener. Even if you haven't, though, you can apply some basic organization to your unpacking. Be sure each box is in the room where its contents will go. Then you can start unpacking basic supplies. Kitchen and bathroom basics should probably come first, followed by bedrooms and living room. Decorating, unpacking fine china, and setting up entertainment systems can come on Day 2 or later if need be. If you are starting a new job, prepare the day before to make sure proper work clothes and grooming items are available. The first day is no time to be late because you couldn't find socks!

Category: Service providers

Subcategory: Service providers

Tip: Branching Out With Your Shipping Company

Growing a business can be a difficult task for some start-up companies. There are many large shipping companies that started out as a few people, with a few trucks, in one location. The key to growing your start-up shipping company is to branch out to a new area whenever you have the financial means to do so. As profit comes in, you may be able to rent an office space, buy a few more trucks, and hire a manager and several drivers in a new area. The best place to do this would be at least 30 miles away from any of your current locations, in a large town or city. This will give you a new area in which to advertise, promote your business, and gain customers. Once you have several locations, you can begin to combine your routes so that you can cover the most amount of space with one driver. This will help your shipping company save money that can be used for advertising or to establish another location.

Tip: Growing Your Shipping Company Through Great Service

One of the most effective ways to grow the customer base of your shipping company is to make sure your current customers are happy with the quality and service they receive for the price that they pay. The higher a shipping company's rates, the better service a customer may expect. This is important to keep in mind when dealing with an unsatisfied customer. If you can succeed in making your customer walk away satisfied with the transaction, they will be more apt to give you returning business the next time they are in search of the same services. Furthermore, if they have family, friends, or associates who need something shipped, they will be more likely to refer you to these potential customers if they were satisfied with the service they received from your shipping company.

Tip: Promote Your Shipping Company in an Open Market

One way to promote your shipping company is through open market Web sites. These Web sites are places where shipping companies and those who need shipping service can come together and negotiate a price that is acceptable for both sides. These Web sites allow those who need an item(s) shipped to place a listing and then potential moving companies will make a proposal on how much they would need to be paid for the service. The person looking for a shipping company will then choose a bid and the transaction will be set up. A few things to keep in mind: - Such Web sites do charge a small portion of the amount you receive, but it is necessary for them to keep their doors open. - You may have to place a bid for an amount lower than what you would normally charge, but it is a good way to get your services and shipping company seen by those who are in the market for them immediately or to fill up extra space on a route you will be taking anyway. - A shipper might be inclined to base more value on the quality of service you will give them and your overall satisfaction rating, rather than grabbing the lowest bid.

Category: Shipping Animals/Agriculture

Subcategory: Shipping Animals/Agriculture

Tip: Choosing a Horse Hauler

Questions to ask a horse hauler: -- Do you have insurance? What will happen if there is an accident? -- How large is the trailer? How many horses will be traveling in it? -- Who will be looking after my horse during the journey? -- Will the driver have a cell phone? -- What must I provide for my horse's journey -- health certificates, hay, feed, halter, lead rope, shavings? -- What is your refund policy? -- Is there hay and water in front of the horses at all times?

Tip: Preparing a Horse for Travel

Even in the best of conditions, traveling by road is stressful for a horse. Horse transportation can be a difficult for the animal, and it is common for the horse to stop drinking, resulting in dehydration and digestive illness. To help your horse make the journey successfully, start adding electrolytes to its water a few days before the trip. These will help the horse feel thirsty and want to drink enough water. Also, three days before departure, start adding mineral oil to its feed to ensure proper digestion, and cut back on high-grain and sugary feeds, replacing alfalfa with grass hay. If your horse tends to be nervous or hard to control, it's important to let your hauler know in advance. Ask your veterinarian what measures can be taken to calm the horse's nerves during the journey. Two or three weeks before traveling, have your farrier trim your horse's hooves and replace shoes as needed. A couple of days before, have the farrier stop by to round off the hooves one last time.

Tip: Shipping Pets

With proper care, you can ship cats and dogs easily and safely. Dogs and cats will do quite well being shipped from one place to another. However, the transit process is unfamiliar and disorienting to the pet, so many owners prefer to use the method that keeps the pet in transit for the shortest time. Often, this means flying in a sturdy carrier in the baggage compartment of a plane. This compartment is climate-controlled and pressurized, the same as the cabin, so the pet is not subjected to extremes of temperature. Some air carriers allow small pets to ride with their owners as carry-on luggage in the passenger compartment, provided they are small enough to move around in a kennel the same size as a carry-on suitcase.

Tip: Some Animals Cannot Be Shipped

Department of Agriculture rules prohibit shipment of the following kinds of animals: -- Puppies and kittens who are less than 8 weeks old, or who have not yet been weaned. -- Animals who do not have rabies vaccinations or a health certificate from a veterinarian. -- Any animal, if the airline or the shipper determines that the temperatures will be too hot or too cold during the journey. -- Any animal that shows aggressive behavior or does not appear fit for travel. -- There are special restrictions for exotic animals including primates, venomous snakes and lizards, and animals such as ferrets that are illegal to keep as pets in some jurisdictions.

Tip: Taking a Pet on the Road

Some pets, particularly dogs, take well to travel. For some animals, any travel is fine as long as they are with their owners. For others, it's a miserable experience, and the pet would be better off being cared for at home. If you want to bring your pet on a journey, whether it's for practical purposes or just for fun, here are some ideas to make things easier on both of you. -- Get a secure harness and leash several weeks before the trip, and have your pet spend a few minutes wearing it every day, while receiving treats and attention. There's nothing more heartbreaking than a confused and disoriented pet who bolts into unknown territory during a move or trip. -- Make a special ID tag with your pet's name and your cell phone number, plus the name and number of someone at your destination who can receive calls if your pet gets lost. -- During the days preceding the journey, make short trips with your pet, preferably in the vehicle you'll use for the trip. Always use the leash and harness while traveling. -- Train your dog not to bother people (particularly the driver) while the vehicle is moving.

Tip: The Question of Sedation

While some people seek to calm their pets' stress by administering sedatives before a flight, the American Veterinary Medical Association and many breeders warn that this is a bad idea. Sedatives can harm the animal's breathing and cause disorientation or even

death. This is especially true of pets with pushed-in noses, such as bulldogs or Persian cats. Instead, spend some time before the trip getting your pet acclimated to the carrier. Leave it out in the pet's normal parts of the house, and put a familiar object -- a toy, one of your socks -- inside. Give the pet treats, attention, and praise in the carrier so he or she associates the carrier with pleasant experiences.

Tip: What to Bring on a Road Trip with a Pet

If you're taking trip with your pet, make sure you have all the necessities: -- A supply of the animal's favorite food. This is not a time to introduce new foods -- he or she will be much happier with familiar tastes. -- Bottled water. Pets need to drink regularly, and unfamiliar water may be off-putting to a dog or cat who needs the hydration. -- Food and water dishes -- Can opener -- Pet treats -- One or two favorite toys or objects -- Blanket -- Comb or brush -- Leash and harness -- Paper towels -- Disinfectant/spray deodorant -- Plastic bag and scoop. You may also want to bring your pet's rabies certificate and your veterinarian's phone number.

Category: Shipping Services

Subcategory: Shipping Services

Tip: Military Moves

When a U.S. service member is reassigned to a new station, the government will hire a contractor to pack and ship the service member's personal goods, up to a certain weight. If your household goods exceed the weight limit, you will have to reimburse the government for moving them. If you would rather move your own goods or hire a private company to ship equipment or personal items, the government will pay you what it would have paid the contractor. Be sure to get approval from the base personal property office before arranging your own move. If storage is required at your destination -- that is, if you do not yet have permanent housing lined up -- the government move may be your least expensive option. It should be noted that household goods do not include pets. In a government move, up to two pets (dogs and cats only) will be shipped at the service member's expense.

Tip: Ridesharing

Ridesharing can be a great way to get where you're going, save gas or get help with expenses. Unfortunately, it's often tough to make connections with people who have the same commute you do, or who are headed the same direction you are. Such connections can sometimes be made through ads in the newspaper, and some government transportation authorities run clearinghouses for ridesharing. Often, though, people who need or can give rides are increasingly finding one another online. Shop

around for ridesharing boards -- some offer more protection than others. On some, for example, the person posting an ad must provide some proof of identity, and the operators of others offer limited guarantees. Before you share a car with a stranger, establish the driver's preferences for smoking, eating, conversation, and music. If possible, meet the person ahead of time in a public place and make sure you feel comfortable with him or her.

Tip: Shipping Alcoholic Beverages

The 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives states the right to regulate the sale of alcoholic beverages within their borders. A few states do not allow the shipping of alcoholic beverages at all, and many more allow shipments only to licensed wholesalers, or even to state-owned liquor distribution centers. Even if you're planning to ship a couple of bottles of homemade wine to a relative, it's wise to be cautious and check out the shipping laws in your state and the destination state before shipping any alcoholic beverages across state lines. Buying alcoholic beverages from abroad requires dealing with U.S. customs authorities. If you are importing for resale, you will need a Federal Alcohol Administration permit; if the shipment is for your personal use, you may still have to pay import taxes and duties.

Tip: Shipping and Moving Scams

Once a company has your goods on the truck, you're ready to go, right? Not if you're working with an unethical shipper or mover. They're not common, but they are out there. Some companies will charge you an extra "overweight" fee or other extra charges before they will unload your goods. Be wary of movers who will give you an estimate based on an Internet questionnaire, rather than sending a representative to look at your move firsthand. Be sure you read and understand your contract before you sign, and do not pay the movers until all the contractual obligations have been met. Some online retailers will not quote you a price for shipping the goods you buy, saying they will charge your credit card separately after they pack your order, "so they can get the correct amount." This often results in a hefty charge, as much as double the actual price of the shipment. Ask for a firm shipping price before you commit to buy.

Tip: Shipping Hazardous Materials

Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (usually abbreviated "49 CFR") is the set of federal rules that covers the transportation of hazardous materials. As a shipper, it is your responsibility to know the rules of shipping and comply with them. Your shipping company may have further rules that go beyond what the law requires. If you need to send a quantity of materials that the government labels "hazardous" (these could include used auto parts, dry ice, batteries, compressed gas, magnets, paints, spray cans, office supplies, even perfume), you may find it helpful to work with a company that specializes in packing goods to comply with 49 CFR rules.

Tip: Shipping Musical Instruments

Musicians, particularly those who play large instruments, face special shipping challenges. Not only is a tuba or bassoon vulnerable to damage in transit, but they are also sensitive to temperature and humidity changes. In addition, some instruments, such as floor harps, are too big to be shipped in standard parcels and do not lend themselves easily to being broken down into pieces for shipping. If you cannot transport a musical instrument yourself, ask questions of the shipper about how it will be packed and sent. If you are packing an instrument, follow the same procedures you would for any sensitive shipment, with extra layers of padding and "Fragile" labels. When you are receiving a wooden or stringed instrument, allow it to spend at least 24 hours acclimating to the temperature and humidity in your home or studio before playing it.

Tip: Transporting a Body

This isn't the kind of cargo most people like to think about, but it does happen from time to time that people die far away from the places where they will go to their final rest. In those cases, special shipping arrangements must be made to bring the remains home safely and respectfully. In many states and countries, local regulations will require embalming, though it is not strictly necessary provided the body is transported in a sealed casket. Cremated remains face fewer restrictions and may be transported in a sealed urn which is protected against breakage. In both cases, airlines will require a death certificate showing the cause of death, and may have other hygienic requirements. In the case of a death far from home, the family will incur extra costs by calling a funeral home to help make arrangements. Instead, call the funeral director in the place where the arrangements are to be made. There are body shipping services which will work with licensed funeral homes to move human remains from one place to another, taking care of the necessary paperwork.

Tip: What Is Dimensional Weight?

Dimensional weight is a measurement that many shippers use to calculate the density of a package -- a figure that takes into account both the space it takes up and how much it weighs. To compute the dimensional weight of a package, first calculate the cubic size (height times width times length). Then divide this number by 166 (for inches/pounds) or 6000 (for centimeters/kilograms). This is your dimensional weight. Weigh your package. Which is larger, the actual weight or the dimensional weight? Whichever is larger is the one shippers will use to bill you.