



# Tips on international moving





Moving is among one of the most stressful moments you will ever experience, especially when it's combined with emigration. Moving to a different country means taking care of a lot of affairs.

During preparations you have to do things like getting a visa and a work permit, perhaps finding a job abroad, buying a house with a mortgage or renting something with a good contract, finding a new school for your kids, preparing the relocation of your pets, taking care of your taxes in both your origin country and your future home, opening a bank account, getting a health insurance in your country of destination, etc. And these are only the very first steps if you plan on moving abroad. Yes, it is a lot of work.

Besides all these things you have to take care of, there is the actual move as well. The moving of your personal belongings has to be arranged thoroughly too. We've collected information from our clients and team of experts, noting the most important and useful tips and recommendations to help you be better prepared for your move in hopes this makes for a more carefree experience for you. To help you with the preparations for this, we have developed this e-book. Please read this through, you might find it helpful.



# When does preparation start?

It is wise to take your time during the preparations of a special project such as an international move. This gives you the possibility to make many choices based on a thought-through consideration. Think about for example booking the move with the relocation company.

→ Desired moving date

It can save money to secure your move timely. This means you will have the advantage of your mover's planning being very flexible, so they can secure your desired date. Relocation companies are also glad with an early booking, which means you could profit from the best offer.

→ Taking advantage of savings opportunities

The work involved in packing and loading at the place of departure determines, among other things, the budget for your international move. Sufficient preparation time up to the moment of relocation therefore offers you the opportunity to save. Start 3 to 4 months prior to your move with structural tidying up and a strict selection of what really needs to be taken along. You can also prepare things. We do not recommend packing certain items yourself so that the movers do not have to do this for international removals and removals outside Europe. You are therefore not insured and there is a good chance of additional checks at customs. And an inspection is guaranteed to lead to higher costs and delays. If you do pack yourself, always do this in consultation with the moving company.

→ Good timing

What is good timing? Mostly we say this means booking the move with your relocation company 2 to 3 months in advance. Later is also a possibility, but there will be less choice for the exact moving date and savings tips.





# How to choose the right relocation company?

Choosing an international relocation company isn't easy, because how often do you do that? What should you look for? How do you prevent a wrong choice and a failed move? What should you keep in mind?

## 1 Quality certificates

It is wise to look at an organization in an objective way. Quality certificates are an important thing to look at.



### → Recognized Movers

Over 200 relocation companies are affiliated with Recognized Movers. These companies mostly look at the regional relocation market. The majority of all moves happens within a radius of 10 kilometers. These regional relocation companies have to meet a big amount of standards in areas such as training, quality, organization, insurance and relocation terms and conditions. This makes for a more professional approach with less chance of mistakes or damage during the move.



- *FIDI*  
*To get the highest quality possible during an international move, an association has been formed. This international association is called FIDI (website of FIDI), and has over 600 members in more than 100 countries. This association organizes training, brings her members together during annual congresses and developed a unique international quality system: FAIM.*
- International relocation companies  
An international move is different than a local one. An international move requires up to date knowledge about the forms for customs, the insurance and transport by road, sea or air. A good relationship with international partners in the country of destination is also crucial for a successful move. And last but not least: international relocation asks for special craftsmanship from the movers. Inside Recognized Movers a select group of relocation companies specialized in international moving over the course of a few years. A specialty that requires more regulations, and for which a special relocation organization is set up: FIDI.
- International quality requirements  
More parties are involved when it concerns an international move. This goes smoothly when this partnership has gotten better through experience. Internationally, relocation companies set up rules for this. These rules are imbedded in quality systems. This sounds a bit complicated, but it is worth going over. Besides the certificate of Recognized Movers, international relocation companies generally have the ISO 9001 (quality system), ISO 14001 (environment) and work on the protection of personal information (for example through ISO 27001). The past few years, due to terrorist threats and hacking, more attention has been paid to safety. Because of this, most relocation companies only hire people that have a certificate of good conduct.
- Two relocation companies  
The most important difference between a national and an international move to a different continent is the dependence on the relocation company delivering your goods to the country of destination. How do you ensure that the relocation company at origin is of the same high quality as the relocation company in the country of destination? The meaning of quality is different within each country.

If something goes wrong – and that chance is always there – you don't want to end up in a discussion about packing, materials, transport, unloading or unpacking the goods into the new home. That's why the choice of international partners is based on how well we know the partner, a good relationship with the people inside the company and a mutually familiar quality system. A specialized international mover chooses her partners based on quality requirements and the experience with that company. The membership with FIDI helps with this.

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→ FAIM

FIDI has developed a quality system with set rules and procedures, specifically for the international relocation industry. This system has been given the name FAIM. This system lets companies know they work in the same professional way concerning the organization of the move.

To ensure this is true, there is a mandatory periodical check by an independent organization. This objective check is called an audit. This audit is taken care of by the international renowned company **E&Y**. The certificate will only stay valid when the check is met with a successful end. This is to ensure that the relocation company still meets the strict requirements.

Ask your relocation company what international partner the move is coordinated with and if this company also has this certificate.



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AEO Certificate

For international shipping, customs developed the so-called

→ Authorized Economic Operator certificate. A relocation company with this AEO-certificate has shown that their approach and security of the premises are in order and therefore are first in line during customs checks.

For the client this means a vast lessening in risk of extra checks, delays and damage. In short, all kinds of measures taken to ensure your valuable goods get to where they need to be safely and on time. This saves you a lot of stress and worry.



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## 2 Craftsmanship

- International moving is a specialty  
The movers of an international relocation company are specially trained for the expert work of packing/disassembling of furniture. This also includes special crating of valuable or fragile items. These experts are sometimes also called an 'emballeur' (French for 'packer').
- Dealing with other cultures  
A not to be underestimated skill is dealing with other cultures and foreign languages. These soft skills (empathy, being calm, pleasant manners, etc.) are an important aspect during a stressful event like moving, as this makes for a carefree move.
- Experienced drivers  
Lastly it is important for the drivers – if it concerns a move that is done by truck, inside Europe – to not only feel at home on the highway. He should also know how to get to his delivery address safely in narrow streets, past 'impossible' roundabouts, across curvy mountain roads or to remote dream houses in the middle of nowhere. No matter if it's in the center of Paris, at the Costa's or in the Dordogne... the relocation expert will know how to get there in a proper manner.

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→ Service center

The office organization of an international relocation company is also different in set-up than a local mover. There is an international service center. Experts trained in multiple languages work here who know everything about customs clearance and the international transport on the road, across the water and in the air. They are called move coordinators.

→ International move coordinator

An international move coordinator is the key in the collaboration and has contact with the acting movers, customs, shipping lines, airlines, international partners and as many outside parties as necessary to take care of the move completely from A to Z. They pretty much are international project managers with a broad knowledge about the moving process anywhere in the world.

→ International network

An international move coordinator has built up a personal collaboration with the employees of international partners, who are mostly necessary to get your goods to the right location in your country of destination. These years of collaboration are essential for a smooth move, which requires flexibility and adjustment. Often it doesn't go exactly as planned. An international partner could for example be the best relocation companies in Hong Kong, Nigeria, Scotland or Lithuania, just to mention some destinations.

→ Safety procedures

An international move coordinator works with strict procedures which minimalizes the risk of mistakes and violation of privacy. With all the personal information this is definitely not an unnecessary luxury! It's all about protection of your privacy.





## 3 Customer satisfaction

- It is obvious that true quality is decided by customer satisfaction. It is important that the relocation company has this quality checked. Do know that a satisfied client for a local move says nothing about the relocation quality internationally. A customer review from a year ago is also a bit outdated.

Always check the customer satisfaction based on your desired move. If you want to move to Singapore, ask for current references for moves to and from this region.

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# What sets the moving price for an international move?

The charges of an international move are mainly decided by a combination of the volume, moving distance and necessary administrative hassle. The larger the amount and size of your goods, the more expensive it gets. Roughly, the charges of an international move consist of the following components:

- 1 The packing and loading at the place of origin
- 2 The transport of the goods: by truck, ship or airfreight
- 3 Delivering the goods at the destination
- 3 Administrative support and coordination
- 4 The choosing of services like assembling and disassembling of furniture, (temporary) storage, the moving of pets and other charges like inspection fees, parking permit charges and local fees
- 6 Insurance

On the following pages these 6 components are explained.





# 1 Packing and loading

The biggest part of moving is human work. Human work that should be done by expertly trained professionals. A lot of work in return also means higher charges.

With moving this means properly and efficiently emptying the residence in a way that neither the goods nor the residence are damaged. This also means packing the goods in such a way that it takes up as little room as possible in the moving truck or sea container, because during transport room is valuable!

Firstly, packing is a very important aspect regarding this. You can mostly do this yourself to avoid certain charges involving packing. In that case it is smart to ask your relocation company for packing tips and things you should be mindful of.

Secondly, it is important to load the boxes and other goods in such a way that the weight is properly distributed (no heavy items on top of light items), and that the items fit together like a puzzle so the chance of damage caused by shifting is minimal. Considering no move is the same, this calls for a lot of concentration and creativity from the international movers. For this too, a lot of expertise and experience is needed.





## 2 Transport

### → Transport on the road or sea

The transport charges depend on the volume (how much room does it occupy) and on the weight of the goods that have to be moved. The volume decides how much room you need in a truck (transport on the road) or in a container (sea transport).

A move within Europe is mostly done by truck on the road. A truck is generally enough to transport the contents of a house with three bedrooms. For sea transport, the goods of a three-bedroom house fit in a 20 foot container. For larger quantities a relocation company can also choose larger containers, or even fill multiple. This is applied for most moves involving a car, boat or other unusually big items.

When it concerns a move done by truck the moving distance is a logical factor: a European move from The Netherlands to Belgium over 200 km is cheaper than a move to southern Spain with over 1.000 km of travel kilometers. When it concerns a move in a container overseas to a different continent, distance also plays an important role. For a move to the U.S.A. a ship doesn't have to sail as far as to Chili. On the other hand there can be exceptions because of the flow of goods internationally. The transport of a sea container to China can be relatively cheaper because the international shipping traffic has more cargo from China than to China.





**Tip:**

→ *Mostly the biggest part of a relocation is done by sea transport (slow but cheap). A small part (for example a baby room) can be moved through airfreight (fast delivery). Means of transport is your choice. You decide what you want and the relocation company offers you the alternatives. This way your desired result is achieved.*

→ **Airfreight**

Generally, airfreight is the most expensive way of transportation. With airfreight it is mostly the weight that influences the charges. It is the same principle as when you take multiple heavy suitcases with you on holiday. The choice for airfreight is generally the choice when a fast delivery is wanted.

With airfreight transport your goods can be delivered within days, when sea transport can take several weeks. The transport charges for an airfreight, because of the high fuel charges, are much more expensive than transport on a containership. Distance plays a part here as well as competition.

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## 3 Delivery

Be aware:

→ *With many moves, transport from port or after loading generally goes through the storage depot of the international relocation company. It is crucial that the depot meets the security and safety standards. It is important to consider these storage options when it is possible to sell your house earlier, or it might be a good idea to have your new home truly finished before the goods are moved in.*

The unloading part of the move usually consists of emptying the truck or the container. Of course the delivery destination plays a part in this. How easily can the truck get there? How many floors are there? Is there an elevator or just stairs, etc. The easier it is, the cheaper it is.

When it concerns the unloading of a container, the items are placed inside the residence and the packing materials are removed. A lot of this you can do yourself. Especially the unpacking of boxes and other things is better done at your own pace, a move is chaotic enough on its own. It helps to collect all the boxes in a certain room and empty them from there into the correct cabinets or available rooms. The more you do yourself, the lower the charges will be.

You can also choose to take care of everything from port yourself. The container will be delivered in port by the shipping line and you will then take care of the transport to the destination and the unloading of the goods.

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## 4 Coordination

The laws of the country of destination and the way customs works has a lot of influence on the administration work that is needed. For example, France is easy to get through but customs in Brazil is incredibly strict. Or Singapore in comparison to Israel.

The more complex this is, the more work there is that needs to be done. Also the coordination needed for an international move that is done by truck with a team of movers in Berlin isn't as extensive and risky as a move to the U.S.A. that involves both airfreight and sea transport.

Lastly, administrative regulations for customs formalities for a move within Europe is incomparable with a move to for example Brazil or China. This will be explained during your conversation with the relocation company.

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## 5 Optional services

### Tip:

→ *It could be you are taking your pets with you. Could it not be possible to take them with you in the car or on the plane, then there is a special moving service available for this. Ask your relocation company for the possibilities.*

For a move, you get to choose your own options. Many options go hand in hand with ease or unavoidable costs.

You can choose to make it easy on yourself and minimize the risk of damage by letting the relocation company's professionals assemble and disassemble bigger pieces of furniture. You can also have the packing of fragile or even non-fragile items done by our relocation specialists. By doing this you can focus on other aspects of your move, like selling your previous residence, the school your children will go to and the help that they might need.

A popular service chosen is temporary storage of (part of) your goods. This gives you the possibility to lower the relocation price (you take less with you) or gives you more time to get the new residence ready. You can have parts of this delivered whenever you desire. During times of uncertainty it could be interesting to sell your current residence before getting a new one. In that case, storage is a good option.

Lastly you could be faced with inspection fees, parking fees and local charges. Your international mover can inform you about this, although it isn't always possible to inform you about how high these charges will be beforehand. In some countries it could be there is unclear legislation or there are random inspections.





## 6 Insurance

When moving your valuable goods, it is a possibility to get an all-risk moving insurance. Items could get damaged because of bad weather or other influences from the outside. With the all-risk insurance, the risks that aren't within the limited liabilities of the relocation company are covered as well. This results in a bit more peace of mind. The charges for an insurance are mostly based on how much the (insured) goods are worth.

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# Saving tips

- 1 Move less goods. An open door, you might say, but nothing is less true. Unfortunately it often happens that during the delivery at the new location some items are sold or thrown away, or moved boxes are moved again in the same condition after a few years to a new location. By sorting out your goods before the move you could end up saving a lot of money.
- 2 Plan ahead. If you start on time you will have more time to select what you really want to take with you. You will also have plenty of time to select the best offers and profit from an early booking. An early booking ensures the best possible moving date.
- 3 Do a lot yourself or arrange for help. Of course, an important part of an international move is so risky or complex that it requires professionals. But you can also do a lot yourself. Alone or with the help of others. Think of: packing your things yourself, disassembling the furniture and reassembling it later or getting things ready. If necessary, deliver it yourself to the depot of the moving company. You can also choose to do a lot yourself when unloading. We do not recommend packing, disassembling and assembly yourself for international relocations and relocations outside Europe. You are therefore not insured and there is a good chance of additional checks at customs. If you do pack yourself, always do this in consultation with the moving company.

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Why did De Haan write this e-book? Because we realize that we are eventually moving people, and not just property. We experience daily that an (international) move is one of the most important and stressful events in a lifetime. We hereby offer help by sharing our knowledge and experience. For a smooth moving process, less stress, lower costs, and an good move of your valuable properties, so you can quickly feel at home again. That is our ambition!

#### About De Haan relocation

De Haan is established in 1777. The organisation provides relocation services worldwide. In the course of the years already for 500.000 customers. De Haan is part of FIDI and has a worldwide network of over 1300 partners. The organisation is certified according to the highest standards, like ISO 9001, ISO 27001, ISO 14001, AEO and FAIM. De Haan has around 100 employees in 2020.



**De Haan**

[www.dehaan.nl](http://www.dehaan.nl)

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