

# Moving Made Easier



  
MOVERS FOR  
AMERICA



## The PCS Playbook for Military Families

Moving is a regular part of military life — and it can feel overwhelming. This PCS Playbook compiles tips and best practices to help military families and moving professionals navigate the process together.

From planning and paperwork to pick-up and delivery, this guide walks through what to expect, what to prepare for, and how to make your move as smooth as possible.

# New PCS Assignment? Use On-Base Counseling

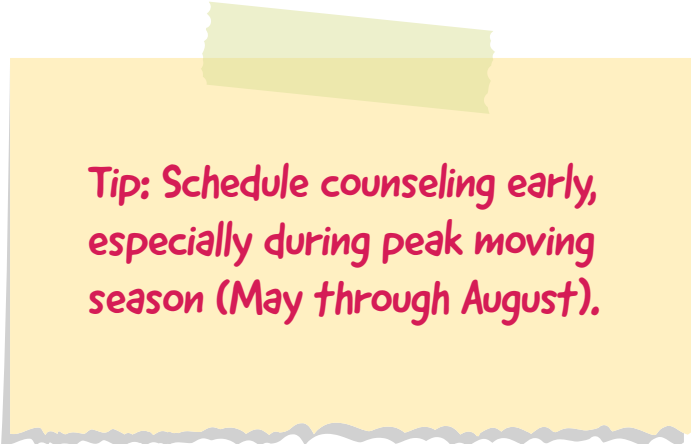
Before scheduling your move, [your installation's Transportation Office or Personal Property Office \(PPO\)](#) will provide pre-move counseling. This step helps service members and families understand their moving options, entitlements, and responsibilities.

These professionals guide you through the PCS process and help ensure your shipment is scheduled correctly.

During counseling, you can expect to learn about:

- Your shipment options (Defense Personal Property Program Move [DP3] or Personally Procured Move)
- Weight allowances and shipment limits
- Important paperwork and documentation
- Timeline expectations and scheduling guidance

Your local transportation office is one of your most valuable PCS resources. If you have questions at any point in the process, reach out — they are there to help.



**Tip: Schedule counseling early, especially during peak moving season (May through August).**

# What's New in 2026?

DP3 military household moves have been elevated as a core mission and are now overseen by the newly established [Personal Property Activity \(PPA\)](#).

## WHAT FAMILIES SHOULD KNOW:

- **New Website:** The PPA has launched a user-friendly hub for military families and moving professionals. The website features helpful resources and industry advisories issued by the PPA.
- **Earlier booking:** Service members moving during peak season (generally May–September) can begin booking moves in March, a full month earlier than in past years.
- **Stronger inconvenience claims for DP3 moves:** If delays occur, per diem is now available not only to the service member, but also to dependents up to 75% of meals and incidentals). These costs are paid by the moving company.
- **Improved compensation for movers:** Some new business rules better reflect real-world costs, helping attract and retain high-quality moving companies.
- **Direct family support:** A new centralized call center allows service members and families to communicate directly with PCS support staff.

**These changes are designed to reduce confusion and make every step of a PCS more predictable, transparent, and focused on serving military families.**



# Military Full-Service Move vs. Personally Procured Move (PPM)

## FULL-SERVICE MILITARY MOVE (DP3)

In a government-arranged move, the Department assigns a vetted Transportation Service Provider (TSP) to manage the shipment of your household goods.

This option provides structure and built-in protections while experienced movers handle packing, transport, and delivery.

### What to expect:

- A pre-move survey to estimate shipment size and identify special items
- Professional packing with approved materials
- A detailed inventory of your belongings
- Transportation coordinated through the PCS system called DPS
- One-time placement of furniture, unpacking services, reassembly of furniture, and debris removal
- Access to support resources and a claims process if issues occur

**For many families, this option reduces the stress and logistics of moving.**





## PERSONALLY PROCURED MOVE (PPM)

When planning a PPM, choosing a reputable mover is one of the most important decisions you'll make.

A PPM gives families more control, but also more responsibility. You manage the move yourself using rental trucks, containers, or movers you hire directly, then request reimbursement based on shipment costs and per diem guidelines.

### What to expect:

- Most costs are paid upfront (truck rental, labor, fuel, lodging, supplies)
- Reimbursement is processed after submitting weight tickets and receipts
- Missing or incorrect paperwork can reduce reimbursement
- Claims involving privately hired movers may be more difficult to resolve since personally procured movers are not subject to department oversight or regulation

**If you choose this option, it's important to work with reputable movers.**

### Look for movers who are:

- Licensed by the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration \(FMCSA\)](#)
- Authorized for interstate household goods moves
- Transparent about their safety and performance

**You can verify movers using the [FMCSA mover lookup tool](#) and review company ratings through the [Better Business Bureau](#).**

# Moving Paperwork Terminology 101

Moving paperwork can feel confusing at first. Understanding a few key terms can make the process much easier.

## **GOVERNMENT BILL OF LADING — DP3 MOVE**

A document that is used to acknowledge the receipt of a shipment of goods under the terms and conditions outlined in the contracts for the shipment. It outlines the intended destination, services provided, shipment details, and terms of transportation.

## **PRE MOVE SURVEY**

Inspection to estimate the personal property weight, packing needs, and any special services necessary.

## **DD FORM 619 — DP3 MOVE**

The document listing the moving services performed at origin or destination. This is signed by you and the Transportation Service Provider (TSP).

## **INVENTORY**

A detailed list of your household goods created by the movers during packing. Each item is recorded along with its condition.

## **HIGH VALUE INVENTORY — DP3 MOVE**

Any items included in a shipment that are considered to be of extraordinary (unusual) value, valued at more than \$100 per pound. (For example, china, crystal, rare collectibles/artwork, etc.) *NOTE: You should disclose these items to the mover to ensure that they are protected accordingly. Items must be initialed, signed, and dated by you and the Servicing Agent at the origin and destination.*

## **WEIGHT TICKETS**

Official documentation showing the weight of your shipment. These are especially important for reimbursement during a Personally Procured Move.

## **NOTICE OF LOSS/DAMAGE (NOLD) — DP3 MOVE**

These are filled out Documents completed by the customer at the time of delivery or if discovered after delivery is completed to notify TSP of any items are missing or damaged. This is not a claim.

**Always keep copies of important paperwork in your PCS folder.**

# Planning Your Move

Preparation is one of the most important steps in a successful PCS move. Starting early can reduce stress and help avoid last-minute surprises.

## Consider these steps as you prepare:

- Research your new duty station and community
- Begin decluttering items you don't plan to move
- Arrange time off work for moving days
- Plan childcare if needed during packing and pickup
- Schedule utility connections at your new home
- Review available [PCS Benefits and Allowances](#)

It's also helpful to create a PCS folder (digital or physical) to keep important information organized.

## Your folder should include:

- PCS orders
- Identification documents
- Medical and school records
- Housing information
- Key contacts and appointments

**Staying organized makes it much easier to track moving details. Keep your TSP informed of any changes throughout the move process.**



# What Should and Shouldn't I Pack?

Not everything in your home can be packed for transport. Safety regulations limit certain materials, and some items are better kept with you.

## Items movers cannot pack typically include:

- Flammable materials (gasoline, propane, lighter fluid)
- Ammunition and explosives
- Hazardous chemicals or cleaning supplies
- Perishable food
- Open containers of liquids

## You should also plan to personally transport high-value or irreplaceable items, such as:

- Clothing needed for 1-2 days of work
- Passports and important documents
- Jewelry
- Medications
- Small electronics
- Family heirlooms
- Sentimental keepsakes



# Adjusting to the Move

Moving is both a logistical change and an emotional transition – no matter when, where, or how you move. Leaving a familiar home, routines, and community can create stress even when the move is positive.

## Many families experience several emotional stages during a move:



**Anticipation:** Excitement about the next assignment mixed with uncertainty about the transition.



**Transition:** The busiest phase of packing, planning, and travel.



**Adjustment:** Settling into a new home, routines, and community.

**It's common for both adults and children to experience stress, anxiety, homesickness, and temporary feelings of disorientation.**

## Helpful strategies include:

- Talking openly about the move
- Maintaining familiar routines
- Staying connected with friends and family
- Exploring the new community early

**Remember that adjustment takes time — and most families begin to feel settled within a few months.**

# Moving with Kids

PCS moves can be especially challenging for children because they may be leaving friends, schools, and familiar surroundings.

**Open communication can help children feel more comfortable with the transition.**



## Helpful approaches include:

- Explaining the move early and answering questions
- Showing pictures or videos of the new location
- Involving kids in packing and planning
- Researching schools and activities together
- Keeping familiar routines during the transition

## Helpful Resources:

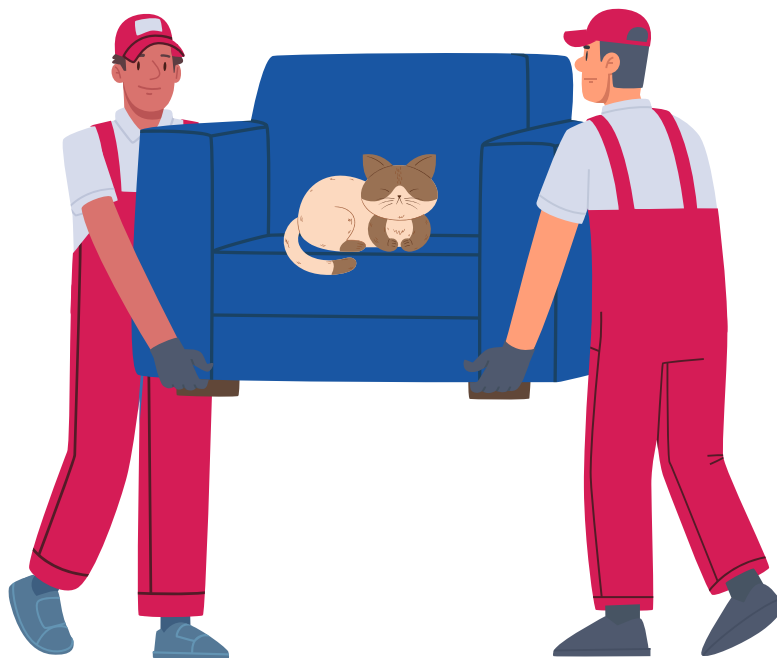
- [School Liaison Program](#)
- [Reimbursement for Temporary Childcare After PCS](#)

# Moving with Pets

Pets are important members of military families, and there are ways to increase their comfort throughout the moving process.

## To help pets adjust safely:

- Schedule a veterinary visit before the move
- Make sure vaccinations and records are up to date
- Transport pets with familiar bedding or toys
- Update identification tags and microchip information



## Pet Transportation Allowance

A Service member may be eligible for reimbursement of the costs for moving one household pet. Moves within CONUS = up to \$550; Moves within OCONUS = up to \$2,000.

**If traveling long distances, plan pet-friendly lodging and rest stops ahead of time.**

# Pre-Move Survey Tips

Before your move, a representative from the moving company will conduct a pre-move survey, which **can be done on-site or virtually**.

The purpose of the survey is to estimate shipment weight, identify special packing needs, and plan the move.

## During the survey:

- Walk through every room in your home
- Point out fragile or high-value items
- Identify furniture that requires disassembly
- Ask questions about packing materials and timing

**This survey helps movers bring the right equipment and personnel on packing day.**



# Moving Day

A few simple steps can help moving day go smoothly.

## 1

### Before movers arrive

- Pack an essentials bag to keep with you
- Prepare a “first-night bag” with necessities like sheets, towels, and toiletries
- Set aside your Pro-Gear (professional equipment specific to your job) so that it can be inventoried correctly (*Service members are allowed up to 2,000 lbs. of pro-gear, and spouses are allowed up to an additional 500 lbs*)
- Label & Place all “Do NOT Pack Items” in a separate place (ideally in your car or a designated room).

## 2

### When movers arrive

- Greet the crew and provide a walkthrough of your home
- Highlight fragile items or furniture that requires special handling
- Stay available to answer questions during packing

## 3

### Before the truck leaves

- Review the inventory carefully
- Confirm all items are listed
- Do a final walkthrough of the home to ensure nothing was left behind

# Delivery Day Tips

Delivery day is when your shipment arrives at your new home.

**To help ensure everything is delivered correctly:**

- Be present during unloading
- Direct movers where to place furniture
- Check items against the inventory list
- Inspect boxes and furniture for visible damage

**If anything appears damaged or missing, note it on the inventory before signing any documents.**



# Filing a Claim?

Even with careful handling, damage can occasionally occur during a move. If that happens, the PCS claims process helps resolve the issue.

## **Important steps include:**

- Inspect items during delivery
- Document damage with photos
- Keep copies of the inventory and delivery paperwork
- Submit claims within the required timeline

**Filing early helps ensure your claim can be reviewed and resolved quickly.**



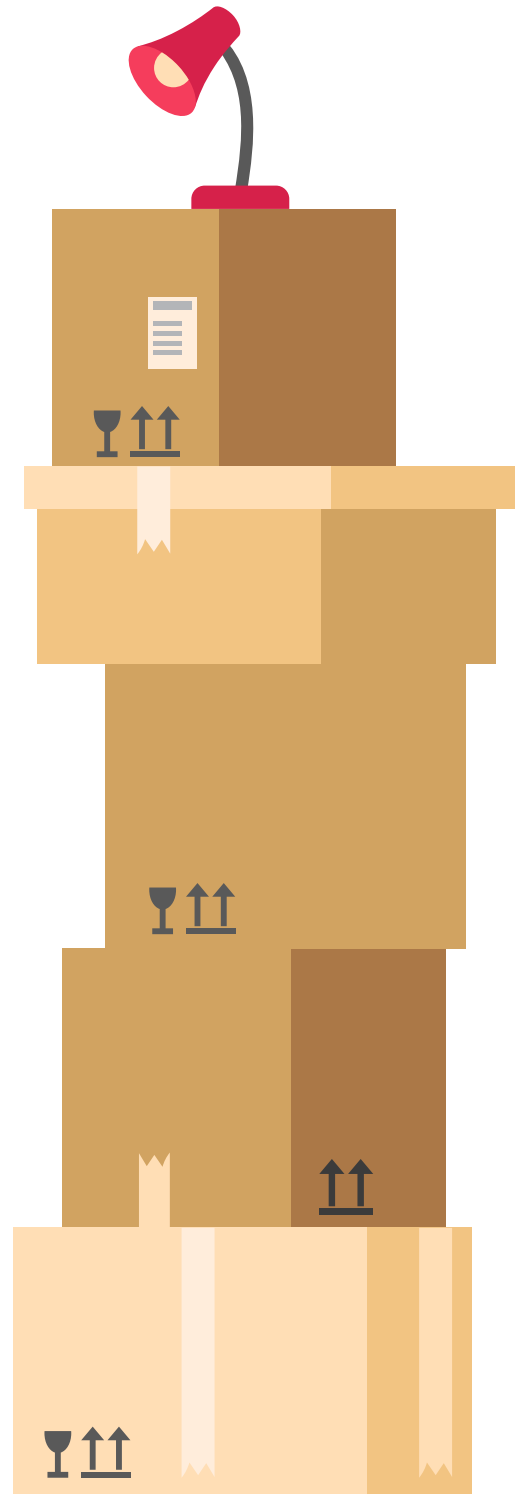
# Mold Prevention

Mold takes several weeks to form, and can go undetected at the time of your move. There are a few simple ways to ensure you don't unintentionally bring mold along your move and into your new home.

## To reduce risk:

- Ensure items are clean and dry before packing, especially items that contain food such as: car seats, highchairs, baby/kid items, refrigerators, freezers, rugs, and shoes
- Avoid packing damp items such as towels or outdoor equipment
- Allow air circulation when unpacking at your new home
- Report concerns quickly if mold is suspected

**Early action helps protect your belongings and ensures proper resolution.**



# PCS Checklist

**A simple checklist can help you stay organized throughout the moving process.**

- Create a PCS folder with important documents
- Schedule on-base counseling
- Decide between a DP3 move or PPM
- Complete your pre-move survey
- Photograph high-value items
- Set aside essentials and important documents
- Prepare items and any appliances
- Review your inventory at pickup and delivery
- Save receipts, weight tickets, and paperwork