

A FREE GUIDE TO
Mobile Home
— MOVING —



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Introduction

Mobile and manufactured homes have been popular since the early 1950s, thanks to their ease of setup, low costs, and their mobility. Unlike a traditional home, you can quickly and easily set up and move in the same day, rather than waiting for months. Most mobile homes are also built on a permanent wheel chassis, which means that if you decide to move, you can simply pick up and relocate wherever you want.

While moving a mobile home isn't always practical, it's often more affordable than buying new. Because it's your home, and you've likely put a lot into it, whether in the form of upgrades, decorating, or memories, you probably also don't want to give it up when you move. Taking your mobile home with you is a great option, and one that's usually cost effective. In this guide, you'll learn how to get started, how to prepare your mobile home for the move, and what to consider along the way.

The Costs of Moving

Costs are the most important thing to keep in mind when transporting a mobile home. While it's not always easy to say 'you will spend this much', you can learn the average costs of moving your mobile home, so you can save up and plan for it. Costs are dependent on a number of factors, such as whether your mobile home is sitting on a concrete base, if it's in good condition, and how much it weighs. You'll have to consider the following costs:

- Mover fees, plus a per mile fee
- Gas
- Permits and paperwork fees
- Building permits
- Any fines associated with leaving your current park or area
- Tires (+ flats) (usually \$50 + per)
- Axles (usually \$150 plus per)
- Insurance for the move (prices vary based on location)
- \$1-5 per mile for safety cars (per car)
- Any bridge, ferry, or toll costs for the trip.
- Disassembling/reassembling of additions/fold out rooms/porches
- Renting extra wheels/axles as required
- Labor costs for anchoring/unanchoring the home
- Any replacement parts required
- Permits and utility deposits

Costs

A normal, single wide, or single section mobile home is the most cost effective option to move. The final cost usually depends a great deal on how far you are moving, the weight of the vehicle, the individual labor costs, and how much labor is required in removing the anchoring. However, you can consider general price ranges when making estimates:

For example, you can expect the following fee ranges:

1-20 miles - Total cost of about \$2,000-\$3,000 plus about \$5-\$10 per mile (including costs of fees, permits, setup, etc.).

20-100 miles - Total cost of \$5,000-\$10,000, plus about \$6-15 per mile (including all costs)

You can move in excess of 100 miles, but not all moving companies will handle it for you. Additionally, longer moves mean more expenses, because you will have to pay for gas, permits, and licenses, as well as additional time, labor, and vehicle costs.

Moving a Double or Triple Wide

Moving a double or triple wide can be considerably more expensive than a single wide, because you'll have to pay for twice or triple the gas, plus extra trucks, extra cars to drive behind the oversized load, additional permits, and additional manpower to move the sections. You can expect about a 30-50% increase per additional section. For example, the average cost for moving a double wide mobile home within a 100-mile radius is usually \$8,000-16,000.

Deciding Whether to Sell and Rebuy or Move Your Mobile Home

It's important that you calculate the costs of moving your mobile home, including utilities, insurance, associated fees, and a sizable estimate for covering problems (like broken axles and flats), and then deciding whether or not it's worth it to purchase a new manufactured home and sell your existing one. You should also add on about 10-20% over the top of your estimate in case something goes wrong.

Consider the current value of your mobile home if you sell it, and how much a new one will cost. If you sell your existing mobile home, you likely won't have to pay for moving costs at all, which could cover the additional costs of buying a new mobile home.

For example, the average price of a mobile home runs between \$37,000 and \$73,600 nationwide, but may vary depending on your exact location. If you have a 5-year-old mobile home that you can sell for \$20,000, the cost of moving to your new location would be \$15,000, and you have to deal with permits and you can get a new mobile home starting from \$40,000, you can estimate that it will only cost you \$20,000 to get a new mobile home, or \$5,000 more than moving. If you're further than 100 miles away, you'll likely pay much more than \$15,000 to move so it is important to calculate in distance. If you're moving 30 miles, can only sell your old mobile home for \$10,000, and will likely pay under \$5,000 to move your existing home on the other hand, you're probably better off just moving the home.

How much is your old mobile home worth? Prices usually depend on the original value, whether or not the new owner has to move the mobile home, how old the mobile home is, and the condition of the mobile home. For example, if it's 20 years old and requires a lot of work, you'll probably get next to nothing for it. A 3-5-year-old mobile home on the other hand is likely worth anywhere from \$10-\$50,000, depending on the initial value. You can pay for a professional valuation to get a better idea of what to sell yours for. NADA Guides offers professional valuations for \$20+.

Preparing for the Move

If you've decided to move your mobile home, you can save on costs by doing as much of the preparation work yourself, and by ensuring that your mobile home is ready to move. You'll have to get permits, disconnect your utilities, notify your current park owner, ensure that you don't have any legal or lien obligations, and ensure that the new property is ready.

Acquiring a Moving Permit

A moving permit is required in every state, and usually varies by state, county, and even city. For example, in some areas, moving permits are free, but average prices are usually around \$25-50 per trip (you will need two permits for a double wide). You can visit your Department of Motor Vehicles to acquire a permit or visit the local DMV website. Your moving company may handle permits for you, so be sure to ask before visiting the DMV. If you're moving your mobile home across state lines, you will have to get a permit in each state that you're moving in.

Most DMV locations will not have paperwork on hand, so if you are getting the permit yourself, make sure that you find it online and print it out in advance of visiting the DMV. You can be fined for moving your mobile home without a permit. You will likely have to provide information about your mobile home, including information found on the data plate such as fire safety information, wind zone rating, and safety information. If the mobile home was manufactured on or before 1976, it is not HUD certified and you will likely not be able to obtain a moving permit.

Disconnect Utilities

It's important that you arrange to have your utilities disconnected a full 30-60 days in advance of moving. Set a moving date with your moving company first. In most cases, utility companies prefer a 2-month notice, and they may fine you for a shorter notice period. If you have a contract specifying that you will pay for water for a certain amount of time, you may also be fined for shutting off before that date. You'll also be fined if you move without having the utilities shut off in addition to continuing to pay your utility bills. Set a firm date, and arrange for someone to come out to disconnect the utilities for you. This person should be insured, and hopefully from the utility company to ensure that you don't have any fees or fines.

Remove Mobile Home Skirting

You can remove the mobile home skirting yourself, or pay your moving company to do it for you. Depending on how old your mobile home is, the skirting will be secured with bolts, with screws, or with a simple slide and click mechanism. In the case of the bolts, you should usually leave the removal to the moving company so that you don't strip or damage the bolt. You can remove screws yourself with a power drill. Slide and click mechanisms usually have a key near the water supply, which you can remove yourself. However, it is important that you do not damage the track on the mechanism, or you won't be able to reuse the skirting.

Remove click in skirting:

- Find the key panel. This is usually near the water supply, and typically marked by a break in the trim.
- Lift the trim over the edge of the panel with one hand, and then grip the panel under it at the bottom.
- Pull the panel down and out. You may have to pull it quite hard, as it is connected to the panels around it, and may not have been moved in some time. Always pull down instead of straight, so that you don't damage the railing.
- Pull secondary panels to the side to disconnect them from the other panels, and then pull them down and out.
- Stack panels on plastic, or with plastic between them to prevent scratching, damage, or water damage.
- The rail is usually attached to the mobile home with screws or bolts, but can remain in place while traveling. Ask your moving company before moving it. You may want to remove it to prevent damage.

Tip: If you're moving into a mobile home park, take pictures before removing the skirting and ask the new park owner if your skirting is allowed. Some parks only allow certain types of skirting. You may also have to replace your skirting once you get there, which usually costs \$300 and up.

Remove & Secure All Loose Items Inside & Out

It is important that you remove or secure any items that are in cabinets or on countertops that will move when the vehicle is on the road. For example, dishware, pots, pans, decorative items, and so on should all be packed into boxes and taken out, or packed securely in a box on the floor. A mobile home can sway quite a bit in the wind while on the road, and any items that are not bolted, glued, or screwed down should be taken out and packed away for the trip. You can also remove them from the mobile home and pack them into a moving van to lighten the load on the mobile home and therefore reduce costs of transport.

- Glass panels, lamps, and light fixtures should all be removed and packed away
- Remove glass cabinet doors
- Secure shower doors. If glass, consider removing them.
- Remove toilet tank tops and secure them.

Glass items will rattle during transport and might break, so the best option is to simply remove them, pack them in paper or bubble wrap, and put them in a moving van. This will also lighten the load inside of the mobile home and will reduce the chances of an axle breaking. If your mobile home is too heavy for the axles, you should always remove furniture and personal belongings.

Remove any valuable items such as money, jewelry, or family heirlooms, as they are not covered by moving insurance, and the moving company is likely not bonded for jewelry. You can pack them up and store them in your moving van, or keep them on your person for the duration of the move.

Removing Furniture, Light Fixtures, Etc.

Large items such as furniture, appliances, and swinging light fixtures should all be taken down and secured or removed from the home to prevent damage. It's usually better to completely remove large items to reduce the weight, but if it's not a possibility, you can arrange to tie items down so that they do not slide around while in transit. Sliding furniture can cause damage, break the furniture, and cause problems for the mobile home by shifting weight loads around. For this reason, it is recommended that you take furniture and fixtures out of the mobile home. Arranging to have a moving truck on the premises so that you can pack up furniture before your moving company arrives is the best policy. Find out what time the moving company will arrive, and schedule your movers for the morning or the night before, so that the mobile home is completely ready to go when the movers show up.

Securing Possessions to Prevent Damage While Moving

Finally, you should take the time to secure any items that are going to remain in the mobile home so that they do not move while traveling. This means securing refrigerator and cabinet doors, fastening any furniture that you can't move out so that it does not fall over during transit, fastening any mattresses or beds so that they do not slide around if you are leaving them in the home, ensuring that cabinets won't tip over, and making sure that large items like hutches and cabinets cannot fall or slide. If you have an air conditioner or exterior/window ventilation installed, you will have to remove it as well. Your movers may or may not handle moving a porch, addition, or storage area, so make sure that you ask well ahead of the scheduled moving date, and if not, handle having it moved separately. If the movers do not handle additions, make sure that the addition is disassembled and removed from the mobile home before the movers arrive.

Arranging the New Lot in Advance of Moving

You'll have to prepare your new lot for moving in well in advance of getting your mobile home there. There are multiple rules, regulations, and requirements for moving onto a new lot, and if you don't handle them, you won't be able to move. You'll have to:

- Rent or purchase the lot
- Ensure that your mobile home is allowed under local zoning
- Arrange to have the utilities turned on for the day, or the day after. You may need a permit from local government. If there are no utilities running up to the lot, you will have to have them installed which requires a building permit
- Set up sewage, if you have to install a new septic system, this means getting a permit
- Have the lot prepared by the movers or the park
- Acquire utility permits if required.
- Acquire a building site permit
- Arrange for blocks, or ensure that your mover will arrange for blocks for re blocking the site.
- Prepare the base if you are not moving into a pre-prepared mobile home.
- If the lot hasn't been used for a mobile home before, you will have to arrange for it to be drained and compacted.

Every mobile home park has its own requirements, so you should always discuss your needs and requirements when moving into a new park. The sewage and fittings, water fittings, fire proofing, wind zone, electric requirements, and number of bathrooms should all be discussed with the park owner in advance if you are moving to a new park.

Insurance

Moving insurance ensures that if anything happens to your mobile home while traveling, your insurance will pay for the damages. This is important, because the mover's insurance might not cover the cost of items inside of the home. Moving your mobile home is basically the same as putting your home in a wind tunnel on the road, so some damage, especially to the roof and exterior paneling is very common. You want to pay for as little as possible, so insurance is the best way to go. You also want to ensure that you are not personally liable if something goes wrong, there is an accident, or your home is damaged.

- Collect multiple quotes from local insurance companies that cover your current location and your destination and choose the best for the money,
- Have the insurer inspect your home
- Prepare an inventory of all items left in the home.
- Take photos of the home and any items to be left inside so that you can prove damage
- Note serial numbers of tires if the insurance covers tires
- Itemize anything left in closets, cabinets, or drawers.
- Notify the insurer of the moving company, route to be travelled, distance travelled, and travel date.
- Decide if you want full coverage, cost of replacement, or just basic coverage

Insurance costs vary from area to area, but moving insurance is usually relatively affordable compared to the cost of repairing major issues. If you're moving into another state, make sure that the insurance company covers both states.

Reviewing Mortgage or Lien Requirements

If there is a lien or mortgage against the mobile home, you may not be able to move it. Therefore, if you have a mortgage, it is important that you contact your bank or mortgage provider to ensure that you are allowed to move the home. In some cases, mortgage providers write in a clause that you cannot move the home until the mortgage is fully paid. If you have a lien, the same conditions may apply. You can check the home's Preliminary Title Report to see if there is a lien or mortgage before moving if you aren't sure. Any attorney or title company can review the property and write up a title report for you. It will cover, liens, mortgages, and any issues with the property, which you can work on fixing before moving. In most cases, you should get a Preliminary Title Report at least 90 days before moving, so you have time to work out any problems before terminating your lease and utilities.

Checking Property Tax

If property tax is due on the mobile home, you will not be able to move it. Check with your local municipality or your Preliminary Title Report to ensure that you haven't failed to pay any property taxes before applying for a moving permit.

Park Rules & Regulations for Moving

Most parks have their own regulations and requirements for mobile homes moving in. For example, most will require that your mobile home meet the local wind zone and fire regulations. Some won't allow you to leave a hitch on, will require a certain type of skirting, require a certain amount of exterior maintenance, or might not allow exterior buildings such as large porches or storage buildings. It is important that you discuss your needs with the park you are moving to before moving in. However, you also have to handle your legal obligations with your current park before you leave.

Terminate Your Lease 30 Days in Advance

Most mobile home parks require a minimum of a 30-day advance notice to terminate the lease before you move out. In some cases, this will be 60 days. You will have to deliver the notice in writing, with a firm moving out date, so that the park can begin advertising the empty lot well in advance of your moving out. Failing to do so can mean forfeiting your deposit, or having to pay fees or fines. Once you've terminated your lease, you can set up a date for receiving your deposit back.

Set Firm Cut Off Dates with Utility Companies

Set a firm utility cut off date with your utility companies so that you can ensure that the utilities are off when you go to disconnect them. This should be the day before or the morning before your movers arrive. You'll also want to arrange to have the utilities disconnected by an insured and trained contractor, either from your movers, or from the utility company.

Make Plans in Case of Delays

Sometimes things can and do go wrong. Whether your movers end up being late, the lot isn't ready yet, or something else happens, you want to be prepared. Pre-reserving a hotel room is a great way to ensure that you have a place to stay if something goes wrong, especially if you're moving during a holiday, near a local festival date, or are in a tourist area. If the movers show up on time, you can always cancel your reservation.

Selecting a Moving Company

Finding and choosing the right company is crucial to having a good experience when moving your mobile home. You can do a local search to find movers in your area, check with your local Better Business Bureau, or check your local phonebook to find options.

Licensed

A commercial mobile home mover must be licensed in order to move your home legally in any state. You want to ensure that they have a full license issued by the state they are in. If you are moving the mobile home across state lines, they have to be licensed in both states, or hand the mobile home off to another moving company at the border. You can contact your state or regional mobile or manufactured home association to find out if the company is licensed in your area.

Insured

Insurance ensures that you are not liable in case of an accident or property damage. Ask for the company's insurance number, and then verify it with the insuring company before making a hire.

Experienced

Experience is an important quality for a mobile home mover to have because it helps to ensure that nothing will go wrong during the move. For example, an inexperienced moving company might try to pull out of the lot without physically disconnecting the utilities, which can cost you thousands of dollars in damage and utility fines. Ask how many moves they have already completed, or how long they have been in the business before signing a contract.

Written Contracts

A written contract, with a maximum price or a maximum price over the initial quote, claims of insurance, destination, and terms should be included with every move. If not, find another mover.

Mobile Home Zoning

Mobile home zoning is set up for multiple reasons, but mainly for the safety of you and your mobile home, but also to separate zones for manufactured homes and traditional houses. Zoning rules can vary a great deal by state, and even by city, so you will have to check and pay attention to the zoning where you're moving, and along the route there.

Parks

Mobile home parks and areas are already pre-licensed to house mobile homes by the mobile home park owner. You can request their license, and verify it with the local municipality or issuer to ensure that you won't be in trouble with the city. Importantly, you can double check the licensed boundaries for the park, in case the park has been expanded since the move. In some cases, this requires an additional license.

Private Land

Private land is zoned by the city or county, and may or may not be zoned for mobile homes. A real estate agent can help you to determine if the land's zoning allows for mobile homes, but if not, you may have to contact your local municipality. If there are no homes in the area, you can usually install anything you want, on the other hand, if the rest of the area contains single family homes, you might have some trouble installing your mobile home. Go to the municipality prepared, with paperwork and the exact address of where you intend to move. If the zoning doesn't allow for a mobile home, you can appeal to the city for an exception, but you might not win.

Building Permit Fees

There are multiple building permits that you will need if you're moving to a new location, especially if you are moving onto private property, or onto an area that hasn't been developed. Not paying fees will result in a fine and might result in your home being removed from the area. Costs vary depending on your location, and the permit itself may be issued by the city or the county. Fees usually run between \$300 and \$500, but can run at \$100-\$2,500 depending on your location, zone, and the extent of preparatory construction. For example, if you're installing an electric pole, water lines, new septic system, and a concrete base, plus a fence around the area,

you will likely pay the maximum costs, but just installing a mobile home on an existing concrete slab will likely only be much more affordable. Building permit fees are not typically required in a mobile home park but you should inquire with the park owner to be certain.

You may need the mobile home's data plate to obtain a building permit. This should include the fire standards, wind zone, and other data. You may also have to allow a full inspection of the mobile home before the city will issue a building permit for its installation.

Septic Permits - If you're installing a new septic tank on the grounds, you will have to get a separate permit for this. You can inquire with your local Health Department or contact the Water Department. You will also have to get additional permits for any utilities you have to install to your area.

Wind Zones & Why They Matter

Each area is divided into wind zones based on wind speed, intensity, and the intensity of local storms. This is important for you and your mobile home, because manufactured buildings are created according to specific durability standards. You can check wind zones for your area on any wind zone map, or by doing an online search of wind zones.

Mobile homes are usually classified based on how much wind damage they can sustain. Zones are 1, 2, and 3. If you're moving, you can move into the same wind zone, or a wind zone down, but you cannot move a mobile home rated for Zone 2 into a Zone 3, because it will sustain too much wind damage and will fall apart, lose panels in heavy winds, and might be unsafe to live in. You can, however, move a Zone 3 or 2 into a Zone 1 with no problems.

How to Find Your Mobile Home's Wind Rating

If you aren't sure about the wind zone rating for your mobile home, look for the manufacturer's data plate. If it is not available, you can find the HUD Tag and check the HUD certification number. You can use this number to order a new data plate at the cost of \$100. If you do not know the mobile home's wind zone rating, you will likely not be able to obtain a moving permit.

Hitches & Axles Needed

In most cases, you will either have the hitches and axles needed for your move already, or you will be able to rent them from your mover. You may also buy them if you want.

Hitches

Hitches are available as bolt on and weld on models, and each has its pros and cons. In most cases, a weld on hitch is left on after the move, although you may have it removed with a torch if desired.

Bolt on vs. Weld On - Bolt on hitches are fast, attach easily, and remove easily, however, they have lower weight limits than weld on hitches. Weld on hitches take longer to install, cannot always be removed, but have higher weight limits. Weld on hitches are usually the better option for traveling long distances, because they are less likely to break or come loose. Check to ensure that your new location allows you to keep a hitch on if you choose a weld-on hitch.

Weight Limits and Considerations - It is important that you use a hitch rated for the weight of your mobile home or for more weight. Most states have individual trailer hitch requirements, so it is important that you ensure any hitch you choose meets the standards of all states you will be traveling through. Most states also require that the mobile home hitch be accompanied by couplings such as leveling bars and security chains, rated for the weight of the mobile home.

Mobile homes typically weigh about 25 pounds per square foot when full, and sometimes more when furniture or other items are inside, but you should ask your moving company for an exact estimate. For example, a 14x70 single wide mobile home will likely weigh between 18,000 and 24,000 pounds. You need a hitch rated for that weight or above.

Axles

Axles are also mandated by individual state law. You have to choose axles that are specifically rated for moving mobile homes, for the weight, and for the size of your mobile home. You will have to purchase axles from your mover, or from a licensed manufacturer.

Weight Requirements for Mobile Home Axles - Most mobile homes are rated for 6,000 or 7,000 pounds, which means that you need a minimum of 3 axles for most mobile homes. You can install more depending on the weight of the mobile home. Overloading an axle increases the chance of the axle breaking during transport, which will delay the movers and potentially damage the mobile home.

Reusing Axles from a Previous Move - Most mobile home axles are manufactured for a single use over short distances, which means that they are not as durable as standard axles. This is because they are constructed with the brake backing plates welded directly to the axle tubing, and are usually precision grounded with smaller bearings, which makes them more cost effective to manufacture, but also more difficult to reuse. If you intend to reuse the axles, you should inspect them for damage and ensure that they are still sound before reusing them. Ask your mover to inspect the axles before use to be sure.

Hubs and Tires

Most hubs are rated for 3,000 to 4,000 pounds each. Make sure that the combined weight rating of the tires is enough to support the entire load. Usually, your hubs and tires should match or exceed the axle rating. So, if you have a 7,000 lb. axle rating, you should use two hubs and two tires which are rated for 4,000 lbs. each.

Renting Hitches and Axles from a Moving Company

Most, if not all, commercial moving companies will have hitches, axles, and hubs available for rent. Ask about rates, availability, and brands before committing to renting yours from the company.

Conclusion

Moving your mobile home can be a cost effective alternative to purchasing a new one, and allows you to keep your home, even if you move to another state. With the right preparation, you can ensure that you pay as little as possible, and that your home and possessions arrive in one piece. Finding the right moving company, ensuring that all of your possessions are secured, getting insurance, and working out all of the paperwork and legal terms in advance, including notifying your existing lease and utility holders, will allow you to move legally, and without having to pay any additional fees.

Good luck with your move.