

Shipment Types

**There are more ways to move than ever before.
Use this guide to help you choose wisely.**

Traditional family homes are no longer "typical" moves. Particularly given the rapid increase in various remote work situations, today's transferees are moving much differently. With different needs and goals for moving, new and innovative solutions are entering the market all the time.

In order to help decide which is the best solution for you and your transferee, it's important to understand all the options depending on destination, size of shipment, budget, services required, and delivery speed.

We've prepared this guide to help you navigate the many different types of shipments available to you and your transferees.



Domestic / Loose Load

When you think of moving, you likely picture this shipment mode. Loose load is how most single-family households are moved within the continental US.

The name “loose load” can be misleading – it’s not to imply that your belongings are randomly put into a moving truck. Each item – boxes, furniture, the lawn mower – is put into a box and wrapped with a pad, and is then tagged and itemized as it’s loaded into the back of a 28-53’ trailer. Movers will know how to load the trailer to ensure safe transport of the transferee’s belongings.

Sometimes, if a shipment isn’t big enough to fill the trailer, movers will piggyback other shipments together on the same load. While this can maximize capacity for the carrier, it’s kind of like sharing a taxi with people going to different parts of town – you get there eventually, but it’s complicated.

US Domestic Freight and Crate

As compared to loose load, freight and crate moves use large wooden crates specifically designed for household goods moving. These crates, or ‘liftvans’ as they’re known, are filled with boxes and furniture which can then be loaded directly onto a truck. While you can put liftvans onto a van line shipment, the main advantage to crate and freight is that different transport solutions can be used to help augment capacity during peak season and / or to accommodate smaller shipment sizes. Liftvans are also a good solution when short- or long-term storage of a transferee’s belongings is required.

What's a liftvan?

Liftvans are standardized wooden shipping crates used for international and domestic moves. Measuring 7’ x 4’ x 7’, four liftvans will fit into a 20’ shipping container (and eight will fit into a 40’ container). Each can hold up to 1500lbs.

Alternative containerized

Alternative containerized is a catch-all term describing shipments using smaller containers (such as PODS or Zippysell). Though a relative newcomer to the household goods moving industry, alternative containers are quickly gaining in popularity, responding to the unique needs of transferees from condo and apartment dwellers to digital nomads.

Each provider offers slightly different services, so it’s worth figuring out which provider offers the best options for your organization. For example, not all containerized providers can support both US Domestic and international shipments (it’s usually either/ or). Also beware that each company has its own container sizes, and are therefore not compatible (although most will still fit within a long-haul truck). The containers can be transported in a number of ways, either with the service provider’s trucks or a common carrier. Several van lines have caught on to the trend, and are offering containerized programs as well.

There are a wide range of service levels for containerized shipments depending on your needs and budget. Like loose load or freight and crate, they can be full-service or self-pack.



Alternative containers have also been an invaluable solution to support disaster recovery!

Microshipments

Microshipments are generally moves consisting of less than 1000lbs. They are ideal for college grads or anyone who goes through life with no more than a few boxes and their laptop. Very small shipments used to be challenging to service by van lines because these companies were scaled and built to move a typical family home. Small shipments either weren't worth their time or had to be piggybacked onto another shipment. However, several specialty firms have recently emerged in response to this growing market segment, ensuring quality service, faster transport, and guaranteed delivery times.

International Air

When you have a Very Important Transferee who needs to relocate to an international assignment quickly and where no expense is spared, international air is the right solution. In most circumstances, air shipments are usually used as a supplement to sea shipments because they are so expensive. If the transferee is moving into their final house or apartment, air shipments can deliver priority household items weeks sooner than the sea shipment will arrive. This is most often not the case, though, and both the transferee and their employer have many other bridging options available to them to provide comfortable accommodations (such as short-term, fully-furnished rentals) until their shipment arrives at destination.

International Sea

International sea shipping containers (or "sea cans") are waterproof, metal boxes that are either 20' or 40' long. Containers can be placed on a chase and transported on a truck. A typical US semi-truck is 48-53' long, so these containers probably look familiar from seeing them on the road. As compared to international air shipments, the transit times for international sea shipments are significantly longer, ranging from 4-18 weeks depending how far across the world you're moving. A typical use case for international sea shipments would be a family of four or more, as the containers can swallow up boxes, furniture, bikes, and other prized belongings.

Cross-Border Truck

Cross-border trucking shipments can functionally work the same as a domestic shipment, except they are travelling Intra-country or intra-region (i.e., within Europe or North America). This transport method is also commonly used on the final leg from port to destination on an international air or sea shipment.

Baggage Shipments

Transferees can also bring their belongings right with them on the plane as baggage shipments. This is now less common practice as it is a bigger hassle when you are moving partly because the space is never guaranteed (so it's a good idea to check with your airline carrier before making plans).

PricePoint can help you find the right moving solution for every move, every time.

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