

# Avoid PCS Move Wipeout!

As you begin to plan your upcoming PCS, many questions will begin to pop up.

Whether it's your first move or you've got many moves under your belt, you may be asking the following: ***Should you move yourself? How can you help your kids cope? What can you be doing now to prepare?*** With checklists for the months leading up to the move, tips for helping your kids transition, and helpful information for conducting a Personally Procured Move, let MilitaryByOwner help make these pre-move weeks and months easier!



## Inside this E-book:

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<b>3 Months Before the Move</b>	<b><u>3</u></b>
<b>Should You Move Yourself?</b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
<b>Helping Military Kids Cope with a PCS</b>	<b><u>7</u></b>
<b>One Month Out Checklist</b>	<b><u>10</u></b>



# 3 Months Before the Move

We hope that you have orders several months before you PCS, but regardless of the timeframe, there are a few things to pay attention to as soon as those magical orders are in hand!

1. **Assess your finances and create a budget.** If you choose to do a “Personally Procured Move” (You may hear this referred to as a “DITY move” or “do-it-yourself”), a planned budget will make for a less stressful move since moving expenses will be more costly up front.
2. **If you’re currently renting, notify your landlord of your upcoming move,** but don’t do this until your orders are firm. Orders change and you don’t want to find yourself out of a house!
3. **If you own your home, begin preparing your house for the market.** List [your home for sale or for rent on MilitaryByOwner.com](#). How early should you list? The [right time to list your home](#) will vary depending on whether you’re selling or renting.
4. **Research the new location.** Check the installation’s website and social media for information on schools, jobs, and more. Find honest reviews on neighborhoods from other military families at [Military Town Advisor](#). If you’re PCSing overseas, your sponsor will be an invaluable resource.
5. **Decide how your vehicle will get there.** Depending on the type of move, you may need to ship or store your vehicle.



6. **Begin the purge.** Go through your belongings and if you haven’t used an item in a while, decide whether it’s worth moving. Donate the rest or pencil in a date on your calendar for a [yard sale](#).
7. **Start creating a PCS binder** with a Power of Attorney, copies of orders, and other moving documents. This will be your “brain” for the remainder of your move!
8. **Schedule any necessary medical or dental appointments.** Additional appointments will be required if you need overseas medical clearance or a member of your family is enrolled in the EFMP (Exceptional Family Member Program).
9. **Schedule vet appointments for your pets,** and ensure they are up to date on their vaccinations. They will also need medical clearance if moving overseas, or you may consider leaving them with your family.



# Should You Move Yourself?



Personally Procured Moves (PPMs) are authorized military moves allowing the service member to pack and transport their household goods (HHGs) in a manner they chose. Alternative transportation options typically considered are: rental trucks and trailers, portable storage containers, privately owned vehicles and hired commercial carriers. The service member is then reimbursed the majority of money the government would have paid for a contractor to conduct the move. **This voluntary program was previously referred to as Do-It-Yourself (DITY) Moves.**

**A Partial PPM allows the military member to pack and load a portion of their HHG**, leaving the rest to be moved by a government procured move. The reimbursement is calculated by dividing the allotted weight allowance between the Partial PPM and the government procured move. This option is generally beneficial when a vehicle has to be driven to the next duty station anyway, as it makes sense to fill a truck with goods you might want on hand immediately at the destination. Precious items that cannot be replaced are also suggested for a partial PPM.



When applying for a PPM, it is possible to ask for an Advanced Operating Allowance. This money will help pay for up to 60 percent of the estimated amount of your move's operating costs such as vehicle rental, gasoline, oil, tolls, packing material, and moving equipment. A PPM counselor can help calculate the amount based on your estimated weight.

### Benefits of a PPM

- Added flexibility. A busy PCS season often leaves pack and unpack dates restricted. Choosing moving dates that suit your schedule can ease the transition. Additional TDY may also be available.
- If done correctly and without exceeding allotted weight limits, there is a high likelihood of making some extra money. PPMs are authorized to receive 95 percent of what it costs the government to transport your HHG.
- Property owners have more control over how well items are prepared, boxed, loaded, and unloaded.

### Disadvantages of a PPM

- A PPM requires extreme attention to detail, patience, and hours of hard work. Securing moving rentals such as trucks or storage facilities are just the beginning of the process. Proper documentation of allowances and many other items are required to be reimbursed.
- Some expenses such as a tow dolly rental, auto transport, and gas for a second vehicle are not covered.
- It will be difficult to travel leisurely if worrisome trucks or trailers are in tow. Navigating tourist attractions and parking will become a nuisance. Securing lit and visible overnight parking is vital to avoid break-ins and theft.

### How to Plan for a PPM

- 1. Make an appointment with your installation's transportation office.** You may be eligible to complete this counseling online through the DOD website [move.mil](http://move.mil). This meeting will help eliminate costly errors and provide exact details regarding weight limits and which forms are required to make the move. The following are typical forms processed:
  - DD 1351-2: Travel Voucher
  - DD 2278: Application for DITY Move and Counseling Checklist
  - Copy of PCS Travel Orders
  - Certified Weigh Tickets, one for Gross (full) weight and one for Tare (empty) weight
  - Copy of Paid Rental Agreement
  - Copy of vehicle registration for POV and/or boat/trailer
- 2. Decide which rental equipment and packing materials will be needed and plan for pick up dates.** Schedule and secure moving companies if they are an option to help pack, transport, or unload items. Professional companies often offer partial moving assistance. Determine if temporary storage is required at either end of the trip.
- 3. Update your insurance policies.** PPMs require up-to-date insurance policies for vehicles, trailers, and accident coverage.





4. **Get accurate vehicle weights, fully loaded and unloaded.** This is crucial for reimbursement. The DOD's "It's Your Move" document states: "No passengers are to be in the vehicle when obtaining the weight tickets. Weight tickets should reflect the status of the gas tank (i.e., full,  $\frac{3}{4}$  tank,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tank,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tank, and empty). If making multiple moves (i.e., TDY to several locations) separate weight tickets are required for each segment of the move." Information on the ticket should include:
  - Name, rank, Social Security Number
  - Name and location of scales
  - Vehicle and/or trailer identification
  - Date of weighing
  - Weigh Master's signature
  
5. **Assemble all necessary receipts in one folder to submit for reimbursement.** Costs that are paid include:
  - Payment for rental vehicles and packing materials
  - Moving equipment such as hand trucks
  - Gas and oil expenses
  - Weight tickets and highway tolls

There is a 45-day window after the move to submit paperwork for settlement. The claim must be complete and correct in order to receive a full payout.

A detailed description of a PPM can be found at [Defense Transportation Regulation Part IV Personal Property](#)



# Moving Yourself?

*Plan your Personally Procured Move*



## PPM TIPS



### MEET

Meet with Transportation Office to go over rules and entitlements.



### PACK

Use quality materials and a reliable moving vehicle.



### UPDATE

Ensure all insurance policies are current.



### MONITOR

Monitor bank and credit card statements throughout your trip.



### WEIGH

Having accurate vehicle weights before and after move is critical to reimbursement.



### ASSEMBLE

Create a folder to hold receipts for all moving expenses

# Helping Military Kids Cope with a PCS



Moving is an inevitable part of military life. In the middle of all the activity that goes along with a military relocation, it can be easy for kids to get lost in the shuffle. If a move is stressful for adults, it is even more so for children, who may not fully understand everything that's going on. Here are a few tips to connect with your children, keep the lines of communication open, and help make the transition easier during this time.

## Before the Move:

**Let kids help.** From separating belongings to packing up a few boxes and choosing items to donate or sell, let kids have a say in what is happening.

**Keep talking.** Some children may ask a lot of questions; some may not. Whether it's their first move or their tenth, be available and willing to answer their questions about the impending move. Check in with your child often to have a gauge for how they're coping. Be honest and open about what is happening (i.e. don't promise they will come back to visit if you're not able to follow through).

**Encourage them to say goodbye.** Some children may not wish to go through yet another round of good-byes. Take photos of them in front of their house, with their friends, in front of their school or other favorite places. Have a goodbye party if they are open to it. They may not see the need now, but will likely be grateful for these memories later.





## Research the new area together ahead of time



- **Schools:** Using resources such as the Pre-PCS School Checklist and sites like Great Schools and SchoolDigger, keep your child involved with the information you're gathering. If you're homeschooling or using a private school, research state laws and options together.
- **Your new neighborhood:** Check out [neighborhood reviews](#) and the installation's website and social media together. Create an air of excitement about the new place!
- **Connect with the military's [Youth Sponsorship Program](#):** Children can be assigned their own same-aged "sponsor" who will connect with them before the move, answer questions, and show them around on arrival!

**Maintain positivity.** While moving is an enormous physical and emotional change for everyone in the family, your attitude is catching. Allow for grief over the goodbyes, but try to stay upbeat when discussing the new location.

**Plan a fun trip.** If you have the time, plan a few days en route to do something fun together as a family to create new memories.



## After You Arrive:

**Set up their room quickly.** Do something special to make it their own. Pick out new paint or decor together, make a collage of friends' photos, and give them control over how their room is arranged.

**Maintain routines.** Children and even teens thrive on order and consistency. While it's difficult when surrounded by moving boxes or suitcases to keep routines going, even simple things such as the same bedtimes and meal times the same will help with maintaining familiar routines.



*Photo credit*

Seattle Center International Fountain

**Explore the new area.** Go on exploratory visits of the new neighborhood, area attractions, parks, and new school together. Help them make a list of favorite places or places they'd like to explore further. Bring them along with you to your installation's newcomers' orientations if they're allowed. If your PCS falls during the summer, encourage them to go outside or visit the youth or teen center on base to meet new friends before the school year starts.

**Remember that it takes time to acclimate.** Let your children set the pace and allow them time to process this big change. Encourage them to keep in touch with old friends. Each child's temperament is different and will have a big impact on how the move affects them. If you need it, there is confidential help available at [Military One Source](https://www.militaryonesource.com).

# When Kids PCS...



**It's tough on them.  
Emotions run high.**



**Sometimes they act out.  
They can be afraid.**

*So lets...*

**Listen to them.  
Acknowledge them.  
Involve them in the move.  
Keep them connected.**

**Hear them.  
Stick with a routine.  
Learn about new duty station.  
Make the move fun.**

**Make sure the hotel has breakfast and a pool!**

**Love them.**



# One Month Out Checklist



One month out and the next PCS journey begins! [To-do lists for moving](#) are endless, but these suggestions will alleviate some of the chaos. Get excited, get organized, and get going!

## Administrative Tasks

- Check and double check scheduled pack and moving dates.
- Do yourself a favor and schedule a housecleaning crew to do the final cleaning.
- Re-confirm lodging reservations. Be positive pets are allowed, if applicable. Consider giving your family a break and stay in lodging a day or two before departure. It's depressing and difficult to sleep among boxes.
- If vacationing, make the most of military discounts at your closest base's leisure or discount ticket office.
- Finish assembling your PCS binder which you'll hand carry and should include: official orders (multiple copies), passports, birth certificates, household good inventory, and other hard to replace records. Don't leave this in the car overnight in case of break-ins, especially in hotel parking lots.
- Contact current and new schools to inquire about documents needed, particularly if special education is a factor.
- Coordinate shut off and turn on dates for old and new utilities.
- Update insurance companies with new address and phone numbers, including a number to reach you on the road.
- Take advantage of the [United States Post Office online services](#) to forward mail and change home addresses.
- If using an auto transport company, discuss pick up and drop off dates. If you are not able to receive the car, determine if the company requires legal documents, such as a power of attorney, for the person who is collecting the car.
- Prepare for your meeting with the moving company representative for a household assessment. Consider addressing the following:
  - If you own a piano, requesting a professional for move prep.
  - Point out pro gear.



- Note odd-shaped items such as oversized artwork and antique furniture or other items requiring special handling.
- Identify high value items (collectibles and electronics).
- Discuss what you expect on moving day, including things like removing entry door, protecting banisters, laying down cardboard or runners on high-traffic areas, taking apart furniture, packing certain items in product boxes.

### Household Tasks

- Hold the best and most organized [garage sale](#) of your military career!
- Dig deep in the cabinets, refrigerator, and freezer and start making dinner at home to avoid wasting groceries.
- Plan a goodbye meal with friends serving a “little bit of this and a little bit of that.” Military friends will understand; non-military friends will find it funny. Send them home with a parting gift of a box of barely used spices and condiments.
- Pick a room to begin separating pro gear for your sponsor and yourself, if needed.
- Pick the space where movers will not enter (“do not pack” space) and store the items required for the car ride like suitcases and kid’s entertainment systems.
- Don’t move trash or junk! Throw out half-empty beauty products, broken toys, and endless amounts of art projects collected. Clean windows and baseboards as you go; they won’t be dirty before you leave.
- Remove window coverings, wall art, and other decorative items.
- Clean, dry, and store outdoor furniture.
- Begin any yard clean up if vacating a rental home or selling your house.
- Review leases to determine if nail holes should be filled or if painting is necessary.

