



## Tools of the Trade: Checklist for Estate Cleaning Supplies

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Cleaning out an estate is a huge project, but if you choose to do it yourself, you can make it easier with careful advance preparation. First, assess the job by going through every room and roughly estimating the contents in terms of cubic yards. It's not a precise calculation, but a cubic yard is about the size of a dishwasher. So make a mental note of approximately how many dishwashers' worth of stuff is in each room.

Then separate the items into four piles: TRASH, DONATE, SELL, and KEEP. That way you can estimate a volume for each group and plan your supplies accordingly.

### SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

#### Boxes (or Bins)

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One cubic yard will fill 3 small moving boxes. Some people prefer clear plastic bins because you can see what's inside them, but we use boxes because they're less expensive. It's easier to drop boxes off at donation centers than to unpack and reuse plastic bins.

#### Packing Tape

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Get one large roll (with a handled dispenser) for each room.

#### Trash Bags

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A 50-gallon trash bag will hold 1 cubic yard of material. Make sure to use bags that are at least 3 millimeters thick. Thinner bags will tear, creating even more work. We plan for one 25-count box of trash bags per room.

#### Face Masks

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Every worker should wear a mask at all times, and plan to use three masks per person per day. Never use a mask without a rating of N95 or P100 – masks without those ratings aren't safe. You can find them in boxes of 10 in the paint aisle of most hardware stores. If the job requires more protection, such as a respirator mask, you should hire a professional. With that much mold and contamination the project could be too dangerous for amateurs to handle.

### Gloves

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We often choose nitrile or polyurethane gloves because they are easier to work with. (It's difficult to grasp small items with leather gloves.) With thin nitrile gloves, double up by using two at a time. Plan for each person to use two sets of gloves per day.

### Safety Glasses

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There will be dust and other particulates, so everyone needs eye protection.

### Work Boots or Shoes

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All footwear should be leather with hard soles that nails can't penetrate and toes that can withstand something dropping on your foot—because something is always going to drop on your foot.

### Water

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This is hard, physical work, and it's easy to get dehydrated. No energy drinks or caffeine; bring a case of water for each day, and expect to drink four to five bottles of water per person per day. Sports hydration drinks also taste amazing after cleaning all day.

### Large Glass Jar or Fishbowl

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These are for collecting the inevitable loose change you'll find as you clean, and you'll be amazed at how many coins you'll find in a house. We use glass so everyone can hear when coins are dropped into it. That helps build momentum and trust.

### Sharpies

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These are indispensable, and everyone should have several of them because they'll be put down and misplaced throughout the day. We use both silver and black (the silver shows up on black trash bags), and we suggest starting every day with three of each color in your pockets.

### Ground Tarps

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Weather permitting, we prefer to do any sorting outside. Tarps protect the items from dirt and grass stains. We use large tarps, either 6' x 8' or 10' square. You can find them in a hardware or home improvement store's paint aisle.

## Portable Storage Units

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These are optional, but extremely helpful. If there's no yard or the weather isn't suitable for working outside, storage units can be used as a work area for sorting and packing.

## Miscellaneous Items

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It's helpful to have some folding tables, rakes, cleaning rags, and trash cans on hand. Also a small pocket knife to help open old boxes.

We provide our DIY information as a service to families settling estates or helping with a family member's transition to assisted living. If your project is too large or complicated to manage yourself, give us a call anytime for a free consultation: 800-913-7747. Visit us online at [www.LegacyNavigator.com](http://www.LegacyNavigator.com)



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