

Before you read on further, please note we strongly discourage new teachers to hire international movers because of the extremely high premium paid for international shipping. We do advise you use your relocation allowance to cover any remaining expenses in your home country before departing and also buy the furnishing for your apartments when you arrive in Shanghai. But if you insist on shipping personal belongings, the following is for your information.

How to Plan Your Move

Before contacting a mover, you should decide on what you want to take with you.

Your choice will be based either on your expatriate's contract drawn by your employer or by the budget allowed for this move. Generally, the amount is restricted to a specific volume of goods, which when exceeded, is paid by the expatriate. In this case, putting the goods in storage is a possibility.

To sort out your personal effects:

- Bear in mind the dimensions of your new place. Having large pieces of furniture in small rooms can be a hindrance (Please click www.moving.com for details.).
- The priority should be given to all goods you cannot find in the country to which you are moving to.
- Make sure you know about the new country's climate. Will it damage your furniture?
- For all your electrical appliances, make sure you know if the voltage used in the new country is the same as used at home (Please click www.moving.com for details.).
- Import and export customs restrictions should play a role in your selection.
- Do not hesitate to send a few basic goods via air especially if you are traveling with young children, as there are sometimes long delays.

The Pre-Move Survey and the Quote:

How to select the right moving company? You need considerable expertise when you are moving goods from one country to another. Not all moving companies have it. The packing, the logistics on an international level, customs regulations and choosing the handling agent at destination are many aspects that require specific skills.

The qualities to ask for:

- Avoid companies that do not come to your home and will send you a quote after a telephone call.
- Go for a mover that offers you a comprehensive service from door to door, the one that will not only send your personal belongings to the other end of the world, but also find you a local company to deliver your goods.
- Opt for a mover, which is a member of an international group with its own agencies from departure to arrival. The mover could also belong to an international association, which has its network of partners across the world.
- Ask the moving company for references: NGO, Corporate Accounts, diplomatic missions, etc.
- Check if this company has implemented a quality control system and whether it has been awarded quality certifications.

The pre-move survey:

It aims at identifying all the aspects of your move:

- The volume/weight estimate: The list of all items which will require special attention (made-to-measure packing, refrigerated boxes, lamp boxes, etc.)
- Anticipation of additional services (external elevator, difficult access, disassembling and reassembling of furniture, packing of heavy / large items, etc.)
- Explanation of all the human and technical issues concerning the elements mentioned above

Questions to be Raised:

- What are the import / export restrictions?
- Is the reassembling of the furniture included in the quote? Is an additional insurance coverage necessary?
- Who is responsible for locking/disconnecting the electrical appliances mechanisms?
- What mean of transportation should be used?
- What is the time scheduled for delivery?
- Who is the handling agent at destination?
- What documents have to be submitted to the customs?
- Do I have to be there upon arrival of my belongings at the destination?
- The quote will be sent further to this pre move survey.

The quote:

It is for your own interest to ask for several quotes (it's free), and thus to compare the services provided.

Take the time to check that the logos of the various quality organizations mentioned by the salesman are on the quotation.

Carefully read the general terms and conditions, and particularly the clauses dedicated to the claims in case of damage.

Beware: the cheapest quote is not necessarily the quote you should go for. You must pay attention to what is included and what is not. Be careful of all the charges excluded (THC or Terminal Handling Charges which are the port charges, difficult access, etc.).

All the following must be shown on the quote:

- ✓ the volume to be shipped
- ✓ the customized packing materials
- ✓ the additional services
- ✓ the means of transportation
- ✓ the price and its detailed costing
- ✓ the insurance cost
- ✓ the payment terms
- ✓ the place of pick-up and delivery.

The Packing & Shipping

The pick-up

At this stage, the service quality as well as the technical know-how of the moving company can be measured.

An international move differs from a domestic one because of the quality of the packing material used to protect your personal belongings during handling and transportation.

Before making a decision, you should ask for a descriptive leaflet on the packing material that will be used to wrap your furniture, dishes, clothes, etc.

The quality of the material is not sufficient; the packing crew needs to be specifically trained in all the packing methods.

The packing list and the inventory

You will be given a packing list on the pick up day. This important document lists the content of every package. Once you arrive at destination, this will allow you to easily check if every item has been delivered.

You will have to fill out a detailed and valued inventory. This document is of prime importance since the potential refund/compensation in case of loss or damage will be calculated according to the value declared on the inventory.

Beware: Any belonging packed by yourself will be clearly identified by the mover. In case of damage, under no circumstances would the mover be liable for such goods.

The Insurance

Even though precautions have been taken, no mover can promise you a no-risk operation. In this respect, it is essential to be adequately insured against any potential risk.

Insurance subscribed by the moving company

- A professional civil liability covering any physical, material and immaterial damages caused by the mover to a third party.
- An industrial multi-risk policy covering your belongings against fire, lightening, explosion, act of vandalism during the period of storage in our warehouses...

Insurance to be subscribed by the customer

- A transportation insurance policy is calculated on the basis of the value of the belongings to be moved. It covers your goods from point A to point B. If you do not wish to purchase such insurance, you should carefully pay attention to any restriction of the mover's liability mentioned in the general terms and conditions for international removals.

The Time of Transportation

You will find below a summary of the transportation times from Europe for the following destinations:

	Africa	Asia	North America	South America	Europe
Air	10 to 15 days	10 to 15 days	10 to 15 days	10 to 15 days	-
Road	-	-	-	-	5 to 10 days
Sea	25 to 60 days	40 to 60 days	30 to 50 days	40 to 50 days	-

The Storage

In order to help you choose the right professional, you should first pay attention to the quality standards imposing strict rules on the packing and storage conditions, the warehouse safety, appropriate insurance policies in case of robbery or damage, etc.

Two types of storage exist:

Permanent storage may be necessary if you cannot ship all your belongings (overrun of the employer's allowance, furniture not fitting into your new house, appliances that will not be of no use in your host country, etc.). This storage period may last several years; this is the reason why you should call out for a professional who will pack your goods with the appropriate materials. The better protected your goods are, the fewer unpleasant surprises there will be at the end of the storage period.

Storage in transit (SIT) is rarely included in the quotation provided by the mover since usually it is related to a delay in obtaining the visa/work permit or finding a new home.

The Destination Services

Customs clearance

As soon as you arrive in your host country, you should contact the handling agent at the destination, not only to plan the delivery but also to check if all the necessary documentation has been obtained to clear your shipment through customs (some documents will be issued by the local authorities such as duty free entry certificates).

Delivery

On the delivery day, carefully check with the packing list to ensure that all the boxes have arrived. It is advisable to open all the packages to ensure that there is no damage. If there is, the claim will generally have to be filed within 7 days (do not hesitate to check on your insurance certificate). After this deadline, it will be very difficult to obtain compensation.

Once the delivery has been made, you must sign a delivery receipt. If you have noticed any damage, you must detail everything on this document and confirm your comments in the time period allowed by registered mail.

Beware: only the goods or the group of items listed on the insurer's valued inventory will be taken into account in case of loss/damage. Therefore, the more accurate the inventory is, the better compensated you will be.