

Before PCS Packing: Build a Useful Belongings Record

Prepare a private belongings record that makes the mover inventory easier to review and later questions easier to explain.



Read the current online edition:

realtylistingco.com/learn/military-pcs-and-va/pcs-inventory-before-packing/

The Problem

On packing day, a vague description can be difficult to challenge because the item is already wrapped or inside a carton. A small amount of preparation gives you a reference while you review the shipment paperwork. Your own list supports the conversation, but it does not replace the official mover inventory or establish a claim value.

Your goal: Identify the belongings that need a clearer description before they are packed.

Choose the Items That Need Detail

Start with items that would be hard to identify from a generic label: similar electronics, furniture with separate parts or equipment with model information. Use the identifiers needed to distinguish the item and keep the complete record privately. Avoid photographing identity documents, passwords or unrelated private papers. You do not need to publish a complete household inventory.

Record Visible Condition and Components

Take clear, dated photographs and write a plain description of the condition you can actually observe. Note detached pieces or accessories that belong with the item. Do not diagnose an internal fault or invent a replacement value. Keep supporting purchase or service records in a separate secure folder and index their location rather than copying unnecessary financial information.

Compare Your Notes With the Mover Inventory

Military OneSource recommends reviewing inventory descriptions and recording disagreements in the remarks. Read the actual paperwork while the item can still be identified. Ask about unclear abbreviations, condition descriptions or missing components before signing. If the explanation does not resolve the issue, contact the local transportation office for guidance instead of making your own interpretation of a code.

Keep a Copy You Can Find at Delivery

Retain the inventory and your supporting references in a secure place available during the move. Organize by item or inventory number once assigned. Make sure the person helping at delivery knows where the approved records are, without giving them unrelated private documents. Your preparation list and the mover document should be distinguishable so later readers know which is which.

A Practical Example

Fictional example: Joe Poe owns two similar monitors. Joe photographs each model label and records which stand and cable belong with it. At pickup, Joe notices that the inventory describes both only as a screen. Joe asks for clarification and keeps the reviewed inventory with the private photographs, making later identification more specific without claiming a guaranteed reimbursement.

Illustrative example, not a case history or a recommended legal outcome.

When to Get Help

Use the transportation office when inventory descriptions or pickup procedures remain unclear. Ask the appropriate claims office about evidence requirements; a household estimate does not determine settlement.

Sources and Further Reading

Source guidance reviewed October 28, 2026. The organizing steps and example are RealtyListingCo's educational framework.

- Military OneSource – Managing Your Moving Days

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/military-pcs-move-management/>

- Military OneSource – Understanding Moving Claims

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/moving-claims/>

YOUR NEXT STEP CHECKLIST

Before You Move Forward

- ☐ Select hard-to-identify belongings
- ☐ Photograph observable condition
- ☐ Record components and useful identifiers
- ☐ Review the mover inventory before signing
- ☐ Retain private references for delivery

One thing to do today: Choose three belongings and record enough detail to tell them apart later.

Professional Advice Disclaimer

General education and preparation only, not legal, tax, financial, insurance, lending or military-benefits advice. Orders, service rules, contracts and local requirements depend on your circumstances and may change. Confirm benefits, processes and deadlines with the responsible transportation, housing, finance or legal-assistance office. Consult qualified local real estate, tax, insurance and lending professionals before consequential decisions. Keep orders, identification, operational details, account numbers and access codes out of shared planning records. Read our full Educational Disclaimer.

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