

Overseas Moving Guide

International moves require many changes. These range from the simple everyday basic necessities, such as your household electrical appliances, to the professional and cultural aspects. With this in mind, you will realize that the costs incurred for this type of visit will be repaid many times over after you move.

You need two to three months (more if you do not have a passport) to prepare for and plan an overseas move. If you follow the suggestions in this chapter, you will be able to make tremendous strides toward understanding the situation and make informed decisions.

The Groundwork

Before you set off on a pre-move visit to survey the new country, you must have the appropriate travel documents. Begin the document process early on (preferably three or four months in advance of your departure date during peak passport times, March to August). In addition, have a very clear understanding of the additional documentation necessary for the country to which you are relocating.

A work permit is often required to work in another country. Responsibility for obtaining this permit rests with the employer. Working without authorization may lead to eventual deportation. Be sure you check with the appropriate department in your company to assure that proceedings have been implemented to obtain this permit.

Passports

A valid passport is necessary when leaving and entering the majority of countries. Passports can take about three to four months to obtain and are available from the Department of State, (202) 647-0518. The American Automobile Association (AAA) has passport applications and will do passport photos, but the applications must be processed through the post office or local county courthouse. The county courthouse lists the government offices that prepare passports, and your local post office knows the designated post offices that accept applications. Finally, there are some travel agencies that also have passport applications available.

You will need these documents to obtain a passport:

- A properly completed passport application.
- Proof of United States citizenship or a passport issued in the United States.
- Two identical passport-sized photographs.
- The correct fee.
- Proof of identity such as a driver's license.

Overseas Moving Guide

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Illinois 60658, (800) 972-2472. The cost is \$10, and the requirements are that you must be 18 years old, have a valid United States driving license and two passport-size photos. You do not need to be an AAA member to obtain a permit. International driving permits are also useful as a primary source of identification in other countries.

The Pre-move Trip

Having attended to all the necessary documentation, you must now embark on a pre-move trip to find a place to live. You should also research medical care providers and facilities, schools, pet care, areas to do your shopping and safety levels of the new country. When planning this trip, consider everything that your family requires on a daily basis.

You may want to buy a copy of A Guide to Living Abroad, a comprehensive guidebook series that provides in-depth information about 40-plus countries. Call to learn if one exists for the country to which you are relocating. See our gray box for details.

First, A Place To Live

Some companies provide housing for their expatriates, but this service is happening less and less. Chances are you will have to locate a place to live on your own, so allow at least two to three days in your schedule to tour available accommodations. A colleague at your new foreign office may be willing to give you a tour of areas that would be good places for you to live.

Some issues to consider when thinking about your location are:

- Is the house close to work, school, public transportation and hospitals?
- Are there any other American families nearby?
- How close is the American Embassy?

In fact, if you have time, visit the embassy and let the officials know you are moving to the country. These people can enlighten you about laws, safety issues and travel precautions that you should be aware of.

When surveying housing, think about what you have previously enjoyed in the way of living arrangements. For instance, do you like being able to walk from your home into the nearest city, or do you prefer the peace and quiet of country life? Many cities abroad are relatively small, and you may be able to locate a home or apartment that allows easy access to town.

Another consideration when house hunting is whether or not driving will be vital to your daily routine. If driving will be a problem, i.e. difficult driving conditions, limited access to an automobile or a pending driving permit, you should check on available public transportation.

Realize that homes in countries other than America often have smaller rooms and smaller accommodations for washers and dryers. Be sure to take a tape measure with you on this trip so you can measure room sizes and evaluate the living space. Before you transport your

Overseas Moving Guide

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appliances, you need to know not only whether they will fit in the space, but also if the appliances will match the country's electrical or mechanical requirements. See also Chapter Twenty with international appliance information.

Renting or Buying

Renting is usually preferable to buying a place to live in a foreign country. The home markets and procedures plus the high taxes on home resale transactions make buying a home abroad very difficult. Some countries don't even allow Americans to purchase homes. An article in The New York Times titled "Hidden Costs in Buying a Home Abroad" stated, "... second home financing from foreign banks ranges from minimal to nonexistent. A necessity [for purchasing a home] is reliable legal assistance from someone who speaks English and the local language."

Assuming you decide to rent, you should look into a relocation service or find a knowledgeable Estate Agent to assist you in evaluating a lease. They will help you negotiate and explain exactly what is involved in leasing in the country as well as the currency that is used for payments and the amount of down-payment required. See also the "International Housing" sidebar in this chapter for housing sources in other countries.

Get to Know the Area

Save a few days of your trip to learn about the area because this may be your only chance to become familiar with it before you move. Drive or walk around the city or village looking for services that you will need (hospitals, banks, newsstands, a post office, gas stations, restaurants and supermarkets). I suggest that you visit these facilities whenever possible. It is important to locate stores and shops with personnel who speak English if you are not proficient in the country's language.

Ask expatriates who have lived in the country for awhile for help. They can tell you particulars of the country and places to shop for household goods that will be familiar to you. Most people who have lived in a country will also be more than happy to caution you about the neighborhoods you should stay away from and steer you around pitfalls that they or their friends have experienced. Purchase a good local map and study it so you learn the streets and the immediate area.

Ask colleagues or other expats if there is an American Women's or Men's Club in the area because these groups have a lot of helpful information. They can also offer a bit of solace if you are feeling homesick. Many of these organization publish materials with practical advice to assist expatriates in a host country. Read whatever literature they offer because it will ease your transition into the new country. See also the sidebar about FOCUS Information Services (an information and support resource for expatriates) in Chapter Twenty-three.

Medical Care

Do not overlook medical care on this pre-move visit. Remember, when you are living in a foreign country you will be a long way from 911! Find out how to obtain medical care in the

Overseas Moving Guide

Checklist - Medical

- ___ Take extra prescription medications (noting shelf life of medicines) to last until you get acclimated to your new area.
- ___ Keep all drugs in their own labeled containers. The name of the drug, the strength, the dosage, the physician and the pharmacy should all be noted.
- ___ Store medications according to directions.
- ___ Be aware of the side effects of medications.
- ___ Know whether food or beverages need to be avoided with a medication.
- ___ Know whether you should be driving while taking a particular drug.
- ___ Inquire about specialists necessary for your family before you move.
- ___ Pack an anti-diarrhea medicine when traveling abroad.
- ___ Take antibiotics prescribed by your doctor with you if you are prone to severe infections.
- ___ Pack a bilingual dictionary in case you need translation in an emergency situation.
- ___ Know the appropriate procedures for emergency and medical care as well as the routes to hospitals for any country you are visiting or living in.
- ___ Keep a list of contacts for physicians who speak your language.
- ___ Take the necessary insurance forms and identification card with you when you move.
- ___ Know how, or if, medical insurance will be applied in the country to which you are moving.

Checklist - School Expectations

- ___ A favorable accreditation rating
- ___ A well-stocked library with up-to-date books
- ___ Classroom computers and a strong focus on modern technology
- ___ Services for students with special needs
- ___ Availability of space for your child at the appropriate grade level
- ___ A broad spectrum of courses from remedial to advanced placement
- ___ Adequate instruction for the language of the country
- ___ An acceptable profile on standardized test scores, university placements and national enrollments
- ___ Theater and creative groups, school newspapers
- ___ Sports and activities that your students enjoy
- ___ A faculty that provides for academic and nonacademic needs.

Overseas Moving Guide

Resources

Accounting

Campbell, Rappold & Yurasits LLP, Certified Public Accountants, 1033 S. Cedar Crest Boulevard, Allentown, PA 18103, (610) 435-7489.

Appliances

Appliances Overseas, Inc., 276 Fifth Avenue, Suite 407, New York, NY 10001-4509, (212) 545-8001, Help@AppliancesOverseas.com.

Business

Internal Revenue Service (for moving forms), (800) 829-3676.

The SCORE Association (Service Core of Retired Executives), (800) 634-0245 for a SCORE office near you.

Child Care

The American Academy of Pediatrics, P.O. Box 927, Elk Grove Village, IL 60009-0927.

Child Care Action Campaign, Care Action Campaign, 330 7th Avenue, 17th floor, New York, NY 10001-5010, (212) 239-0138; Child Care Aware, (800) 424-2246.

National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, (800) 424-2460.

Consumer Information

Consumer Health Information Research Institute, (816) 228-4595 for information on mail-order deception.

United States Department of Education, Consumer Information Center, Dept. 417Z, Pueblo, CO 81009, (719) 948-3334.

United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207, (800) 638-2772.

Culture (Internet Access)

The Web of Culture, <http://www.gina.com/~webofculture/>.

Disability Assistance

ACCESS/ABILITIES, 404 Bryant Street, San Francisco, CA 94107, (415) 541-8598.

Barrier Free Environments, P.O. Box 30634, Watter Garden, Highway 70 W., Raleigh, NC 27622, (919) 782-7823.

Parents Let's Unite for Kids, 1500 N. 30th Street, Billings, MT 59101-0298, (406) 657-2055.

Overseas Moving Guide

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The American with Disabilities Act, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Public Access Section, P.O. Box 66738, Washington, D.C. 20035-6738, (202) 515-0301.

Education

The Calvert School, Dept. 2REL, 105 Tuscany Road, Baltimore, MD, 21210, (410) 243-6030.

International School Services, 202 Carnegie Center, Princeton, NJ 08543-2123, (800) 338-3282 or (609) 243-9111.

Private Independent Schools, 238 N. Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492, (203) 269-3333, http://www.acadia.net/bunting_lyon.

SchoolMatch, 5027 Pine Creek Drive, Westerville, OH 43081, (614) 890-1573.

Educational Resources International, 20607 Shore Castle Court, Katy, TX 77450, (713) 578-0257.

Peterson's Incorporated, 202 Carnegie Center, Princeton, NJ 08543-2123, (609) 243-9111, <http://www.petersons.com>

Elder Care

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 1112 16th Street N.W., Suite 100, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 296-8130. For the Eldercare Locator, call (800) 677-1116.

Home Inspection Services

The National Academy of Building Inspection Engineers, 650 Brighton Avenue, Portland, ME 04102, (207) 828-1977.

American Society of Home Inspectors, 85 W. Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, (800) 743-2744, FAX (847) 290-1920.

Housing

City Net: <http://city.net>.

A America Relocation Services Corporation, 126 Main Street, Cedar Falls, IA 50613, (800) 388-8893 (PIN 4662), <http://www.arsc.forbin.com>.

Oakwood Corporate Housing, 2222 Corinth Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90064, (800) 888-0808, <http://www.oakwood.com>.

Stratosphere Publishing, 980 Middlefield Road, Berkeley, CA 94708, (800) 646-6456, (800) 646-6456, <http://www.stratopub.com>.

Insurance

The Insurance Information Institute, 110 Williams Street, New York, NY 10038, (212) 669-9200. Information on insurance to consumers, (800) 942-4242.

Overseas Moving Guide

Legal

Fitzpatrick Lentz & Bubba, Saucon Valley Road at Route 309, P.O. Box 219, Center Valley, PA 18034-0219, (610) 797-9000.

Medical Assistance

Global Emergency Medical Services, Inc., 2001 Westside Drive, Suite 120, Alpharetta, GA 30201-9955, (800) 860-1111.

Worldwide Assistance Services, Inc., 1133 15th Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005, (800) 777-8710.

Travel Medicine, Inc., 351 Pleasant Street, Suite 312, Northampton, MA 01060, (800) 872-8633.

Mortgages

FannieMae, 3900 Wisconsin Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016, (202) 752-4844.

Moving and Storage Organizations

National Moving and Storage Association, 11150 Main Street, Suite 402 Fairfax, VA, 22030-5066, (800) 538-6672.

Pet Care

Air Animal, 4120 W. Cypress Street, Tampa, FL 33607, (800) 635-3448, FAX (813) 874-6722.

Real Estate

National Association of Exclusive Buyer Agents, 7652 Gartner Road, Suite 500, Evergreen, CO 80439-5204, (800) 986-2322, FAX (303) 670-4187.

Wallace Press, 4600 W. Roosevelt Road, Hillside, IL 60162, (800) 323-0628.

Real Estate Internet

Internet Real Estate Relocation and Referral Network worldwide, <http://www.tucsonbiz.com/irerm/>.

Internet Real Estate Directory, <http://www.onramp.net:80/ired>.

Relocation Assistance

Right Choice Inc., 151 Woodland Meade, Suite 4, South Hamilton, MA 01982, (800) 872-2294.

Runzheimer Management Consulting Firm, Rochester Park, Rochester, WI 53167-0009, (414) 767-2200.

Overseas Moving Guide

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FOCUS Information Services, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8 5PG, England, 011 01 71 937 0050.

Living Abroad Publishing Inc., 32 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, (609) 924-9302, (609) 924-7844, e-mail info@livingabroad.com, <http://www.livingabroad.com>.

International Orientation Resources, 500 Skokie Boulevard, Suite 600, Northbrook, IL 60062, (847) 205-0066, e-mail IOR@delphi.com.

Employee Relocation Council, 1720 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 857-0144, <http://www.erc.org>

National Foreign Trade Council, Inc., 1270 Avenue of Americas, Suite 206, New York, NY 10020-1700, (212) 399-7128.

Mobility Services International, 124 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950, (508) 462-9011, e-mail msi@shore.net, <http://www.msimobility.com>.

Retirement

American Association of Retired Persons, 601 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049.

AARP Investment Program from Scudder, (800) 322-2282.

The Widowed Persons Service of AARP, 601 E Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049, (202) 434-2260.

Travel Advisories

Current United States travel advisories, <http://www.stolaf.edu/network/travel-advisories.html>.

Overseas Moving Guide

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About Avatar

Avatar Relocation is a equal opportunity employer located in Bohemia, New York and operates by the authority of the New York State Department of Transportation, Certificate Number 7485.

Avatar is covered by Comprehensive Public Liability; including General Liability, Automotive Liability, Warehouse Legal Liability, Cargo Legal Liability and Worker's Compensation.

Avatar recognizes that quality service is the key to customer satisfaction. As a result, our mission is to provide high quality service...day in and day out. We strive to build enduring business relationships with our customers. This is achieved by providing quality service supported by responsive customer service.

If you have any questions regarding preparations for your move, please don't hesitate to contact Avatar Relocation at 1-800-439-4900.