



Packing Basics

CALCULATE YOUR CARTONS

Some basic rules to follow as you estimate your pack material needs

1. **The average person uses 5-10 cartons per room**—more for the kitchen, basement and library
2. **Plan on using a lot of tape.** A carton that is properly sealed with packing tape--3 strips on top and 3 strips on the bottom--uses 3 to 4 yards of tape per carton. That's one roll of tape for every 10 - 15 cartons
3. **DO NOT PACK WITH NEWSPAPERS!** The ink will not only come off on your hands--it can also rub off and stain many household items, including your fine china. Clean, white newsprint is very inexpensive and is available in 25 and 50 pound bundles. You will need to allow 5-7 pounds of newsprint for each dish carton.
4. **Label every carton immediately upon sealing.** Label as to room and contents. If you wish to take advantage of Beltway's 40% refund policy on returned cartons--please mark on the tape, not on the cardboard.
5. Pack each carton while it sits on top of another carton or in the seat of a side chair. **The less you bend--the less you ache.**

There are four carton sizes that are basic to the average household move

1. **THE BOOK CARTON**
This carton measures approximately 17x13x13 and is used for books, records, CDs, videocassettes, canned goods and other similar small heavy items. Each book carton will hold two linear shelf feet of hard-back books.
2. **THE LARGE CARTON**
This carton measures approximately 18x18x24 and is used for light, bulky items like toys, comforters, waste baskets, shoe boxes, throw pillows, etc. Special care must be taken to not overload a box of this size.
3. **THE CHINA CARTON**
Each china carton measures approximately 18x18x30 and is used for china, dishes, glassware and other fragile items. It is constructed of a heavier duty cardboard for strength. Each carton will hold an 8 to 10 piece place setting--including glasses and serving pieces. Remember--always pack dishes and plates on end--never flat.



HINT: Paper plates make ideal separators between china plates plus they can be used afterwards to make the first few days in your new home as simple as possible.

4. THE MEDIUM CARTON

This box measures 18x16x18 and is the most versatile of all the cartons. It can be used for everything from linens to bric-a-brac. It will hold approximately one shelf of the average linen closet. This is the carton of choice for most do-it-yourself packing.

Besides the four cartons just discussed--there are many specialty cartons available for use but the mover normally packs them. Clothing wardrobes (which each hold 2 to 3 feet of hanging clothes) and mirror/picture cartons and lamp cartons are better rented than purchased. Mattress and box spring cartons can often be avoided entirely on local moves.

For additional types of cartons, dimensions and costs, visit our [carton calculator](#)

The BMA SmartPacksm move system can greatly reduce the number of cartons you need to buy and reduce packing time.

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When estimating your packing needs, consider re-packing. Before you move you should plan to repack attic items, children's clothes and Holiday decorations while you have the chance. It will give you an opportunity to sort, discard and organize all your household goods and will also insure a safer move for breakable items which have been stored for a long period of time.

APPLIANCES: Wrap small appliances and place in sturdy cartons with heaviest items on the bottom. Have an authorized service person prepare all large appliances prior to move day.

BEDDING: Fold and pack all sheets and bedding in clean boxes. Beds will be dismantled by Beltway and set up in your new home. Mattresses can be protected by covering them with old sheets, mattress covers or you can purchase Beltway mattress cartons.

BOOKS: A book carton will hold 2 linear shelf feet of hard back books. Alternate bindings and pack on edge. Don't overload.



DRAPES: Place on hanger in a wardrobe carton.

DRAWERS: Whether dresser, desk or hutch - don't overload. Remove spillables and very fragile items and then leave remaining contents in place.

Do Not Tape drawers shut--the tape will damage your furniture's finish.

FOODSTUFFS: Pack upright with no more than 24-30 cans per carton. Don't attempt to move perishables without advice from your moving consultant. Tape over open top boxes and shakers.

TOOLS: Remove fuel from power tools. Pack in small, strong cartons.

If you are still trying to decide if packing yourself is your best option, visit [to pack or not to pack](#).

We are pleased to have the opportunity to provide you with information, which we know, will prove helpful as you plan your move. The more you understand about the move process the less stressful it will be for you.

Need More Help?

Ask to speak to a move consultant.

Virginia, call 703-971-3550

Maryland, call 301-340-2310