

news release

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TURN HOLIDAYS IN TEMPORARY HOUSING INTO MERRY MEMORIES *United Van Lines offers tips for enjoying the holidays while in moving limbo*

Moving is the third most stressful life event, following death and divorce, according to the Employee Relocation Council. Add in the holidays and a temporary housing situation, and the stress levels can increase dramatically. United Van Lines offers these tips to help you remember that “home is where the heart is:”

- **Stay close** – Once it becomes obvious that your move is going to require temporary housing, it’s time to decide where you will live for that period of time. It might be tempting to locate close to your current home in order to spend the holidays in familiar surroundings, but the most ideal situation is to take up quarters as close to your new, permanent home as possible. Begin investigating rental properties/apartments in close proximity to your final destination. That way, you will be able to use the time in “limbo” to get acquainted with what will become your new surroundings – churches, shopping, traffic patterns, and amenities.
- **Examine and compare lease/rental contracts** – Make sure you fully understand details regarding your lease or rental agreement for your temporary housing. You don’t want to get hit with unexpected costs during an already expensive time of year. Should your new home become available sooner than expected, what is the penalty for breaking the lease? Can the lease be extended on a month-to-month basis if your new home isn’t ready by your lease expiration? Some apartments and rental homes offer month-to-month options for an increased rental fee. The more you plan for the unexpected, the less stressful it will be when/if it happens.
- **Take only what you need, plus some holiday cheer** – Temporary housing is most likely going to be a lot smaller than your permanent home, so you should approach the packing for this location like you would a lengthy vacation. Still, it’s important to bring along some of the things that make the holiday season special. If you always hang stockings, make sure those are readily available. If decorative lights make you feel festive, be sure to bring those along. Holiday CDs, candles, special cookie platters and door wreaths don’t take up that much room and can help bring seasonal cheer into your temporary surroundings.
- **Relax and enjoy** – If you typically cook a large holiday meal, this might be the year to think about expanding your traditions to include dining out at a local restaurant that is doing something special for the season. But, if you are set on eating at home, consider simplifying your life by buying some nice pre-made dishes at a grocery store or restaurant that has food to-go, versus making everything from scratch in a smaller kitchen without your usual cookware or pantry of ingredients.

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- **Establish a “Necessities Box”** – This box will be your lifeline, especially during those weeks in December when so many offices are closed and people are on vacation. It might be convenient to purchase a small, lightweight filing cabinet. In it you should have files containing:
 - important papers about your move and closing;
 - medical papers, insurance cards and prescription information;
 - documents for your children such as school records and immunizations ;
 - banking and investment information;
 - addresses and phone numbers for friends and family – especially your holiday card list;
 - vehicle and license information; and,
 - papers about your pet(s) and veterinarian contact information.

- **Make the most of your time in “limbo”** – Attitude is everything when it comes to avoiding stress. Try to make the most of the time you have before the real work of unpacking and decorating your new home begins. If you find yourself lonely because your schedule is lacking all those invitations from old friends to holiday gatherings, then schedule weekly “adventure” trips to explore parks, trails, shopping venues and restaurants. Find a gym and start a workout routine. Visit a few churches to find the one that’s right for your family. Spend some time at a bookstore scouring through decorating magazines and books on do-it-yourself home projects. Consider volunteering at one of dozens of organizations that need extra hands this time of year.

- **Prepare for the final moving day** – Unlike your move into temporary housing – when you had way too much to do and too little time to do it in – now you’ve got the easier end of the move ahead of you. All the big packing is done and you’re just in a holding pattern. Use this time wisely. Make phone calls to the utility companies to get your services turned on at your permanent home. Make appointments to meet the teachers/principal at your children’s new school. If you’ve moved to a new state, get your car license changed and your driver’s license renewed. Address your “change of address” cards for friends and family. Write thank-you notes to people who gave you holiday or going-away gifts, or to friends who have helped you with childcare, pet sitting, etc. Make arrangements to have your items in storage delivered to your new home.

About United Van Lines

United Van Lines, with headquarters in suburban St. Louis, maintains a network of 1,000 affiliated agencies throughout the world. As the nation’s largest mover, United holds more than 30 percent of the market, which is nearly double the market share of the second largest carrier. More information about United and its services is available at www.unitedvanlines.com.