

# CANADIAN RELOCATION SYSTEMS, "MOVING TIMES" AUGUST 2006

## IS A SELF-MOVE RIGHT FOR YOU ?

### The essentials

The two essential ingredients of a successful move are "personpower" and hauling capacity. Whether you rely on friends and borrowed vehicles or hire local college students and rent a truck to do the job, you need not only enough strong helpers but also the right hauling capacity. If you lack either of these, it's best not to self-move.

Convincing friends can be tricky. If the move is short, the weather cooperative and you have enough help to make the work light, a move can actually be fun. A quick shuffle of furniture followed by pizza and a house-warming party is a do-it-yourself mover's dream. But consider all that could go wrong: a strained back, a broken heirloom, and, worst of all, bruised friendships.

### Is it really cheaper?

Consider whether moving yourself actually makes economic sense. If you are moving a long distance, calculate the cost of travel: gas, tolls, meals, lodging, and so on. Add in the costs of renting a truck large enough to handle all your belongings, insuring valuable possessions, hiring additional help, and even the cost of pizza at the post-move party. Then get some estimates from professional moving companies and decide how costs compare with a self-move. If a professional move will cost you more money, ask yourself if it's still worth the decrease in stress and hassle. In the end, you might find it's easier and more worthwhile to hire professionals. But if you decide it makes sense to take on a self-move, the next step is to examine the details.

### The three "Ps" of moving

**Pack:** Well before moving day arrives, pack up everything but the bare essentials in your old home. Well-packed goods take up less space, are easier to handle and are less likely to be damaged.

**People:** Line up as many people as you can at both ends of the move. More people means less strain on each individual and a faster move. Even so, be sure to match individuals with tasks. The people you ask to carry the couch up two flights of stairs should be in good shape.

**Power:** Make sure the truck is big enough for the job. The goal should be to have enough space to make loading and unloading easy, and to complete the move in one trip.

## **ABSENT FROM WORK, OR THE ART OF PLAYING HOOKEY!**

It's 6 a.m. and you are about to throw the alarm clock out the window. It's too cold out, you're tired, you had one glass of wine too many last night, you've really got to clean your house, and, most importantly, you haven't had some real bonding time with your couch lately. "Just call in," you tell yourself. "They can get by one day without me." So, in your best sick voice, you leave a near-death sounding message for your boss and throw in a cough just to make it believable.

### **The art of playing hooky**

A recent survey took a look at employees who call in sick with bogus excuses. Forty-three percent of workers said they called in sick when they felt well at least once during the last year, up from 35 percent in the 2004 survey. The most popular motivator for missing work: good, old-fashioned rest. Almost 23 percent of workers said they just wanted to relax and catch up on sleep. Seventeen percent said they just didn't feel like going in, 16 percent attributed it to a doctor's appointment, and 9 percent said they had to catch up on housework and run personal errands.

### **Three-day weekend or mid-week break?**

Thirty-eight percent of workers said they viewed sick days as equivalent to vacation days. The most popular day for calling in sick when feeling well was Wednesday, with 27 percent of workers getting over the mid-week hump by fabricating an excuse. While extended weekend absences were also popular, with 26 percent of workers calling in sick on Monday and 14 percent on Friday, those partaking may have put themselves at more risk of scrutiny.

### **Your boss is no fool.**

Sixty-three percent of hiring managers said they are more suspicious of employees calling in sick on a Monday or Friday. The survey also revealed that some hiring managers were less tolerant of workers playing hooky, with almost one-fourth stating they fired an employee for missing work without a legitimate reason. While the definition of a sick day has evolved, with more employers including mental health and special circumstances in the description, workers should be mindful of company policies and their responsibilities as an employee. When asked to share the most unusual excuses workers gave for missing work, hiring managers shared some of their favorite examples:

"My cow bit me."

"I accidentally flushed my keys down the toilet."

"The ghosts in my house kept me up all night."

"I forgot I was getting married today."