Advice to follow during household goods movement

Story by Frank Piacine, NAVSUP Household Goods

Editor's note: This is part two of a two-part story.

A permanent change of station move can pose challenges; so these are the remaining moving tips, offered last edition, developed by Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Household Goods Team:

• Update your non-temporary storage account.

"Active duty service members and retirees who place property into non-temporary storage [long term storage in-lieu of shipping] often fail to keep the custodial personal property office informed with respect to their contact information or current entitlement changes," said Navy Household Goods Traffic Management Specialist Dan Wolfert. "As a general rule, the entitlement period for a Sailor separating is 180 days from the active duty termination date. For retirees, it is one year from the active duty termination date.

"For members serving overseas it is for the duration of the tour overseas plus 90 days. It is extremely important that the office that initiates and manages your storage is notified 90 days prior to the expiration of your storage entitlement and of your desires for delivery," said Wolfert. "If you are serving a consecutive overseas tour, a copy of the new orders must be faxed in with a cover letter to continue your storage entitlement under the authority of the new orders.

"If the personal property shipping office does not hear from you 45 days prior to expiration, officials will attempt to contact you via certified mail. If they do not hear back by the expiration date of your entitlement, the account will be converted to member's expense. Once it is converted to member's expense it is between the member and the commercial storage facility to ensure payments are made on time. If a member fails to keep current on his bill a 'Warehousemen's Lien' can be placed upon your property. The next step is public auction of your property," said Wolfert. "Bottom line: know when your entitlement expires and stay in touch with the personal property office."

• Understand Full Replacement Value (FRV).

Customers can settle disputes over lost or destroyed household goods directly with the moving company for FRV.

"As a general rule, the Transportation Service Provider (TSP) will repair or pay you for the repair of damaged items; or replace or pay you for the replacement of items lost or destroyed beyond economical repair. FRV also covers your items placed in storage-in-transit as well as non-temporary storage. There are limits to the TSP's liability for loss or damage to personal property: In order to obtain FRV, claims must be filed directly with the TSP, not the Military Claims Offices," said Navy Household Goods Traffic Management Specialist Richard McIntire.

"FRV claims must be filed within nine months. If your claim is filed directly with the TSP within nine months of delivery, the TSP's liability on each household goods shipment is a minimum of $5,000 per shipment, or a maximum of $4 times either the net weight of the household goods shipment or the gross weight of the international unaccompanied baggage shipment, in pounds, not to exceed $50,000," said McIntire. "If you feel the value of your household goods will exceed this amount you should seriously consider obtaining additional insurance protection."

Obtaining and paying for additional insurance protection is the member's responsibility. If a claim is filed directly with the TSP more than nine months after delivery, the TSP will only be liable for the depreciated value of the items up to a maximum of $1.25 times the net weight of the shipment, not to exceed $40,000.

• Avoid too many split shipments.

Household goods can be shipped by Government Bill of Lading (Navy pays a mover to move it end-to-end), by personally procured move (PPM) or by local contract. Service members can choose to move part of their belongings themselves and have the Government arrange to have the rest moved. This is known as a split shipment.

"A split shipment permanent change of station move often results in the member incurring excess cost charges and owing the government money," said Navy Household Goods Traffic Management Specialist Paul Campbell. "This can happen even when the weight moved is below the member's authorized weight allowance. The cost to ship a partial shipment of household goods is higher because the mover is moving less. This cost is added to the cost of the PPM move to get a total.

"Under current regulations, the total cost of the two moves is compared to the cost to move the total weight in one lot at the lowest cost available to the government between authorized locations.

"If lowest TSP cost is lower than the combined cost of the two moves, the government must collect the difference from the member," said Campbell. "Changes to the way the government's cost are calculated are being reviewed and may be changed in the near future. Until that change is made, members are advised to consider moving entirely by Government Bill of Lading or PPM in one lot, to reduce the risk of indebtedness."

• Know the rules for shipping a privately owned vehicle (POV).

"The shipment of a POV is not an 'entitlement' as most people seem to think," said Campbell. "The Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTRs) indicate this is a 'discretionary allowance' at the service's discretion.

"Another important fact is the shipment of POVs to OCONUS (Outside Continental U.S.) locations is predominantly controlled by the 'host nation' through Status of Forces Agreements [SOFA]. These agreements can vary widely in requirements and restrictions.

"Host nations have been known to change requirements and restrictions occasionally, which lead to confusion, delays and the potential for undue hardships to the service member. Such seemingly minor things as length of wheel base, color, scratches, dents year, make, model and fuel source, gasoline or diesel, are all reasons that could prevent a POV from being approved for entry into certain foreign OCONUS location."

As a general rule, shipment of POVs within CONUS (Continental United States) is not authorized. Few exceptions are available.

"I strongly encourage early communication with someone at the 'gaining command,' via the Sponsor Program if possible, and the responsible outbound transportation office to minimize possible difficulties regarding shipping POVs," said Campbell.

• Avoid shipping too many household goods to a duty station.

Service members frequently fail to do their homework on the size and type of quarters that will be available at a duty station.

Many overseas duty locations provide adequate but small quarters. A fair number of stateside locations also provide smaller than average quarters. The end result is that the member finds they have too little space for all their personal property.

"Do your research before visiting the personal property office," said Wolfert. "Speak to your sponsor and individuals of similar grade and family status at your future duty station.

"Also, visit the base Web site, talk to the housing office about the size of on-base and off-base housing. If you live off-base and can't find or afford quarters large enough to accommodate all your property, you will be responsible for paying storage costs which can be very expensive, said Wolfert."

For more information contact the U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka Personal Property office at 243-7587.

Movers from the Ikeda Piano Transportation Company use a crane to lift a couch out of a second story living room during a customer's off-base pack out. Moving Western style furniture in and out of a Japanese house can call for creative solutions. NAVSUP Household Goods recommends moving tips such as becoming familiar with new housing before moving to ensure your furniture is not too numerous or large.

Photo by Blake Vives

FISC severs legacy ties, completes ONE-NET cutover

(Right) FISC Yokosuka Information Technology Director ITC (SW) Lynne Jones and her team symbolically cut the cord to all legacy systems at FISC, representing a complete transition to the new ONE-NET network in support of a Chief of Naval Operations directed initiative to reduce legacy networks.

Photo by Yohsuke Onda