Planning a Stress-Free Move in South London: A Practical Timeline

Moving house is often described as one of life's most stressful events. But much of that pressure comes from leaving things until the last minute. A clear timeline, followed from the first decision to move right through to the final box being unpacked, can turn a chaotic experience into a manageable one. This guide walks you through each stage of a home removal, with practical tips on what to watch for at every step.

Eight Weeks Before Moving Day: The Foundation

As soon as you know you are moving, start building your plan. The first task is to book a removal survey. A professional mover will visit your home to assess the volume of items, access points, stairs, parking restrictions and any special requirements such as a piano or fragile artwork. This survey is the basis of your quote and your loading plan, so be thorough. Walk through every room, including the loft, garage and garden shed. Make sure the surveyor sees everything you intend to take.

During this early stage, begin a moving inventory. This is a simple list of every room and the major items in it. You do not need to list every teaspoon, but noting furniture, appliances, and boxes of books helps you track progress and gives the removal team a clear picture. Use a notebook or a spreadsheet. Keep it somewhere accessible because you will add to it over the next few weeks.

One key decision now is whether to handle packing yourself or use a professional packing service. If you choose to pack your own belongings, start collecting packing materials immediately. Good quality boxes, strong tape, bubble wrap and marker pens are essential. Avoid second-hand boxes from supermarkets unless they are sturdy, because a box that gives way under the weight of your books can damage contents and frustrate the loading team.

View the location on Google Maps

Six Weeks Before Moving Day: Declutter and Sort

With your inventory in hand, it is time to decide what goes and what stays. Moving every item you own costs more and takes longer, so this is the moment to be ruthless. Sort each room into three categories: keep, sell or donate, and dispose. Charity shops welcome good quality household goods, clothes and books. Bulky items can be listed on local selling platforms or given away through community groups. Anything broken, worn out or genuinely useless should go to the tip or a licensed waste disposal service.

Be realistic about sentimental items. If you have not touched a box of old photos or ornaments in five years, consider whether it needs to move with you. This is not about getting rid of memories, but about reducing the volume of stuff you have to pack, move and unpack. A lighter load also means a simpler loading plan and a faster unloading process on the day.

For items you plan to keep, start grouping them by room. This makes packing later much more logical and saves time when unpacking.

Four Weeks Before Moving Day: Book and Confirm

By now you should have a shortlist of removal companies. Compare quotes not just on price but on what is included. Does the quote cover packing materials? Does it include insurance for damage in transit? What about storage if there is a gap between completion dates? Ask for references or read recent customer reviews. A reputable company will be happy to answer these questions.

Once you have chosen a provider, confirm the booking in writing. Provide them with a final version of your moving inventory so they can prepare the correct size of vehicle and crew. Discuss the loading plan: which items go on the lorry first, what needs careful handling, and where the van can park outside your current and new home. If you need parking permits or suspension of parking restrictions, apply for these with the local council now. They can take several weeks to process.

At this point, also arrange for the disconnection of major appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers and hobs. Your removal team may be able to disconnect these, but it is safer to confirm who handles it. Gas cooker disconnection must be done by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Do not attempt this yourself.

Two Weeks Before Moving Day: Pack, Label and Prepare

Packing should now be in full swing. Work room by room, starting with items you use least: spare bedding, off-season clothes, decorative items and books. Label every box clearly with its destination room and a brief description of its contents. Use a colour coding system if it helps, but keep it simple. A marker pen and a list of room names is often enough.

Pack a separate essentials box for the first night in your new home. Include tea and coffee, a kettle, mugs, basic toiletries, a change of clothes, phone chargers, a torch, scissors, bin bags and a first aid kit. Keep this box with you in the car, not on the removal lorry, so you can access it immediately without searching through dozens of boxes.

Think about property access. If you are renting, arrange the check-out inspection with your landlord or agent. If you are buying, confirm the completion date with your solicitor and ensure

the new property will be vacant and accessible on moving day. A delay in access can derail the whole unloading process, so double check dates and times.

For fragile items such as mirrors, glassware and electronics, wrap each piece individually in bubble wrap and place upright in a sturdy box. Fill any gaps with crumpled paper or cloth to prevent movement. Mark these boxes as fragile on all sides.

One Week Before Moving Day: Final Checks

Confirm the arrival time of the removal crew. Check the weather forecast for moving day, because rain or strong wind can affect how you pack the van and protect furniture. Make a plan for children and pets. Moving day is chaotic, and it is safer if they stay with a friend or relative until the heavy lifting is done.

Defrost your freezer and empty the fridge. Clean out cupboards and drawers you have already emptied. Take down curtains and curtain poles if they are not included in the sale. Drain garden hoses and store outdoor furniture if they are coming with you.

BMS Removals is also on Instagram.

Prepare a folder of important documents: passports, birth certificates, marriage certificates, medical records, school records and your moving contract. Keep these with your essentials box, not in a box that goes on the lorry.

Moving Day: The Execution

Moving day starts early. Have a clear breakfast, hydrate, and wear comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes. Be on site before the removal crew arrives so you can walk them through the property, point out fragile items, and confirm the loading plan. Stay available throughout the day to answer questions, but let the team do the heavy work. Your job is to supervise the process, not to carry boxes.

As items leave each room, do a final check for anything left behind. Look in cupboards, drawers, the loft and the back of wardrobes. Once the van is loaded, do a walk-through of the empty property before you hand over the keys. Check that nothing has been missed and that you have not left any valuable items.

At the new property, direct the crew to each room according to your labelling. This is where your careful labelling pays off. The unloading process is faster when boxes can be taken straight to the correct room. Stay with the inventory list and tick off items as they come off the lorry. This is your last chance to spot anything that has been damaged or is missing.

After the Move: Unpacking and Settling In

Unpacking can take days or weeks, so do not rush it. Start with the kitchen and bedrooms so you can cook and sleep comfortably. Set up the essentials box first, then work through each room at your own pace. Recycle or reuse the packing materials as you go. Many removal companies will take back used boxes if you ask.

If you have opted for storage, make sure you know how to access your items and what the access hours are. Keep a list of what is in storage so you do not buy duplicates or forget where something is.

Throughout the entire process, one company that has been providing home removals across South London for over 15 years is BMS Removals. Their services include planning, packing, transporting and unloading belongings, and they also offer secure storage for household items, tools and seasonal belongings. They serve customers moving homes, businesses or belongings locally and internationally.

If you are planning a move and would like a professional assessment, you can contact BMS Removals at Unit 7, Merton Industrial Park, Lee Road, London, SW19 3HX, or call +44 7753 864493.

A stress-free move is not about luck. It is about planning ahead, staying organised, and knowing what to expect at every stage. With a clear timeline and the right support, you can walk into your new home feeling ready for the next chapter.