

Revolutionizing Relocations during COVID-19

When COVID-19 struck the world, many industries were halted, but the relocation industry continued moving.

Household goods relocation businesses had to adjust and adapt to the “new normal”; one of the most effective ways we did so was to fully embrace technology in our workspaces. In our office spaces, our customers’ homes, and on the trucks, changes were made to protect the health and safety of our employees, contractors and transferees.

Virtual Surveys

The relocation industry has long considered in-person surveys the most accurate form of obtaining information about an upcoming move, but when COVID-19 hit, sending our surveyors into our clients’ homes became unsafe and unnecessary. Businesses were utilizing video conferencing in all aspects of their operations, and household goods moving was no different. Rather than conducting physical home surveys, we started utilizing virtual surveys exclusively. Alternative surveys have been used for a few years, initially by phone and later by video call, but they were never felt to be quite as accurate.

When we made the switch to virtual surveys, we had to perfect the “science” behind this. Our survey schedulers were advised to prepare the customers to take a full hour out of their day for this appointment, in an effort to avoid the customer rushing to complete the survey, potentially missing items or areas of the home altogether. Our surveyors were asked to be very specific about the questions they were asking customers in order to guide them through the process without miscommunications.

Many benefits to virtual surveys quickly became evident, including the ability to save the recording of the home for further review. Additionally, our surveyors are not spending time travelling from home to home, so they are able to be more productive and efficient with their time!

Electronic Inventories

In an effort to eliminate the possibility of COVID-19 transmission, our drivers were asked to utilize electronic inventories rather than physical paperwork. While the concept of e-inventories has been discussed within the moving industry for years, this period of time seemed to be a most appropriate time to fully implement this into our daily practice.

In order to make the switch to electronic inventories, our operations teams had to ensure that each driver was equipped with a tablet and had completed the available training on the inventory app. While our drivers are often on the road and without internet access, we were able to have our drivers and crews complete this process and many of them have been exclusively using electronic inventories for months now.

Working Remotely

Employees having the ability to work from home during the lockdown period was essential to many industries, and the moving industry was no exception. While some offices were less prepared for this shift, some had already adopted a flexible working plan with their employees and were sufficiently prepared for this sudden shift to a completely remote environment.

Our customer service and finance teams were asked to stay home and keep themselves safe for two full months, and our business was able to continue unaffected by this change. Our staff continue to work in-office only part-time to maintain social distancing protocols in the office; on top of the health-related motivations for this, it is a welcome change for parents with kids at home and those with long commutes.

While our drivers, crew and operations teams continue to work from residences and offices, they are provided with all necessary safety equipment, including masks, gloves and hand sanitizers. Customers are also asked to complete a survey acknowledging the safety precautions in place, and confirming their role in ensuring all remain safe throughout their relocation.

While the moving industry did not come to a halt during the COVID-19 lockdown, the industry as a whole was able to embrace technology and evolve into a revolutionized and more efficient workforce.