

A MOVING performance

Start your new life in France in a good mood by finding a reliable removals company, advises logistics expert **Ben Hingley**

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Moving all your worldly possessions across the Channel can seem like an insurmountable task. If not carried out well, it can cause your new life in France to get off to a stressful start. Calling on the services of a reputable removals company can help to demystify the process and provide a comprehensive door-to-door service.

Finding 'the one'

When looking for a removals company, it is important to choose one with an in-depth knowledge of France; a company with the contacts, affiliations and practical skills to take care of you all the way to your new home. For peace of mind, they should offer full financial protection door to door.

Recommendations are a good starting point but other than that, make sure movers are at least members of the BAR (British Association of Removers). This is the only trade association in the industry that helps members and protects customers. It sets high professional standards and the BAR code of practice is approved by the Trading Standards Institute. It offers clear professional advice and also provides a scheme of pre-payment protection.

Don't think you need to use a local company, as experience and knowledge on overseas moving is

more important. Also, as payments are made prior to moving, it may be more reassuring to use a financially bonded mover who belongs to the BAR Overseas Moving Group or FIDI (Fédération Internationale des Déménageurs Internationaux). FIDI is the global alliance of professional international moving and relocation companies, and offers customers a portal to an alliance of recognised quality movers. Its FAIM standard covers a company's operations and service to customers through a quality management and certification programme. The BAR Overseas Moving Group, meanwhile, offers an international guarantee that customers' advanced payments will be protected should a member company cease to trade.

All of this means that if you have paid prior to your move and that company ceases to trade before said move, your payment is protected, similar to ABTA when booking flights and holidays.

Your next step is to get a realistic quotation and, for this, an experienced estimator should visit you in your home to accurately calculate the volume you wish to take and note your packing requirements. They should give professional guidance as to how your entire move will be delivered, right from the collection stage in the UK to delivery to your new residence in France (or vice-versa), without any obligation. Ask for a realistic quotation, which will include full removal insurance, based on a first-class and high quality service.



Above: Ask for a realistic quote that includes full removal insurance
Left: Make sure you have the keys to your new property before delivery day

“Remember owner-packed goods are not fully insured, whereas those packed by the mover are”

Lock, stock and bookcase

Many clients do not need the use of a full-sized furniture van, so many removal companies can offer prices for 'part loads'. This means that you can send a small consignment of belongings over to France which goes on a shared vehicle with other customers.

The cost will involve the space pre-booked in the van rather than you having to pay for the cost of a sole-use vehicle. Delivery dates will need to be flexible as the removal van will have several deliveries to make. Normally, part-loads can be collected and delivered within two or three weeks, depending on traffic.

French specialist movers will offer services on a regular part-load basis to most parts of France. Some can also arrange collection and delivery of motor vehicles and motorbikes which can be transferred in road trains (a vehicle with a boxed trailer).

Packing it all in

Choose a removal company with professionally trained removal operatives to ensure that all of your personal effects make their Continental journey in complete safety. Packing can take longer than you might think, so bear in mind that the movers will need to factor packing materials and the time needed to prepare for the move, into the quote.

All specialist items or items needing extra care – paintings, mirrors, musical instruments etc – need to be packed in special cartons and with protective materials which have been approved by the British Association of Removers, for maximum protection. If you choose to pack yourself, give yourself plenty of time. The moving company can supply packing cartons and materials for clients to pack belongings themselves, but remember owner-packed goods are not fully insured, whereas those packed by the mover are.

Safe keeping

More often than not, you'll find that a move to France will require the use of storage for some intermediate period before your possessions can be taken to your new abode, so it is important to use a remover with storage facilities.

Opting for containerised storage means that containers will arrive at your UK home on a multi-purpose vehicle and an inventory will be made as each item is carefully loaded into containers and transported to the storage facility. The furniture will stay in your containers until it is ready to come out of storage.

Containers rarely travel to France as they take up too much space, so normally the furniture is transferred directly into a furniture van the day before departure.

Alternatively, self-access storage involves your possessions being stored in individual padlocked rooms; you are able to have access to your items during the period of storage. Try and give the remover two to four weeks' notice in order to arrange for your belongings to be delivered from store.



Bottom left: Mirrors and other delicate items need to be packed in special cartons
Below right: Containers rarely travel to France as they take up too much space

See **Burke Bros** at the **FRENCH PROPERTY EXHIBITION** Olympia, London 16th-17th September 2017

Final delivery

Delivery at the new premises should involve your removal company unwrapping all furniture items and reassembling items that require non-specialist attention, such as beds, dressers and bookcases. It is always important to have keys to the new property prior to the delivery day. Always discuss the access to the French property as sometimes a shuttle service from the vehicle to the new home will need to be arranged.

Choosing the right removal company really is key to a successful move to France. Opt for the company you feel most comfortable with and discuss everything thoroughly with them. Get this right and you'll be on the road to a successful and stress-free move to France. ■



Ben Hingley
Sales Manager at
Burke Bros Moving Group
Tel: 01902 714 555
burkebros.co.uk