

# Relocation Frequently Asked Questions

## General Questions

It is recognized that moving is a stressful circumstance at best. The more relocation information you have ahead of time the better prepared you will be to have a successful relocation. This means that the more questions you ask ahead of time the less likely it is that there will be misunderstandings. No two organizations are exactly alike when it comes to relocations. The National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) is a Federally Funded Research and Development Center. As such, it is subject to numerous Government regulations and guidelines. In some cases this means the Observatory is limited in what it can provide or how it provides relocation assistance. Therefore, please take time to review this FAQ to acquaint you with the relocation processes at the NRAO.

This collection of frequently asked questions (FAQs) is written to cover a wide spectrum of relocation scenarios. Since each move has different constraints and requirements you are encouraged to read through these FAQs and then contact the Relocation Coordinator for additional guidance.

## Contacts

### ***Who is my contact for arranging a household relocation?***

For Green Bank, Charlottesville, and Chile-bound moves your Relocation Coordinator is Ted Miller in Charlottesville at 434.296.0321 or via email at [tmiller@nrao.edu](mailto:tmiller@nrao.edu).

For Socorro-based relocations your Relocation Coordinators are Skip Lagoyda, New Mexico Operations Business Manager and Allen Lewis. Skip can be reached at 575.835.7318 or [slagoyda@nrao.edu](mailto:slagoyda@nrao.edu). Allen can be reached at 575.835.7309 or [alewis@nrao.edu](mailto:alewis@nrao.edu).

## Relocation benefits

### ***How do I know what relocation benefits I am eligible for?***

Your offer letter should clearly state the benefits. If you have any questions about your benefits please call or email the relocation contact listed in your offer letter and your relocation authorization form, if provided.

### ***What if there is a disagreement about my relocation benefits? Can the relocation contact change the offer letter terms?***

Clarifications to the relocations benefits can usually be addressed by the Relocation Coordinator and will be confirmed in email format. If the change requested is beyond a clarification then the change must be addressed to the NRAO Human Resources for consideration. In all cases, any change authorized

by Human Resources will be made by email or in writing. A verbal change is not authorized.

***What if I do not relocate at the time of my NRAO employment? Is there a time limitation on the relocation benefit?***

The relocation benefit is good for up to one year. You may request an extension of the benefit through Human Resources.

## **Moving company**

***Can I be reimbursed for moving myself in a rental truck?***

Yes. Be sure to save all of your receipts for the truck, fuel, and packing materials including blankets, boxes, tape, etc.

***Who does the NRAO use for a relocation company?***

The NRAO generally uses United Van Lines and its affiliates for Charlottesville, Green Bank, and Chile relocations. Mayflower Transit and its affiliates are utilized for Socorro relocations.

**Who contacts the mover to get my relocation started?** The Relocation Coordinator will contact the mover to establish your benefits and relay information about your move. Most communications are conducted via email to ensure an audit trail.

**What information does the Relocation Coordinator need to provide to the relocation company?**

As a minimum, the following information is needed:

1. Current address of the household goods.
2. Contact information, including cell phone and preferred email.
3. Desired date for pack-up.
4. Any special needs such as unusually large items.
5. Prospective address, if known.

**Will the moving company visit my house or apartment first before packing, or do they just come and figure it out when they arrive?** Typically a moving company representative will conduct an on-site visit to determine the estimated weight and cube of your household goods. In cases where the household goods shipment is relatively small, a phone interview may be conducted in lieu of an on-site visit.

***What if I want to ship my vehicle(s) rather than drive them to the new location? How is this handled? If I do this, can I be reimbursed for use of rental cars?***

Consult your offer letter. Relocations within the continental United States do not generally offer relocation of vehicles. If you are moving from outside of the continental US, the relocation company will ship the vehicle, if authorized in the

offer letter. Rental cars are generally authorized in cases where vehicle shipment is involved.

## **The Pack-out and Move**

### **Will I need to pack things beforehand, or do they do all the packing?**

The movers will do the packing.

### **Do I need to disassemble my furniture?**

No, the movers will do that for you. Any furniture you want to have disassembled should be identified during the household goods survey with the moving company representative to ensure the proper time is allotted and tools are brought.

### **Do I need to disconnect my appliances?**

This is an item you want to discuss during the household goods survey with the moving company representative. Disconnecting of gas lines and hard wired electrical service is generally not included.

### **What if I want to pack some of my own goods?**

You may pack whatever you want however you should be aware that the moving company will label those items as “packed by owner” (PBO). This designation will reduce your ability to obtain reimbursement if the item is broken in transit.

### **Are my belongings insured during transit, and what is covered by this insurance?**

Yes, you are covered by replacement value insurance that includes loss, breakage, water damage, etc. The mover has the option to repair, replace with like kind item, or pay the replacement value. There is generally a limitation of \$75,000 on the lot of household goods shipped. Individuals may increase the coverage, if desired, but at their own expense. Contact your Relocation Coordinator to discuss the option and pricing.

***Are there any restrictions on the type of goods and materials I can have moved?*** In general, you should not pack liquids, perishable foods, flammable liquids, or any form of explosive. If you have a question about particular items please contact your Relocation Coordinator.

## **After the move**

***What if there is damage to my shipment?*** The moving company has a form to complete and specific instructions for filing a claim.

***What if I think my claim is not being handled properly by the moving company?*** Call or email the relocation coordinator with the specifics of your concern. He or she will work with the moving company to resolve your claim.

***What forms do I need to submit to settle my travel claim?***

The NRAO website has the form you need to complete. See [http://www.nrao.edu/administration/fiscal\\_office/travelforms.shtml](http://www.nrao.edu/administration/fiscal_office/travelforms.shtml) for the Relocation Expense Voucher. You can also request an emailed version of the form from the relocation coordinator.

***Is there assistance available for completing the Relocation Expense***

***Voucher?*** The Relocation Coordinator is usually the person you will meet with or send your paper work to. To ensure you receive the correct reimbursement, do not send your Relocation Expense Voucher to Fiscal without having it reviewed by the Relocation Coordinator.

***What information do I need to complete the Relocation Expense Voucher?***

You will need to have all of your receipts for transportation, lodging, passport processing, and reciprocity tax for Chile entry. If you are making a self-move, you will also need receipts for the moving truck, fuel, and materials purchased such as tape, boxes, blankets, etc.

***Are there tax consequences to my relocation?***

If you refer to the Relocation Expense Voucher, you will notice that it is divided into two sides. All of the expenses on the left side are not taxable. These include your moving related personal car mileage rate, transportation costs, one day of lodging en route, and any moving costs you may have paid if you made a self move. All of the costs on the right side of the Relocation Expense Voucher are taxable items. These items include per diem, temporary housing, and other items that may be incorporated into the offer letter.

***Will I be reimbursed for my personal vehicle mileage and what is the rate?***

For moves within the United States, vehicle mileage is reimbursed at the rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service as identified in chapter 4 of IRS Publication 463 and related IRS information releases. One part of the rate is specifically identified as move-related mileage and the other part is the standard mileage reimbursement rate.

The NRAO will reimburse for the full general mileage rate however it will be split into two sections to conform to tax regulations. For example, if the standard mileage rate is 58.5 cents per mile and the move-related rate is 27 cents per mile, the reimbursement will be divided into components of 27 cents and 31.5 cents for each mile travelled in the private vehicle. When entered on the Relocation Expense Voucher, the 27 cent rate will be used on the left side of the form and the 31.5 cent rate will be used on the right side of the form.

Be aware that these rates change annually, and sometimes more frequently, as determined by the IRS.

***Why does NRAO collect tax for the right-side items and what is the tax rate?***

The NRAO is required by Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations to collect tax for all taxable relocation reimbursements. The tax rate is set at 25% by the IRS. This is not a negotiable item with NRAO Fiscal or the Relocation Coordinator since this is public law.

***How do I receive my reimbursements?***

For the items listed on the left side of the Relocation Expense Voucher, the non-taxable items, a check will be sent to you directly. This check typically arrives within ten work days of filing your Relocation Expense Voucher. For the items listed on the right side of the Relocation Expense Voucher, the taxable items, you will receive this reimbursement through your next payroll check. If the Relocation Expense Voucher is submitted very close to the end of a pay period, the reimbursement may not be processed in time to be included in the next pay check. In those cases, the reimbursement will arrive in the following or second pay check.

***If I am given a maximum dollar amount for my relocation and I exceed the allowance, how is this handled?***

You are responsible for any costs in excess of the authorized allowance. Consult with Human Resources if this circumstance presents itself.

***If my household goods weight exceeds my allowance, how is this handled?***

You are responsible for any costs in excess of the authorized allowance. Consult with Human Resources if this circumstance presents itself.

***What if I need to stay in temporary housing longer than planned because I can't locate permanent housing?***

Contact your Human Resources representative to discuss the situation. There are tax implications and allowability of cost standards for housing allowances that exceed the authorized stay. These limits are based on IRS regulations and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, neither of which is within the control of the NRAO.

***Am I eligible for storage of my household goods if I haven't found a new residence?***

Consult your offer letter. If the offer letter does not explicitly state that storage is authorized then you need to contact Human Resources to obtain a change to the offer letter. The Relocation Coordinator is not authorized to make offer letter changes.

***Does my benefit including transporting my pets or animals? Are there any other exclusions?***

Pets, animals, and boats are not authorized to be relocated at Observatory expense. Consult with your Relocation Coordinator if you have other questions about what is and is not allowed to be relocated at Observatory expense.