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## **Moving Tips – Make Your Move Trouble Free**

Americans move from one home to another for a variety of reasons. They want to upsize, downsize, be closer to family and friends, seek a more desirable design or layout, or accommodate changing medical or physical needs. As people age, the likelihood of a move increases and it's important to have reasonable expectations, be alert to scams and protect your identity during the process.

Moving may increase the risk of identity theft because personal information is transferred from home to home. New accounts may be opened and old ones closed and unscrupulous scammers may become alert to relocation plans. To decrease the chance of identity theft during a move, it is important to take a few preparatory steps in the months before the move. First, keep track of the mail you receive at your current residence. Make a list of the financial information you receive by mail and the frequency of statements, i.e. monthly or quarterly. If you have a relationship with a financial advisor, notify the office of your new address and the anticipated date of the move. At least seven to ten days prior to the date of your move, notify the post office and complete a change of address form. Visit your bank(s) and advise them of your change of address - in writing. Shred financial and health related documentation rather than simply discarding it.

Secure sensitive documents and information during open houses or when contractors are in the home. During the move, keep sensitive documents with you and consider the possibility of moving your computer yourself. Within 30 days of your move, confirm that all mail is coming to your new residence, and verify that your former utility accounts have been closed. Request a credit report to ensure that no fraudulent activity has taken place on any of your accounts.

When engaging a mover, do not rely solely on advertisements. Get recommendations from family, friends and realtors - they often get great feedback from their clients and may be able to refer not only a mover but, often, other contractors. Check the Better Business Bureau or local community organizations for complaints about movers under consideration. Verify that the mover you have selected is licensed and insured. Also be sure to request a written contract with the mover that specifies their duties and obligations, the items to be moved and the price.

Finally, don't forget to let Berwitz & DiTata LLP know of your new address. We want to be able to keep you in the know.