



# WHAT MILITARY FAMILIES SHOULD KNOW ABOUT **LONG-TERM STORAGE**

What Is Non-Temporary Storage?



For many PCS trips (mostly OCONUS, but a few variations of long term storage for a CONUS PCS exist), the government will store a portion of your household goods while you fulfill your tour at your next duty station. This type of holding is known as *non-temporary storage (NTS)*.

NTS is the long-term storage of your belongings rather than shipping your items to your new duty station. The storage facility is likely near the pickup location, and the crates will stay there for the duration of your tour. After returning home, you can request a delivery of your stored household goods when you have an address.

The process sounds simple enough, but there's a lot to think about before deciding whether or not to use long-term storage. For example, applying for NTS is specific to your destination and years in service, as each rank is only allowed a certain amount of weight per move, also known as weight entitlements.

For reference, a servicemember with E-8 rank, with dependents, and headed OCONUS is allotted a total of 14,000 pounds, excluding the pro gear (some work-related items) for both the servicemember and spouse.

## Start Your NTS Research with Move.mil

To find out the specifics for your PCS situation, start with the Official DOD Customer Moving Portal. It's there you'll learn about weight entitlement and the nearest location of the personal property office. Stay in contact with the personal property office to ensure a safe and proper pack out and the delivery and unpacking of your NTS.

**Be aware: NTS is considered part of your overall weight entitlement.** Do not accumulate more than your allotment; otherwise, payment is due from the servicemember. Here's what the Official DOD Customer Moving Portal says:

“Moving allowances are generally based on the overall weight of your household goods. Any overages on your approved weight will be your financial responsibility, so work hard to make sure you stay within your weight allowance.”

## How Does Non-Temporary Storage Work?





There are rules and guidelines the movers and storage facilities are mandated to uphold, but there are variations between companies. Your local personal property office will help you learn what standards are expected. These are general guidelines.

- Your belongings are packed by movers and crated. They remain crated during the stay at the storage facility.
- Your stuffed furniture is wrapped and stored on shelves individually.
- Your household goods can be left on the floor up to 72 hours at a time to allow space for staging and inventory.
- The facility does not have to be climate-controlled, but they do have to control the humidity levels.

*Are you curious as to what a long-term storage facility looks like? Check out [this article about PCS storage on Military.com](#) to see a video of a storage facility near Fort Campbell.*

## **What Can You Do if You Don't Qualify for NTS?**

Government-funded storage is most widely available for OCONUS moves, but may also be an option for CONUS moves on a case-by-case basis. If you don't qualify for NTS, consider self-storage.







You'll pay out of pocket for private self-storage and should calculate the cost of storage versus the cost of [renting or buying a home large enough](#) to accommodate all of your belongings at your next duty station. Storage facilities are expensive, and you might find that it's less financially taxing to spend above your BAH allowance on rent or a mortgage than to pay for self-storage.

## The Pros and Cons of Long-Term Storage

### PROS

**Long term storage allows you to downsize.**

Utilizing long-term storage is a good option for military families preparing to temporarily downsize at their next location. It's a great way to hang onto things like keepsakes that you know that you're not ready to part with or just don't have space for at the moment.

[\*Here's How to Crate More Storage Space in Your New Home.\*](#)

**Storage makes an overseas move easier.**



Often, an [overseas move involves downsizing to some degree](#), but you could run into obstacles such as different electrical outlets and weapon laws that render some of your items illegal or unusable. Utilizing a long-term storage facility allows you the luxury to keep the things that you can't use now, but you plan to use later.



## CONS

### Your belongings might depreciate.

Electronics and cars depreciate over time. Unless the vehicle is completely paid off or a collectible, it's probably not worth pouring money into storage to have when you return. If it is a feasible financial possibility, consider paying the shipping cost to take the car with you or sell the car before departure and buy something different at your next duty station.

### Your items might be damaged.

We all know what to expect with movers. Has anyone's stuff arrived unscathed after a PCS move? Even though your household goods aren't going as far when you choose to use NTS, if your movers don't pack correctly, [your items could be damaged just from sitting for a few years](#).



## Age is a factor.

What are you storing? Technology continuously progresses, and electronics like TVs, kitchen appliances, and computers will likely be outdated by the time you're back to retrieve them. Go ahead and sell them before you leave and use the money to go towards replacement.

## Storage is expensive.

If you don't qualify for NTS, ask yourself if it's worth paying for self-storage. Any money you put into storage is money that you're not putting toward other important things. Decide if your stuff is worth the yearly cost.

## It's easier to hoard.

The items you store are often what you don't use regularly. And once stashed in a storage facility, out of your hair, it becomes much easier to avoid purging. Suddenly, you're paying for a room of stuff that you're too afraid to face. Be selective about what you put in your long-term storage.



## How to Decide What Option is Best For You



If you're unsure whether or not long-term storage is the best solution, ask yourself a few questions. The answers will reveal whether long term storage is a sound investment.

- Can you live without the items you plan to put in storage?
- Will they depreciate while in storage?
- Are there adequate facilities available?
- Is there easy access?
- How much is insurance?

If you choose to use long term storage, whether paid for by the military or out of pocket, intense preparation is vital for a damage and stress-free experience.



## 4 Tips For Using Long-Term Self-Storage

### 1) Pack appropriately.

Movers should include plenty of filling to cushion your items. And if you've chosen self-storage, not only should you pack well, but you'll want to be mindful of how you organize the unit.





[Life Storage Blog](#) recommends you “keep boxes and furniture off the floor whenever possible. Improperly storing your items, even for the short term, can result in unnecessary damage and stress.”

Lining the floor with pallets or buying storage tubs are great ways to get them off the floor and help prevent water damage should the facility flood.

## 2) Ask for help if you choose self-storage.

Since you'll be gone for a handful of years, it's a good idea to appoint someone to check on the unit from time to time. If your stuff is valuable enough for you to keep, you need to make sure that it's well cared for.

## 3) Don't use plastic bags to pack.

Wrapping in plastic traps humidity and breeds mold and mildew. Instead, use paper, sheets, or drop cloths to protect your things and allow air to circulate. Here are more tips to make the most of your storage space:

- **Use a vacuum sealer.** Although vacuum sealing soft goods won't reduce your storage weight, it does protect winter clothes and bedding from the elements and creates more space.
- **Disassemble furniture.** Save money by consolidating your stuff in a smaller unit. Break down cribs, bed frames, and tables if you can.
- **Label.** Be sure to label the contents of each box before storing. Not only will it be much simpler to unpack when you're ready to retrieve your household goods, but if you're planning on getting items out of storage, they will be easier to find.
- **Cover fabric.** The experts at [ezStorage](#) say to “cover the upholstery on furniture with clean 100% cotton white sheets. Do not use dark-colored as these could bleed color onto the stored items if there is moisture in the storage unit.”

Choosing to use long-term storage isn't an easy decision. There are many factors to consider and a lot of questions you need to ask, especially if you're considering self-storage. Need more tips for an upcoming overseas move? Click below to download our free ebook, Overseas PCS Survival Guide, where you'll find answers to all your overseas PCS questions!

