

Relocating can feel overwhelming, especially when it comes to prepping large appliances for the move. Proper preparation is crucial not only to protect your belongings but also to ensure a smooth, safe, and cost-effective transition. Whether you're coordinating your move with Southside Moving (Southside Portsmouth VA movers) or handling part of the process yourself, understanding how to defrost your fridge, drain appliances, and disconnect washers and dryers properly can save you headaches on moving day.



## Why Appliance Prep Matters

Appliances are some of the most valuable and bulky items in your home. They require specific attention to avoid damage, leaks, or safety hazards during transport. Exactly.. Appliances like refrigerators, washers, dryers, and [resident.com](https://www.resident.com) dishwashers often contain water, refrigerants, and electrical components that must be handled correctly.

Moving companies and authorities, including the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), have safety standards and regulations you need to be aware of to avoid complications or extra charges. The FMCSA's "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move" booklet and the "Ready to Move" brochure are excellent resources for understanding what's expected both from movers and customers.

## 1. Start with Decluttering

Before you even touch your appliances for the mechanics of prep—defrosting or disconnecting—take the time to declutter. Removing unnecessary items helps:

- **Cut moving costs:** Less weight and volume can reduce your moving bill.
- **Speed unpacking:** Fewer things to organize later means a faster settling-in process.
- **Minimize risk:** Moving only what you truly need lowers the chance of damage and hassle.

When removing items from refrigerators or freezer shelves, dispose of expired or unwanted food. Empty washer and dryer compartments and clean lint traps to avoid fire hazards. This prep cuts down on unpleasant surprises come moving day.

## 2. Where Will the Moving Truck Park?

I always ask this before talking about boxes or packing anything. The moving truck's parking location dramatically affects your workflow. For example, if Southside Moving is handling your Portsmouth VA move, confirm the truck clearance and parking area as early as possible.

Check with your condo management or HOA about:

Designated loading zones  
Permits needed for truck parking  
Elevator bookings and size restrictions  
Building access hours and security procedures  
Access logistics will affect when and how you unplug and prepare appliances for transport.

3. Measure Large Furniture and Appliance Exits  
Ever notice how measuring every giant appliance and furniture item really saved me from moving day disasters over the years. Before disconnecting your washer, drying, or fridge: Measure your appliance's width, height, and depth  
Measure all doorway and hallway widths, including elevators  
Note tight corners or stairs that might affect how an appliance moves out  
Label these measurements with painter's tape in big block letters on the appliance or your moving checklist so movers and helpers can prepare accordingly.

4. Defrost Your Fridge Before Moving  
Defrosting your refrigerator is essential to avoid water damage and extra weight from ice buildup. Here's how to prep it correctly: Unplug the fridge at least 24 hours before the move to allow ice to melt. Empty all food items well ahead; dispose of or pack perishables properly. Place towels or a shallow pan under the fridge's drip pan or at the base to catch melting ice water. Remove shelves and drawers to pack separately and prevent breakage. Wipe down inside once fully defrosted to remove any moisture or debris. Moving companies like Southside Moving might have specific guidelines on timing and defrosting to avoid delays and damage. Reach out early!

5. Drain Appliances Before Moving  
Appliances like washers and dishwashers contain water that must be drained before transport to prevent leaks and damage. Follow these steps carefully: Disconnect the water supply hoses and allow water to drain into a bucket. Use the appliance's manual to check if any additional draining steps are necessary (some washers have drain pumps or filters to clear). Wipe dry all accessible connections to avoid water leakage. Most movers, including Southside Moving, will not transport appliances with water inside for safety and liability reasons. Being thorough here is non-negotiable.

6. Disconnect Washer & Dryer Properly  
Disconnecting your washer and dryer requires care to maintain appliance integrity and comply with safety rules: Unplug electrical cords and secure them with painter's tape or cable ties to prevent tripping or tangling. Turn off water supply valves completely to avoid leaks. Remove hoses connecting washer to water and drainage. Make sure they are completely drained and dried. Disconnect vent duct

for dryers carefully, and ensure it's not bent, kinked, or obstructed. Clean the lint trap and dryer drum for safety and functionality. Label these disconnected parts and hoses as "washer" or "dryer" to keep your unpacking organized.

7. Know What Movers Won't Take: Non-allowables and Safety-Based Exclusions When working with professional movers like Southside Moving or reviewing FMCSA guidelines, some items related to appliances and your household are not transportable due to safety risks. Key examples include: Flammable liquids or gases (e.g., propane tanks, cleaning solvents) Perishables or hazardous materials inside appliances Explosives, firearms, or weapons stored near appliances Oversized or improperly prepared appliances I keep a running list of typical non-allowable items taped inside one of my kitchen cabinets as a helpful reminder for myself and clients. The FMCSA's Protect Your Move website is a vital resource for double-checking what movers can and cannot take.

8. Let me tell you about a situation I encountered made a mistake that cost them thousands..

Final Tips & Tricks for a Smooth Appliance Move

Label every appliance and its parts: Use painter's tape in big letters to mark what goes where.

Document your appliances' condition: Take photos before disconnecting, useful if you need to file claims later.

Confirm building access and elevator bookings: Coordinate closely with your condo, landlord, or building management.

Communicate with your moving company: Southside Moving or any mover you hire will appreciate early, clear communication about your schedule and logistics.

Conclusion Properly prepping your appliances before a move—from defrosting your fridge and draining water to disconnecting washers and dryers—is a critical step that impacts your safety, moving costs, and unpacking experience. Using resources like the FMCSA's "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move" booklet and "Ready to Move" brochure alongside trusted movers such as Southside Moving helps ensure your valued appliances arrive safely and without issue. Remember: Always find out where the truck will park, measure your appliances and exits, and double-check your building's access rules before the big day. Taking these practical steps can reduce stress and make your next home truly feel like your own—from day one.