

Getting moving quotes can feel overwhelming—especially when two estimates look nothing alike yet claim to cover the same “local move.” If you’re like many people, you end up scratching your head, wondering which offer truly gives you the best value. Moving is a major life event that deserves clarity and confidence before you sign on the dotted line.

Here’s what kills me: whether you found your movers through ocnj daily, browsed tips on this old house, or compared companies on thumbtack, this guide will break down the key factors for comparing two moving quotes that seem to speak different languages. You’ll learn what counts as a local move, the essential services local movers provide, and how to interpret pricing models.

What Counts as a Local Move?

One of the first things to clarify is the definition of “local move.” Most moving companies consider a move local if it’s between 50 to 100 miles on a direct route from origin to destination. The exact cutoff can vary slightly by company or region, but these distances are the most commonly accepted.



A local move distance affects pricing structure, types of services offered, and insurance coverage. Unlike long-distance moves which usually charge by weight or volume, local moves tend to use hourly pricing to account for time spent packing, loading, driving, and unloading.

Before you even dig into your quotes, confirm with your moving providers that your move falls within their local move radius and pricing model. (note to self: check this later). This baseline detail sets the stage for a fair comparison.

What Do Local Movers Usually Include?

One client recently told me wished they had known this beforehand.. Local moving services are typically full-service. This means they take care of most or all of the physical move-related tasks:

- **Packing:** Skilled packers wrap your belongings properly using materials like bubble wrap, blankets, and boxes (though sometimes packing materials are extra).
- **Loading:** Movers carefully load heavy furniture and boxes onto the truck, protecting both your items and their equipment.
- **Driving:** They transport your belongings within the agreed-upon local radius, following any necessary route or parking arrangements.
- **Unloading:** Movers unload items at your new home and place boxes or furniture in designated rooms.
- **Furniture Protection and Basic Assembly:** This often includes furniture pads, stretch wrap, and moving blankets to prevent scratches or damage during transit. Many companies also offer basic disassembly and reassembly of items like beds or shelving units.

Make sure both quotes you're comparing list these types of services clearly. Sometimes one company might exclude packing materials or assembly from their base price, resulting in a confusing price gap.

How to Compare the *Included Fees List*

The "included fees list" is your roadmap to understanding what each quote covers—and where unexpected charges might creep in. Movers sometimes split out fees differently, so having a side-by-side list helps reveal true apples-to-apples costs.

Ask for specific information on:

- Packing materials (boxes, tape, padding)
- Stair or elevator carry fees
- Long carry fees (if your truck can't park close and movers must walk items further)
- Required permits or parking fees (if applicable in your neighborhood)
- Furniture disassembly and reassembly
- Optional insurance or valuation coverage
- Fuel surcharges or tolls

One quote might bundle these into the hourly rate while another shows them separately, making the second look higher. Never leave it to guesswork—ask, "Is that in writing?" for every included or extra fee.

Why Crew Size Matters: Comparing Your *Crew Size*

One of the biggest differences in moving quotes often comes from crew size. A smaller crew might be cheaper per hour, but it can also make the job take longer, possibly negating the initial savings.

Crew Size	Typical Tasks	Estimated Speed	Cost Implication
2 Movers	Load/unload small apartments, few bulky items	Slower, may struggle with heavy furniture	Lower hourly rate but more hours
3-4 Movers	Average-sized homes, includes staircase carries	Efficient balance of speed and cost	Mid-range hourly rate, fewer total hours
5+ Movers	Large homes or moves with many bulky, fragile items	Very fast but higher hourly rates	Higher hourly rate, may save on total time

When comparing quotes, ask what crew size each company is proposing. A quote with fewer movers that estimates twice as many hours could end up costing more overall. Conversely, a large crew with a high hourly rate that completes the job quickly tends to be more cost-effective.

Understanding *Estimated Hours* and Hourly Pricing

Many local moving companies use hourly pricing models rather than flat rates, especially for moves under 100 miles. It's common for companies to estimate the time they'll take based on home size, belongings, complexity, stairs, and travel time.

To compare quotes effectively:



1. **Ask for a breakdown of estimated hours:** How many hours to pack, load, drive, and unload?
2. **Clarify minimum hours:** Some movers have a 3- or 4-hour minimum regardless of the move's actual length.
3. **Check what increases hourly rates:** Holidays, weekend surcharges, or late-night moves might cost extra.
4. **Check if waiting time is charged:** If you're running behind schedule on moving day, some companies bill extra.

Beware of "half-day" or "full-day" labels without clear hours attached. I prefer real-time, explicit hourly estimates, so I know exactly what to expect and can plan accordingly.

Pro Tips from Local Pros and Industry Experts

Both This Old House and Thumbtack's moving advice pages stress the importance of detailed quotes and clear communication to avoid surprise bills. And coverage like featured in OCNJ Daily emphasizes local knowledge—for example, whether your move's route includes tight streets or restricted parking.

- **Always get the details in writing.** Verbal estimates or vague promises won't protect you.
- **Confirm insurance and licensing coverage.** Movers who won't show proof of insurance can cost you more if damage occurs.
- **Watch for bait-and-switch quotes.** If one estimate looks drastically lower but few details are included, be suspicious.
- **Use a checklist for stairs, bulky items, and long carries.** Movers often charge extra for these, so make sure they're accounted for.

Sample Comparison Table for Two Moving Quotes

Category	Quote A	Quote B
Crew Size	3 Movers	2 Movers
Included Fees	List Packing materials, stair fee, furniture pads, basic assembly included	No packing materials, stair fee extra, assembly extra
Hourly Rate	\$120/hr	\$90/hr

	Estimated Hours	6 hours	8 hours	Estimated Total Cost	\$720	\$720	Insurance Proof Provided	Not Provided
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In this example, even though Quote B has a lower hourly rate, the smaller crew and longer estimated time equalize costs. However, Quote A includes more services with clearer insurance support, likely reducing stress and risk.

Wrapping It Up: Choose Based on Clarity and Total Value

The best way to compare two moving quotes that look different is by building your own checklist covering:

- **Local move definition** and restrictions
- **All included fees** and surcharges
- **Crew size** and how it affects estimated hours
- **Hourly pricing model** including minimums and extras
- **Insurance, licensing, and reviews** for peace of mind

When in doubt, don't hesitate to ask movers detailed questions and request written confirmation. Remember: *is <https://ocnjdaily.com/news-from-our-partners/how-local-movers-simplify-residential-relocations-a-complete-guide-for-homeowners/> that in writing?* is your mantra for moving day sanity.

Armed with these insights and resources from OCNJ Daily, This Old House, and Thumbtack, you can compare quotes confidently and pick the mover that fits your home and budget best.