

Boats Can Be Shipped Using Your Household Goods Entitlement

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ALEXANDRIA, Va., Oct. 24, 2000 — Did you know you can ship a boat to your next duty station at government expense as part of your household goods? You can!

All you have to do is make sure your yacht doesn't take you sailing over your authorized weight entitlement or the move could cost big bucks.

"The Military Traffic Management Command processes nearly 240 boats annually. About 40 percent of the shipments are canceled due to excess cost to the military member," said Gail Collier, a MTMC traffic management specialist.

She said service members have been entitled to ship boats since July 22, 1988. "The Navy and Army typically move more boats than the other military services," she added. The entitlement doesn't extend to DoD civilian employees, she emphasized.

There are no restrictions as to size of a boat that can be shipped, she noted. For moves within the continental United States and Alaska, a boat under 14 feet without a trailer or other small boats such as canoes, kayaks, skiffs, rowboats, dinghies or sculls of any size may be shipped as normal household goods. The owner-shipper must pay for accessorial services, such as special packing, crating and handling.

MTMC will negotiate a "one-time-only" rate with a towaway service or a commercial boat hauler to ship boats over 14 feet long or boats with trailers.

Collier cautioned that shipping boats over 14 feet long with a household goods carrier will lead to substantially higher rates that result in higher excess costs to the service member.

"Boats may be shipped as part of a member's household goods entitlement within the continental United States and to overseas areas," Collier said. "Before a member makes arrangements, he or she needs to contact the new permanent change of station to find out about any restrictions on shipping boats when moving to an overseas area. The service member is only entitled to ship up to his maximum household goods weight allowance. Anything over that must be paid for by the service member."

Domestic shipments that require a one-time-only rate will be shipped separately from the service member's household goods. International shipments should be combined with the member's household goods to minimize excess cost to the member, she said.

Shipping a boat almost always result in excess costs ranging from \$65 to \$4,100, according to Joint Personal Property Shipping Office officials.

“Service members can reduce the cost of shipping a boat by doing a ‘personally procured transportation move,’ which used to be called a Do-It-Yourself-Move, or DITY, and file for reimbursement,” Collier said.

Members who move their own boats will be paid an incentive of 80 percent of what it would have cost the government to move the same property, not to exceed the person’s maximum weight allowance.

“This program allows service members to move the boat at government expense and possibly make money for doing it,” the transportation official noted. “In all cases, members have avoided excess cost by making their own arrangements. A member who paid \$9,000 by including his boat in a government shipment could have avoided the bill completely by selecting this option. He could have arranged movement for only \$3,500 and received reimbursement.”

Small boats being shipped overseas that fit into a standard overseas container and are accepted by the carrier may be included in household goods shipments.

Service members who choose not to ship their boats are authorized to place them in nontemporary storage. But Collier pointed out that most long-term storage contractors won’t accept boats because they take too much warehouse space.

“Making their own storage arrangements may be the best alternative, although the service member will not be able to file for reimbursement until the boat is withdrawn from storage,” Collier said. The boat’s net weight counts against the service member’s household goods weight allowance. Reimbursement is limited to actual expenses, not to exceed what the government would have paid to store a like weight of household goods, she noted.

“Water storage of boats at government expense is not authorized,” Collier said.

Service members interested in shipping a boat should attend their household goods shipment counseling session armed with their boat registration and full specifics such as the dimensions, weight, make, model and year, she said.

“For example, if the member is shipping the boat on a trailer he should be able to provide the counselor with the dimensions of the boat and trailer combined,” she said. “If incorrect dimensions are provided, the carrier may refuse to pick up the boat as scheduled. Then a new rate may be required, which may delay the pickup by several days.”

Collier said the service member should contact their local transportation office to obtain an estimated cost prior to making actual shipment arrangements.

Her advice: “Plan ahead.”