

DON'T MAKE A MOVE Without All The Information You Need

Learning that a spouse is being transferred to a new location can make the “trailing spouse” feel like they’ve been hit by a train. It’s quite likely the transferred spouse is excited about the move, looking forward to a new job challenge in a new setting. The partner’s reaction, in contrast, may be one of stress, fear, even resentment.

Maybe the move will mean quitting a good job and starting again on the job-hunt trail. Certainly the move will mean leaving behind friends, memories, what’s familiar and comfortable. Then there’s the actual work of getting the house ready for sale, sorting and packing and cleaning, finding another home to buy.

Even though some spouses feel their life has been derailed, experience shows you and your family will fare best if you can reframe the move into a positive experience. The best way to do that is to get answers — lots of answers — to every critical question about the move.

This report reveals the questions you must ask to get the answers you need. Only then will you be prepared to set out on this new adventure with your best foot forward — and free from fear of being railroaded by the “Relocation Express.”

The more you know about your spouse’s transfer and the family’s move, the more confident you’ll feel the relocation will work out well. Here are nine important questions you should ask to get the answers you need.

1. Why is your spouse being asked/required to transfer? From the beginning, discuss the transfer together. Find out the good — and bad — points of making a move. You should decide together to accept or decline the transfer, keeping in mind the financial and career ramifications of the decision, as well as the pluses and minuses of making a family move.

2. What assistance does your spouse’s firm offer its transferees? Some firms are more generous than others, but nearly all offer some form of relocation assistance. Typically, firms pay to move your household goods. Many also offer home-sale assistance

and pay for your home-finding trip or trips. Find out exactly what relocation benefits your family is entitled to and plan to use them. Try to make a house-hunting trip together so your home purchase decision is made jointly. If the firm offers a lump-sum payment, you’ll get to decide how to spend it — whether for taking the whole family on an orientation visit, for moving additional household belongings, for decorating the new home, etc.

3. What is the comparative cost of living in the new location? Determine how far your housing dollar will stretch, as well as how your household income will match the expenses of living in the new town. If costs are higher, will your spouse receive a cost-of-living allowance or other financial help, such as a salary increase, a mortgage buydown or down payment assistance?

4. How strong is the job market? If you’re like many spouses, you’re currently employed and will need to find a new job in the new town. Gather job market information early. What jobs are available? What assistance, if any, will your spouse’s firm give to you in your job search? Some firms have formal employment assistance programs, which can include career counseling (generally through an employment firm), resume writing and exchange, even lost-wage compensation, re-employment allowances, or in-house employment. Others offer spouse employment assistance only when asked or on a case-by-case basis.

Sometimes the trailing spouse postpones the job search until the home and family are settled in the new location. Decide on your preferred timetable so you know whether to begin your job search before you move.

5. What does the new town offer? Find out about home styles, prices and sizes. Learn about neighborhood amenities — transportation, commuting, shopping, restaurants, parks and recreation facilities, hospitals, places of worship, libraries and museums. Your real estate agent should be able to provide you with a relocation kit about the new town tailored to your

interests. Consider getting a mail subscription to a local newspaper to get acquainted with the new community before you actually relocate.

6. How well do the schools stack up?

If you have school-age children, you’ll want to tackle the tough task of finding the right school even before selecting a home to buy. Know whether local policy permits parents to enroll their children in any school in the district or only in the neighborhood school. How do the schools’ test results compare to district, state or national standardized scores? If your child has special needs, does the school system provide special education and gifted services? And, not insignificantly, what transportation is available to get children to school? Remember, a school visit can be worth a thousand statistics.

7. Will family members’ needs be met? Perhaps you’ll require child care services, or you’ll need a living facility for an elderly relative. Maybe a family member has a physical or other disability that requires



To Purchase Call (703) 698-7750