

Moving day can be a stressful experience, especially when both your old and new homes have stairs. Whether you live in a two-story house or a walk-up apartment, navigating stairs with bulky furniture and boxes can feel like a daunting task. You might be wondering, “Should I hire movers if I have stairs at both places?” The honest answer depends on various factors like your budget, physical ability, and the complexity of your move.

In this article, we’ll explore why stairs make moves more challenging, what local movers can do for you, and how pricing works when stairs are involved. We’ll also highlight insights from reputable sources such as *OCNJ Daily*, *This Old House*, and *Thumbtack*, to help you make an informed decision.



What Counts as a Local Move?

Before diving into the stair-related challenges, it’s important to clarify what constitutes a local move, since stair fees and hourly pricing depend on the moving distance.

Generally, **local moves** are defined as relocations within a radius of **50 to 100 miles**. Moving companies base their pricing and services on this scope:

- **Within 50 miles:** Typically considered strictly local, these moves usually incur hourly charges.
- **50-100 miles:** Some companies classify this as extended local moves, often still priced hourly, but some may offer flat rate options.
- **Over 100 miles:** Usually considered long-distance moves, which follow different pricing models like weight and volume-based charges.

Local moves are frequently preferred for their simplicity, convenience, and lower cost compared to long-distance moves. If you are moving within the same city or nearby suburb, chances are you are looking at a local move.

Many apartment-to-apartment or house-to-house moves <https://ocnjdaily.com/news-from-our-partners/how-local-movers-simplify-residential-relocations-a-complete-guide-for-homeowners/> fall under this category, making it easier to get reliable hourly estimates and services customized to your specific needs.

What Do Local Movers Do?

When hiring local movers, you get a full range of services tailored to the move's time frame and difficulty. Here's an overview of the core tasks local movers undertake:

1. **Packing:** Local movers can either assist with or completely handle the packing process. This includes wrapping fragile items, disassembling furniture as needed, and securely boxing belongings.
2. **Loading:** Loading involves carefully moving your packed or loose belongings onto the truck. Movers pay close attention to the order and arrangement to avoid damage during transport.
3. **Transporting:** Driving your belongings to the new location safely and efficiently is a crucial part of the job, especially if traffic or route detours are involved.
4. **Unloading:** Unloading requires movers to carry your items into your new home, often making multiple trips depending on the haul.
5. **Furniture Protection and Assembly:** Many local movers offer basic furniture protection such as moving blankets, pads, and shrink wrap. Additionally, they can perform simple furniture disassembly and reassembly at no extra cost or a nominal fee.

The benefit of hiring movers isn't just their muscle and professional experience—they bring efficiency and protection that DIY moves frequently lack. *This Old House* recommends professional movers especially if the move involves difficult logistics like stairs, narrow doorways, or delicate antiques.

How Do Stairs Affect Moving Time and Pricing?

Stairs are one of the biggest factors that increase a move's difficulty and duration. They require extra care, strength, and time to negotiate safely.

Why Do Stairs Increase Time?

When moving furniture up or down stairs:

- The movers must take slow, deliberate steps to avoid accidents or damage.
- Each bulky or heavy item requires more than one person and may need repositioning several times to fit around landings or tight corners.

- Movers have to protect walls, banisters, and floors with pads to prevent scuffing during the carry.
- Loading and unloading take longer since movers must negotiate multiple flights instead of just ground-level carry.

Because of this added complexity, moving companies calculate stair-related labor separately, often as a **stairs fee** in their quote.

Understanding Stairs Fee Quotes

A typical *stairs fee quote* might look like:

- \$10-\$15 extra per flight of stairs, per individual labor hour
- A flat fee for all flights if the move involves many stairs on both ends
- Additional hourly charges if movers need to disassemble bulky items to get them through stairwells

Movers use this fee to compensate for the increased time, risk, and effort required. Be wary of moving quotes that don't explicitly address stairs; that risks a bait-and-switch pricing later on. Always ask "*is that in writing?*" before booking!

Do Stairs Affect Hourly Pricing?

When movers charge by the hour, any factor that slows progress affects the overall cost directly. Because stairs increase the labor time, your hourly rate is effectively stretched by the time movers spend in these challenging conditions.

That's why it's crucial to get upfront, detailed estimates reflecting:

- Number of stair flights at the origin and destination
- Condition of stairwells (tight, narrow, or wide)
- Amount and type of bulky furniture
- Whether packing or assembly is required

According to *Thumbtack*, smart customers always provide photos and details of their stairs upfront to get accurate pricing.

Apartment Move Help: Why You Should Consider Hiring Movers for Stairs

If you're moving from or to an apartment, especially a walk-up without elevator access, stairs can complicate the process considerably. Here are a few key points to consider:

- **Heavy or bulky furniture:** Sofas, beds, and appliances get tricky to maneuver around corners and up flights of stairs.
- **Building restrictions:** Apartments often have policies about elevator use, loading dock schedules, and move-in/out times, all of which movers can manage efficiently.
- **Protection of the property:** Professional movers bring floor runners and wall protectors to prevent damage to your building and belongings.
- **Time-saving:** Apartment stair moves typically double or even triple the time DIY movers spend, which can cause exhaustion or injury.

Hiring movers to handle your apartment move help means you're less likely to face damage or delays—and you can focus on settling into your new space faster.

OCNJ Daily highlights neighborhood moves that involved multiple flights of stairs, and notes how professional movers provided peace of mind and proper handling that saved both physical strain and headaches.

Checklist: Questions to Ask Before Booking Movers for Stair Moves

- Do you charge a stairs fee? If so, what is it per flight or per hour?
- How many movers will be assigned to my job to manage stairs safely?
- Do you provide furniture protection like blankets and shrink wrap?
- Can you handle basic furniture disassembly and reassembly?
- What is your hourly rate, and does it increase for moves with stairs?
- Are you licensed and insured? Can I have that in writing?
- Will you provide a firm estimate based on photos or walkthroughs of both locations?

Summary Table: How Stairs Affect Local Moving Costs and Time

Factor	Effect on Moving Process	Impact on Pricing	Number of flights of stairs	More time needed per item to safely carry
Additional stairs fee or hourly rate increase	Size and bulkiness of furniture	Slows down stair navigation and may require disassembly	Possible extra disassembly/reassembly fees	Apartment or walk-up vs. house
Often narrower staircases and limited elevator use	Increased labor time; possible building compliance fees	Packing and furniture protection services	Wraps and pads require additional prep time but minimize damage	Usually included or nominal extra cost

Final Thoughts

So, should you hire movers if you have stairs at both places? In most cases, yes. Stairs significantly increase the time and effort involved in a move, raising the risk of injury and damage when handled by inexperienced individuals. Professional local movers provide specialized skills, equipment, and experience that make stair-heavy moves smoother and safer.

Whether your move involves a few flights of stairs in a single-family home or several stories in a city apartment, getting an upfront, detailed quote that explicitly covers stairs is essential. Always ask for written estimates and don't hesitate to shop around using trusted platforms like *Thumbtack* for local options.

Remember, moving is about more than just transporting goods; it's about protecting your investment and peace of mind during a challenging transition. Hiring movers for stair-related moves is an investment in safety, speed, and professionalism.