



When You Relocate...Be Sure to Go Green!

By Nan Hayes for Caring Transitions®

With a purposeful focus on sustainable and eco-friendly business practice, Caring Transitions joins the ranks of some pretty big name companies such as Bank of America, GE, S.C. Johnson and Anheuser-Busch.

Going Green

As “going green” becomes less of a fad and more a standard for doing business, companies seek ways to promote their global initiatives and green stewardship. For some organizations elevated environmental concerns may be the result of public outcry. This is the case for companies who revise their “sustainability” practices only after their destructive ways are exposed by organizations such as [Greenpeace](#). In other instances, eco-friendly solutions just make good business sense. For example, [senior living communities](#) have now become one of the largest markets for solar power. These multi-unit homes for the elderly use solar panel installations to supplement on-grid power. This not only helps to reduce energy, but also reduces operating costs and in some cases, allows companies to take advantage of incentives offered by federal and state agencies.

At Caring Transitions, we are fortunate to have eco-friendly services built-in to our business model. By definition, when we help seniors move or when we [downsize](#), declutter or hold an [estate sale](#) for a client, we encourage them to make thoughtful decisions about the disposition of their possessions rather than to simply toss everything in a dumpster and send it off to the landfill.

Chris Seman, president of Cincinnati-based Caring Transitions, says he finds that reusable containers save time and are easier to pack. Plus, the containers can stack higher than cardboard and have built-in handles for easy carrying.

“Beyond the reusable box, there are other ways for consumers to contain costs while being a bit friendlier to the environment,” Seman says. He and others suggest paring down what is being moved - making the load lighter and using fewer packing materials. Also, many moving companies will have boxes collected from a prior move and offer them for free to customers.

“Movers can also scour online ads for folks looking to unload boxes from their own moves. Also, keep your eyes open for stores that would happily let you collect boxes after they have unpacked inventory rather than spend the time to break them down and pay to have them removed. They won't be plastic, but they will still be green,” Seman adds.

We have developed a large network of resellers, clubs and local organizations that may be interested in collecting or accepting discarded household items. We maintain these contacts so our clients don't have to. In so many instances the families and companies we support are moving due to a corporate relocation, medical or financial crisis. Clients are often distracted or overwhelmed and may not have the time and energy to locate the right outlets for all their personal possessions.



We can step in and manage the entire move process. As an added benefit, when we help clients sell some or all of their items, our work often pays for itself.

Our wide menu of services include 'green' practices such as coordinating shredding programs, packing household goods in reusable containers instead of cardboard moving boxes and using protective materials made from post-consumer recycled product. We also provide *unpack* services for the majority of our clients so we remove, reuse or recycle the moving and packing materials, keeping it out of waste bins and dumpsters.

When and where possible, we choose qualified moving partners who maximize the fuel efficiency of their fleets through maintenance and vehicle replacement programs. Many movers are starting to convert to vehicles that operate on [bio-fuel](#) and convert the less efficient retired vehicles to storage trailers.

For our estate sale services, we have developed [CT \(Caring Transitions\) Online Auctions](#) which allows us to support household good liquidation in a virtual environment. Instead of 100 cars lined up for an estate sale, with their engine idling, buyers can view and bid for items online. Our in-home electronic estimates also help reduce the amount of paper used to record and document our client's needs, as well as provide professional estimates for services.

Consumers are encouraged to be kind to the environment in many ways. You can tune up your car, recycle regularly, reduce the use of pesticide by purchasing organic foods, save energy by adjusting your thermostat and swapping old light bulbs for new energy-efficient models. You can begin using natural or plant-based cleaning products and stop taking the car when you can walk or bike to a destination. At Caring Transitions we also encourage consumers to consider "green moving" practices as they prepare for relocation:

- **Packing materials:** When consumers shred documents in preparation for a household move, they can place the paper shreds in cloth, paper or plastic bags that are already in the home. Seal the bags and use the entire package as protective packing material instead of toxic "[peanuts](#)" or bubble wrap. The bags and paper shreds can all be recycled after the move. New, eco-friendly packing materials are also available in the marketplace.
- **Boxes:** Clients can also save or find boxes for moving, but should be cautious and choose only those boxes that are clean, insect and mold-free and in good condition.
- **Emissions:** Rather than making multiple car trips to drop off donations to libraries, charities and soup kitchens, consolidate your drop-offs or locate volunteer groups who will coordinate donation pick-ups at multiple residences.
- **Hazardous waste:** In those cases where we may not be involved at the very beginning of a move, we recommend clients locate their local hazardous waste dump sites and make sure they dispose of computers, printers, motor oil, old paint and other household chemicals in the proper way. Every city or village has local waste management and EPA guidelines available to its residents.
- **Recycle:** Caring Transitions also encourages consumers to take advantage of recycle programs established by companies such as Dell (computers), Verizon (cell phones), Staples (ink cartridges) and Jiffy Lube (motor oil). The [epa.gov](#) website has a number of ideas and outlets for just about every kind of household item.
- **Other Resources:** Consumer who is preparing a house for sale may also look for "green" cleaning services and "[certified green](#)" contractors to hire for repairs and remodels.



- **Resale:** When a home or small office contains possessions of value, there may be financial benefits as well as environmental benefits to using a third party specialist such as [Caring Transitions](#) to hold your online auction, manage your estate sale or create an allocation plan.

If we were to sum up the Caring Transitions mission in one word, that word might be “Support.” We provide support for our clients in transition, support for our many national business partners, support for our highly trained employees; and in a very fundamental way, support for the environment. Our organization applauds others who engage in earth-conscious practices. If you have additional “Green Moving Tips” you would like to share with our audience, you may submit them [HERE](#) and we will be happy to publish them in a future newsletter.

About Caring Transitions

As life changes, it may become necessary to leave a familiar home and part with personal belongings in order to downsize and relocate to a smaller home or retirement community. At Caring Transitions, we help our clients understand the process, evaluate their options and make informed decisions that suit their best interests. We are committed to making each client’s experience positive by minimizing stress and maximizing results.

Visit us online at www.CaringTransitions.com.

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