

Moving a LEGO® collection

By Cody Rodrigues

Pictures by Cody Rodrigues

Sometimes we move from one house to another, we do it for many reasons, be it for a new job, a bigger house or some other reason. In my case, I'm moving because a small airport near where my family lives is buying our house. They have already destroyed the neighborhood in which I live; our house and that of our neighbor are the only ones that remain. We are moving to the town over, and in the new house I'm happy to say I'll have a room dedicated to my LEGO collection. Why am I telling you all this? Well, because I have to bring with me a quite sizable collection, one which I've never had to move before. I will be presented with many problems, I'm sure of that, but I plan to document the move so that you all can have an idea of what works well and what doesn't when it comes to moving a LEGO collection should you ever be faced with the same challenge as me.

I still have four months to move to the new house. I decided to plan my move strategy early on so as to avoid any problems later on, and in some cases have already started to move the collection in. This article is meant to be a guide describing what I've done so far, in no way should it be taken as the best way to move a collection. As some of you who have been in a similar situation already know, each person has their own way of doing things, and so I hope that you keep that in mind while reading.

Step 1

Before I began with anything else, I decided to minimize my collection's footprint. This meant breaking down sets that I didn't use in my dioramas. At the moment I am working on an arctic base and city diorama, things like Star Wars ships, castle sets and yes, even the Helicarrier were broken down. I placed them in their own zip lock bags and properly labeled them all. These bags were later placed in a box that can easily be tucked under a diorama table. Why not just have kept the sets built and place them under the diorama table? I could have done that, but I wanted to minimize the amount of built things I was bringing (less chance of something going missing), beyond that, they were doing nothing but collecting dust. I then took anything else that was on display and placed that into a container, for example my minifigure collection that I had out on display was placed into a LEGO head storage container that had previously sat empty on a shelf in my room. I went as far as to bring some of my collection to a local toy store that buys, sells and trades LEGO. I traded a lot of my larger tubs of LEGO, ones which contained pieces that I knew I would never use. Since I don't build many space MOCs I placed a lot of my space pieces in the tubs, same goes for wheels and larger pieces like BURPs. Taking this first step helped me in the long run to condense the collection and have less to bring.

Step 2

The second step was to identify how much LEGO I had and estimate the number of boxes that I'd need. While I looked at my collection that I accumulated in my 21 years all laid out on my bedroom floor I came to the realization that while I may not be rich in terms of money, I'm rich in terms of LEGO. My collection can be broken down into three distinct categories: unopened boxes (sets that I have bought but haven't opened for whatever reason), built sets and MOCs, and loose pieces (organized in their own drawer or box).





The unopened sets vary in size, this means that I would have to play tetris to try and fit the most possible into a cardboard box. The built sets and MOCs are also of different sizes. The majority of my MOCs and sets are buildings built in the modular style. Other MOCs are larger and more fragile dioramas (my large arctic base built on two 48x48 stud baseplates for example). We aren't moving very far (approximately 25 minutes) so it didn't take long to go back and forth. Therefore, the MOCs and built sets didn't require their own boxes, instead, I placed them in the trunk of my car. I put pillows down on both sides to prevent too much damage. At the time of planning I knew that the drive would be a lot of uphill and downhill, I was sure things would still break (the beauty of the toy is that it can be put back together). With the loose pieces I've spent countless hours separating them into their own drawers (I use stack-on drawers). The only issue in moving these drawers is that there is no backing to them, so even if you tip it slightly, pieces may fall out. The unit was designed to stay vertical at all times. All that said, I needed to be careful not to tip it in either direction. To move these units I needed to find a cardboard box that fit them perfectly, the cardboard box in which the Ghostbusters Headquarters set was sent in fits 3 stack-on units quite snugly. The larger pieces like 2x4 bricks and larger plates are placed in their own individual tub of similar pieces. These were easier to bring (despite their weight), the only thing I had to do was put them in the car and off I went. I suppose that I can add another category of things like LEGO related books, movies, videogames and accessories, but these didn't present me with any problem.

At the time of looking at all the different parts of my collection and seeing that not everything needed to be put in a box, I estimated that I'd need between 8-10 cardboard boxes (for the unopened sets, some MOCs, and for the storage units). Thanks to working in a LEGO® store, I was able to reuse the boxes we receive from shipping.

Step 3

The next step was to get to work. This meant putting everything into the boxes and getting everything together in one place so as to make the move easier. Seeing it all in one place I came to the realization that I may have too much LEGO. I don't know why I bought some many sets from so many different themes. The good news is that lately I have been buying only things that work well in my LEGO city and another good piece of news is that the new LEGO room is spacious.

While putting all the unopened sets together in larger boxes I found it extremely useful to write on the box everything that was going in, especially since they will probably stay in the box at the new house. Once everything was put into its own cardboard box the next step was to put everything in the car. For the unopened sets I made two separate trips, each time trying to maximize all the dead space between the boxes and seats in an attempt to bring as much as possible in one trip. The MOCs were a little more difficult. My modular style buildings were taken apart floor by floor and each floor was wrapped in bubble wrap (excessive, perhaps). Like I stated before, I put down pillows so that if things were to slide, the impact wouldn't be so hard. Anyone who has participated in an AFOL event probably knows the best way to transport their pieces, and each person has their own method. My method, I'd say worked well considering I only found a few pieces that fell off of my MOCs or built sets. The smaller pieces organized and placed in the storage units were easy to move once they were in the larger cardboard box. Had they not fitted tightly in that cardboard box I'm sure I would have found a bunch of loose pieces at the bottom of the box. The other larger pieces that were in their own containers didn't present me with any problems either. In total I made 7 trips back and forth to move the collection, a total of 1.5 tanks of gas. Of course, I could have left this work to the professional movers who within a few days are going to be moving all of our furniture and other items, but come on, it's a LEGO collection, I can't trust anyone else to move it.

Now that the hard part is over, the fun part is soon to begin. This involves getting my new LEGO room together and placing everything where it belongs. At the moment, almost everything I bought is on the floor. In the next addition I will present you with my progress and together we'll construct a LEGO room.

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