EDUCATION

U Haul Truck Size Guide

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Introduction: Finding the Right U-Haul Truck for Your Move

Planning a move can be one of the most stressful life events, but choosing the right moving truck doesn't have to be. Whether you are relocating across town or across the country, selecting the correct vehicle size is critical to ensuring a smooth, efficient, and cost-effective move. U-Haul is one of the most trusted names in the moving industry, offering a range of trucks designed to accommodate everything from a single room of furniture to an entire five-bedroom house. This comprehensive **U Haul Truck Size Guide** will walk you through every option available, helping you match your belongings to the perfect truck while avoiding common pitfalls like overpacking, underutilizing space, or paying for more capacity than you truly need.

Before you book your rental, it is essential to understand that choosing the right size is not just about squeezing everything in. It is about safety, maneuverability, and protecting your possessions. A truck that is too small may require multiple trips or leave you scrambling to fit items, while a truck that is too large can be difficult to drive in tight urban areas and may result in unnecessary fuel costs. By the end of this guide, you will have a clear understanding of each U-Haul truck size, what they can hold, and how to make an informed decision based on your unique moving needs.

Overview of U-Haul Truck Sizes

U-Haul offers four primary truck sizes for residential moves: the 9-foot cargo van, the 10-foot truck, the 15-foot truck, the 17-foot truck, and the 26-foot truck. Each size is designed with specific floor plans, weight capacities, and loading considerations. Additionally, U-Haul provides pickup trucks and trailers, but for the purpose of this article, we will focus on the standard moving truck lineup that covers the vast majority of household moves.

It is worth noting that U-Haul's truck sizes are measured by the length of the cargo box, not the overall vehicle length. This means the actual usable space is slightly less than the full length due to the cab design, but the company's official dimensions are reliable for planning purposes. Below, we break down each truck size in detail so you can visualize exactly how much you can bring.

1. The 9-Foot Cargo Van

The smallest option in the U-Haul fleet is the 9-foot cargo van. This is not a traditional box truck but rather a van with a large enclosed cargo area. It is ideal for small moves, such as transporting items from a studio apartment, a dorm room, or for moving a few large pieces of furniture. The cargo van is also an excellent choice for picking up large items like appliances or mattresses from a store.

Key specifications:

- Interior length: 9 feet 11 inches
- Interior width: 5 feet 6 inches
- Interior height: 4 feet 5 inches
- Total cargo volume: 245 cubic feet
- Payload capacity: Approximately 2,500 pounds
- Gas mileage: Around 18 miles per gallon

This van is easy to drive and park, making it a great choice for urban moves where street parking is tight. However, the low interior height means you cannot stand upright inside, and tall items like bookshelves or armoires may not fit. It is best suited for boxes, suitcases, small furniture, and items that can be stacked efficiently.

2. The 10-Foot Truck

The 10-foot truck is the smallest traditional box truck offered by U-Haul. It provides a significant step up in space compared to the cargo van and is perfect for moving a one-bedroom apartment or a small two-bedroom home. The truck features a high ceiling that allows you to stand and walk, making loading and unloading much easier on your back.

Key specifications:

- Interior length: 10 feet
- Interior width: 6 feet 4 inches
- Interior height: 6 feet 9 inches
- Total cargo volume: 429 cubic feet
- Payload capacity: Approximately 2,800 pounds
- Gas mileage: Around 14 miles per gallon

The 10-foot truck can comfortably hold the contents of a one-bedroom apartment, including a queen-sized bed, a sofa, a dining table, a desk, a dresser, and several boxes. Because the floor is lower to the ground than larger trucks, it is also easier to load heavy items. This size is often recommended for smaller moves because it balances capacity with drivability.

3. The 15-Foot Truck

The 15-foot truck is one of the most popular sizes for U-Haul customers. It is designed to handle the contents of a two-bedroom apartment or a small two-bedroom house. This truck offers substantially more room than the 10-foot version, making it a versatile choice for families with moderate furniture and belongings.

Key specifications:

- Interior length: 15 feet
- Interior width: 7 feet 8 inches
- Interior height: 7 feet 2 inches
- Total cargo volume: 881 cubic feet
- Payload capacity: Approximately 6,300 pounds
- Gas mileage: Around 10 miles per gallon

This truck can hold everything from a two-bedroom home, including a king-sized bed, a full living room set, a dining room set, and multiple large appliances. It has a larger floor area than the 10-foot model, allowing you to arrange furniture side by side. The interior height is generous enough to accommodate tall furniture like grandfather clocks or armoires. Additionally, the 15-foot truck often comes equipped with a back ramp, which makes loading heavy items much easier.

4. The 17-Foot Truck

The 17-foot truck is a newer addition to the U-Haul fleet and fills the gap between the 15-foot and the 26-foot models. It is designed for moving the contents of a three-bedroom apartment or a small three-bedroom home. This truck offers a bit more length than the 15-foot but maintains a manageable size for driving in suburban neighborhoods.

Key specifications:

- Interior length: 17 feet
- Interior width: 7 feet 8 inches
- Interior height: 7 feet 2 inches
- Total cargo volume: 999 cubic feet
- Payload capacity: Approximately 5,700 pounds
- Gas mileage: Around 10 miles per gallon

With nearly 1,000 cubic feet of space, this truck can handle the contents of a three-bedroom home comfortably. The extra two feet compared to the 15-foot model means you can fit additional boxes or slightly larger furniture. It is a good compromise for those who need more space but are intimidated by driving the massive 26-foot truck. Like the 15-foot, it features a loading ramp and tie-down hooks.

5. The 26-Foot Truck

The 26-foot truck is U-Haul's largest moving truck and is designed for moving four-bedroom homes, large houses, or for commercial moving jobs. This is a substantial vehicle that requires confidence and experience to drive safely. If you are moving a large household, this truck can often handle everything in a single trip, which can save time and reduce the complexity of your move.

Key specifications:

- Interior length: 26 feet
- Interior width: 8 feet 2 inches
- Interior height: 8 feet 3 inches
- Total cargo volume: 1,786 cubic feet
- Payload capacity: Approximately 10,000 pounds
- Gas mileage: Around 8 miles per gallon

The 26-foot truck offers the most space in the U-Haul fleet. It has a wide body that allows for two rows of furniture side by side, and the tall interior means you can stack boxes high. This truck is also suitable for moving large items like grand pianos, extensive workshop equipment, or bulky office furniture. However, driving this truck requires careful planning, especially when navigating low bridges, narrow streets, or parking lots. U-Haul typically requires drivers to be at least 18 years old and to have a valid driver's license, though additional requirements may apply in some states.

How to Choose the Right U-Haul Truck Size

Selecting the right truck size is a matter of assessing the volume and weight of your belongings. A good rule of thumb is to choose a truck that offers about 20 to 30 percent more space than you think you need. This extra room allows for easier packing, reduces the risk of overloading, and gives you space to spread out items to prevent damage.

Here is a practical guide based on home size:

- Studio or dorm room: 9-foot cargo van or 10-foot truck
- One-bedroom apartment: 10-foot truck
- Two-bedroom apartment or house: 15-foot truck
- Three-bedroom house: 17-foot truck
- Four-bedroom house or larger: 26-foot truck

It is also important to consider the weight of your items. U-Haul trucks have payload limits that should not be exceeded. Heavier items like furniture, appliances, and boxes of books can quickly add up. If you are moving heavy items such as a library of books, a large collection of tools, or marble furniture, you may need a larger truck to distribute the weight properly, even if the volume seems manageable in a smaller truck.

Additional Factors to Consider

Driving experience: If you are not comfortable driving large vehicles, consider renting a smaller truck even if it means making two trips. The 26-foot truck requires significant skill to maneuver, especially in cities with tight streets and low overpasses.

Distance of the move: For long-distance moves, fuel efficiency becomes a major consideration. Smaller trucks get better gas mileage, which can save you hundreds of dollars on a cross-country trip. However, if a smaller truck means multiple trips, the cost and time may outweigh the fuel savings.

Parking and access: Before you rent, think about where you will park the truck at both your current and new home. A 26-foot truck may not fit in some residential driveways or parking garages. Measure the height and width of any gates, overhangs, or other obstacles.

Loading ramp: Most U-Haul trucks come with a loading ramp. The 10-foot truck uses a small ramp, while the 15-foot, 17-foot, and 26-foot trucks have larger ramps. If you are moving heavy items, a ramp is essential for safety and ease of loading.

Tips for Efficiently Packing Your U-Haul Truck

Once you have chosen the right truck size, the next step is to pack it wisely. Proper loading can prevent damage, reduce the number of trips, and make unloading easier.

1. Heavy items first: Place the heaviest items at the front of the truck, near the cab. This improves stability and handling. Appliances, furniture, and heavy boxes should be loaded before lighter items.
2. Distribute weight evenly: Balance the load from side to side to prevent the truck from leaning. Uneven loading can make the truck harder to control.
3. Use tie-downs: U-Haul trucks come with tie-down tracks on the walls. Use ropes or straps to secure furniture and tall items so they do not shift during transit.
4. Stack boxes carefully: Place heavier boxes on the bottom and lighter boxes on top. Avoid stacking boxes too high near the ramp area, as they may fall when you open the doors.

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