

Removalist interview questions

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What to expect

Removalist interviews are practical and team focused. Employers want to know you can lift safely all day, treat a stranger's home like your own, and keep a crew on schedule without cutting corners, so expect the conversation to move quickly from your background to how you would actually do the job.

- **Practical or trial shift:** A day or half day alongside an experienced crew, where they watch your lifting technique, pace, trolley use and how you speak to the client.
- **Process and technical:** How you pack, wrap, stack, restrain and unload a truck, and how you plan a load around weight and access.
- **Safety and compliance:** Manual handling, pre-start checks, load restraint and what you do when something looks unsafe or outside the job.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of damage, difficult access, a job running late, or a client under pressure on moving day.
- **Client-facing:** How you explain delays, changes and extra work to a customer without escalating the situation.
- **Driving and licence checks:** Licence class, driving history, and for truck-based roles a short drive assessment or review of your record.

Most candidates start with a short phone screen with an operations coordinator or dispatcher, covering availability, licence class, physical capacity and whether you can work early starts and interstate runs. That is usually followed by a face-to-face interview at the branch with a manager or leading hand, then a paid trial shift or practical assessment with a crew. Truck-based roles normally include a drive assessment and a licence and driving record check. Most employers finish with referee checks and a national police check, since removalists work inside private homes and commercial premises.

1. Walk me through how you would load a removal truck for a three-bedroom house move.

Why they ask

This is the core technical question for the role. It shows whether you understand weight distribution, protection of goods and the order of work, not just how strong you are.

How to structure your answer

Give a walk-through in sequence. Cover the pre-load survey, what goes in first and why, how the weight sits over the axles, how fragile and upholstered items are treated, and how the load is restrained before the doors close.

Example answer

"First I would do a walk-through with the client to confirm what is going and what is staying, then check access at both ends, including stairs, lifts and parking. On the truck I load heavy items first, fridges, washing machines, wardrobes and the like, placed over the axles and against the headboard, keeping weight low and even. Boxes go on top in layers with the heaviest at the bottom, and anything fragile stays out of the crush zone. Mattresses and lounges go against the walls, wrapped in blankets. I fill the gaps so nothing can shift, then run straps across at each tie point and check them before the doors close. At delivery I unload in reverse so the client's essentials come off first and the truck is emptied in one pass."

2. Tell me about a time you damaged or nearly damaged a client's item. What did you do about it?

Why they ask

Damage happens in this job. Employers are testing honesty and process, not looking for someone with a perfect record, and they want to know you would rather flag a problem early than hide it.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Set the scene briefly, describe what you were doing and what went wrong, then spend most of the answer on what you did immediately and what you changed afterwards.

Example answer

"On an office move I was carrying a glass-top desk down a corridor and clipped the edge on a doorframe. I stopped, told the client and my supervisor straight away, photographed the chip and logged it on the condition report before we loaded anything else. The client appreciated that we flagged it rather than letting them find it at the other end, and we wrapped the desk with corner protectors and a blanket for the trip. After that I started doing a doorway check on every oversized item before lifting, and I have not had a similar knock since."

3. You arrive at a delivery and the new apartment has a narrow stairwell and no lift booking. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

Access problems are routine in this work. The interviewer wants to see whether you assess before you lift, communicate with the client, and keep the office informed rather than improvising silently.

How to structure your answer

Show judgement under pressure: assess the situation, communicate early, lay out realistic options, get approval before anything costs money, and document what happened.

Example answer

"I would stop and look at the actual access before anything comes off the truck. If the stairwell is genuinely too tight for a sofa, I would measure the item and the stairwell, then talk to the client about options: a hoist over the balcony, removing a door or a window frame with their permission, or temporary storage while we work something out. I would phone the office so the dispatcher knows the job is running long and can adjust the schedule. If we need a hoist, I would get the client's approval before booking it and note it on the paperwork. Keeping the client informed is the main thing, because a delay is easier to accept when they know what is happening and why."

4. How do you look after your body across a long day of lifting?

Why they ask

Removal work is physically demanding and a back injury takes a worker off the road for weeks. This question separates people who have a routine from people who rely on youth and luck.

How to structure your answer

Answer with concrete habits in order: preparation, technique, equipment, pacing, and what you do when something starts to hurt.

Example answer

"I warm up before the first lift and use my legs, keep the load close and avoid twisting, which is where most backs go. I use the furniture trolley and lifting straps for anything heavy or awkward, and I would rather make two trips than one bad lift. On big days I rotate between loading, wrapping and driving where the crew leader can arrange it, and I drink water and eat properly rather than pushing through. If something hurts, I say so early and get it looked at, because a niggling back on a Friday can put you off work for a fortnight."

5. Describe a time you dealt with a stressed or unhappy client on moving day.

Why they ask

Removalists are the face of the business on the most stressful day of a client's year. The interviewer is listening for how you de-escalate and what you actually did to help.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, but keep the situation short and put the weight on your actions and the outcome. Include what you said to the client and what you escalated to your supervisor.

Example answer

"A client on a house move found out at 7am that settlement had been delayed and she was close to tears in the hallway. I stopped loading and sat with her for a minute to find out what she actually needed, then explained clearly what was within our control and what was not. I rang the office and arranged to hold her goods in storage overnight, which meant we could still empty the house on time. I kept her updated by phone during the day and we delivered the next morning. She wrote to the branch afterwards to thank the crew, and I took from it that people mostly want to know someone is handling it."

6. What do you do if a client asks you to move something you think is unsafe or outside the job?

Why they ask

This probes compliance and backbone. Employers need someone who can say no politely, because unsafe lifts and unpaid extras both cost the business.

How to structure your answer

Show a clear decision rule: stop, assess, explain the risk or the scope, offer a safe alternative, and refer anything that changes the job back to the office.

Example answer

"I would stop and explain why, without making the client feel silly. If it is a weight or access issue, I would suggest a safe alternative, such as using a hoist, removing a door, or getting a second pair of hands. If it is extra work outside the quote, I would say that I am happy to do it but the office needs to approve it first, and I would call the dispatcher from the driveway so the client gets an answer on the spot rather than waiting. It is easier to have that conversation at the start than after something goes wrong or the crew is stuck on site for an extra two hours."