

The definitive consumer guide to choosing a storage facility

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store-itTM
SELF STORAGE - WITH CARE

How to avoid the 5 biggest mistakes

**The 7 essential questions
to ask a furniture storage company**

**The 7 tough questions
to ask a self storage facility**

This guide has been produced to help you choose a storage facility to ensure your goods are kept safe, secure and in the best possible condition.

In this guide you'll learn:

1. Your storage options
2. 5 costly storage myths
3. 7 common errors when choosing a storage facility
4. 7 things furniture removal companies don't want you to know when they store your goods
5. 4 steps to choosing a good storage partner
6. 7 questions to ask a furniture removal/storage business or self storage facility

Your storage options

Self storage

Typically, self storage is where you hire a storage unit in a specialist facility. Only you should have the key to your storage unit.

You can either pack the storage unit yourself or you can get a moving company to move and pack your goods for you.

You can come and go at your convenience, depending on the hours of the facility.

Above all, you should have easy access to your goods without the security of your valuables being compromised.

Storing your goods with a furniture removal company

Many furniture removal companies offer to store your goods as an add-on service.

Your possessions may be stored in a number of ways: in shipping containers, wooden crates and even on the open floor.

If stored in a wooden crate, access to your goods may be by appointment only, particularly if they are stacked under or high up on top of other crates.

Shipping container storage

Shipping containers can be leased on a short-term basis and dropped off at your home or business for you to load.

Containers can be left on site for you or taken to a storage depot. They may be stored inside or outside.

Ventilation is a major consideration for shipping containers left outside. They can sweat and cause damage to your goods.

If the shipping container is stored outside, it should be an insulated refrigerated shipping container.

If your goods are stored in a shipping container in a warehouse, then a basic container will do the job.

Storing with friends or relatives

A cost effective option is storing with friends or family. But it's not necessarily the best option.

Where your goods are stored is a major consideration e.g. in the garage, in the basement under the house, or in the attic. You may even let family or friends use your goods.

Consider if you want your goods to be in the same condition you left them. Satisfy yourself by getting answers to these basic questions: Is the space dry? What if your friend's/family's situation changes and they can't store your possessions any more? Who will move them safely and carefully into alternative storage? What if you end up staying away longer than anticipated? Can you ask for the antique table back, which is now a central part of their living room?

5 costly storage myths

When you're storing your valuable possessions, you need to be satisfied your goods are in safe, secure hands ensuring peace of mind.

1. All storage facilities offer secure storage

Security of your goods is vital. There are a number of things to think about when considering security, including where your goods are stored, who has access to them, and who packs your goods into storage.

Visit the storage facility and inspect the premises and security systems. Find out:

- Is the facility alarmed and monitored 24/7?
- Is there an electric fence around the perimeter?
- Are there random guard patrols after hours?
- Are there CCTV cameras?
- Are your goods stored in an individually alarmed and monitored area?
- Are there weekly checks to see if your goods have been tampered with?
- Are their staff subject to Police vetting - particularly temporary staff in the busy season?
- Can their staff access your goods?

2. All storage facilities provide a good service

There are many different storage options, all providing varying degrees of cost, service and quality.

An appealing website doesn't always translate to good service or quality facilities.

Bust this myth by visiting the storage facility yourself, and ask to see testimonials from satisfied clients.

3. All storage facilities offer dry storage

You don't want to come back from a long holiday or finish a renovation project to find your new lounge suite or personal irreplaceable family treasures damaged by mould or water.

You may have saved \$100 in storage fees by choosing a cheaper option, but cost yourself thousands of dollars in damaged goods... and heartache.

- Query the location of the facility and the drainage surrounding it. Is it near a river? Has the river flooded the facility before? Is it near the coast? What effect does sea spray have on the goods stored?
- What ventilation systems are in place?
- What dryness guarantee do they offer?

Bust the myth by visiting the storage facility, check the location and ask if they have a dryness guarantee.

4. All storage facilities look after your needs

Some companies will sell you the storage space they have available. But this may not be the best solution for you. Make sure you're dealing with a professional storage company which has your best interests at heart.

- Be satisfied you're not paying for space you don't need. Is the storage business selling you the space they have available or the most appropriate space for your needs?
- Check if you can change the size of your space during your stay, and what costs are associated with this.

5. All storage facilities are insurance accredited

Satisfy yourself that if something happens to your goods while in storage, they will be covered by insurance and you'll be adequately compensated. Find out:

- The facility's insurance accreditation rating (if any) and which company accredited them. Insurance companies won't necessarily approve/ accredit all storage businesses.
- If your goods will be insured while in storage.
- If you're storing part of your household, check if your own insurance provider will cover your goods while in storage.

7 common errors when choosing a storage facility

1. Hiring a storage company to store your goods without viewing the area and facilities. Always check the storage or furniture company's facilities to find out exactly where your goods are going to be stored.
2. Hiring a cheap storage company. It's cheap for a reason! The price may be attractive but storage companies offering low prices will usually cut corners.
3. Storing with a facility where access to your goods is limited. Find out when and how you can access your goods and if there are any charges associated with this.
4. Storing where there are no restrictions on the types of goods stored. You don't want your valuable property put at risk by other clients' goods which may be flammable (e.g. gas cylinders, petrol cans, paint), dangerous, hazardous or perishable goods.
5. Lack of fire detection systems. Check if the storage company has a modern (and working) fire detection system.
6. Unauthorised access to your goods by staff or other customers. Can the staff of the storage company access your goods? Find out if your goods could get mixed up with any one else's or if you're sharing the space with others.
7. Choosing a non-specialist storage company. 'Fly-by-night' removal companies offer storage as a sideline to their core moving business. Storage isn't their strength. Trust your instinct. If you don't feel happy about doing business with the company, and you're not confident your possessions are in the best possible hands, then consider another option.

7 things furniture removal companies don't want you to know when they store your goods

1. If you're storing your goods with a furniture removal company for a short time, some don't lock your goods away securely. They store your possessions loose on the floor with a plastic cover over them. This means any of their staff can access your goods. It's not uncommon for your goods to be mixed up with another client's goods on the floor and be delivered to the wrong address.
2. Security, or lack of it, is a furniture removal storage company's biggest issue. Their staff can access your goods in many situations. All their staff may not be Police checked and, in the busy months, they hire temporary staff to cope with the workload, further compromising security.
3. In many cases your goods are loaded and securely closed into a "lift van" – a large wooden crate or box. These lift vans are aptly named, as they're frequently lifted and moved around the storage area.

In some cases the lift vans are stacked six deep and high into the air. This often means moving a large number of lift vans to get to your one, increasing the chance of damaging your goods. Lift vans are moved by forklifts. If the driver isn't careful your goods can be damaged when the forks penetrate the bottom of your crate.
4. You often can't access your goods without advance notice. If you need quick access to an important item, you may have to give the storage company 48 hours notice. You also may not be able to unload the item yourself. You'll have to advise the company of the item you want and they will retrieve it for you... and most likely charge you for this service.
5. Some furniture removal companies store your goods in shipping containers. If the shipping container is outside, the potential for damage to your goods is high, because not all shipping containers are water tight. If the container isn't insulated or well-ventilated, they sweat, which harms your possessions.
6. If your goods are stored in shipping containers outside, security is a major consideration. Containers aren't alarmed and monitored, and access to your goods can go undetected.
7. If your goods don't completely fill a shipping container or lift van, your goods may share the space with someone else's goods. You don't want your items mixed up with others.

Four steps to choosing a good storage partner

Make sure the storage company you choose:

1. Has a proven track record

Check out the company's facilities... and client testimonials to see what other customers think of them. Ask staff how long the facility has been in business and what sets them apart from their competitors.

2. Is professional and helpful

Ask them for advice to suit your storage needs. They should be storage professionals and provide you with answers to help inform your decision.

3. Is priced appropriately

Cost is always a consideration in any purchase, but it may not be a good idea to select a storage company based solely on price. Companies offering low prices may be cutting corners and you may end up with a storage solution that costs you more in the long run.

4. Meets your needs, including

- a. easy, flexible and convenient access to your goods
- b. privacy and security of your goods
- c. guaranteeing your goods will come out of storage in the same state you put them in
- d. providing you with peace of mind.

Many of your questions or concerns should be addressed by good communication.

If you feel at all uneasy, don't make a quick decision, wait and find the right storage company for you.

For such an important and often substantial investment, it will be worth it in the long run.

7 questions to ask a furniture removal/storage business or self storage facility

Use this checklist when making a decision about whether to store at a self storage facility or furniture removal business.

Self storage facility 7 point checklist:

1. Security

- a. What security systems are in place?
- b. Can any one else get access to my goods?
- c. Are my goods in a separate, alarmed unit?
- d. What happens if the alarm is triggered? Is it monitored and who responds to it?
- e. Do you have night guard patrols?

2. Dryness

- a. Do you offer a dryness guarantee?
- b. What happens if the roof leaks and my goods are damaged?
- c. What do you do to control dampness in your facility?
- d. What measures do you take to control flooding?
- e. Do you have any temperature control features?

3. Access

- a. What hours can I access my goods?
- b. How do I get access to my goods?
- c. Can family get access, if I'm out of town?

4. Rodent control

- a. What rodent control measures do you take?
- b. Do you have rodent bait stations in every unit to give me added protection?

5. Insurance

- a. Are you an insurance accredited facility?
- b. Will my insurance company cover the goods while stored in your facility?

6. Location of the storage units and style of the facility

- a. Is your facility a drive up garage style, or are all units located inside a large warehouse/ building?
- b. If it is a garage style facility, what protects my goods from the weather on a windy/rainy day?
- c. What undercover protection do you offer for unloading on a rainy day, so my goods aren't loaded wet into the facility?
- d. Are your floors exposed concrete or painted, ensuring your units are visibly clean?

7. Professional Membership

Are you a member of the Australasian Self Storage Association and do you abide by its code of ethics?

Furniture removal/storage business 7 point checklist:

1. Where are my goods stored?

- a. Who can access my goods?
- b. Do I share the space with someone else or are my goods completely separate, removing the chance of mixing up my goods with others.

2. What are my goods stored in?

- a. In a shipping container: Is it inside or outside? If it's outside, is it a refrigerated insulated container to prevent damage from sweating due to poor ventilation?
- b. In a wooden crate: How often is the crate shifted for other people to get to their crate?
- c. On the open floor: How are my goods separated from others?

3. Privacy and security of my goods

- a. Who has access to the area where my goods are stored?
- b. Who packs my goods away? Can they be trusted?

4. Dryness

- a. Do you offer a dryness guarantee?
- b. What happens if my goods are damaged by water?
- c. How do you control dampness in your storage area?

5. Access

- a. How do I get access to my goods and what is the process?
- b. Can family/friends get access to my goods if I'm out of town?
- c. Is there a cost for accessing my goods?

6. Rodent control

What rodent control measures do you take to prevent damage?

7. Insurance

What insurance cover do I need and what are the costs?

You have the power

The vast majority of people making a storage decision don't have all the facts as outlined in the guide.

Use this information to make an informed decision about where to store your valuable possessions.

Next step

If you'd like a FREE, 10 minute self-storage consultation, call Store-it on 04 473 4800 or 0508 STOREIT or 0508 786 734.

Alternatively, email us at enquiries@store-it.co.nz

and then visit us at

Lower Tyers Rd,

Ngauranga Gorge,

Wellington

(located just behind Online Security).

A bit about Store-it

Store-it is a Wellington-based, family-run storage facility established in 2003 by Director, Mike Price.

Store-it has quickly set the benchmark for high-quality storage facilities and customer service. Mike recognises a professional storage solution is nothing less than a focus on people, their property and their individual storage needs.

As a result, Store-it was awarded Facility of the Year 2006 and runner up for the Manager of the Year 2006 – as judged by the Self Storage Association of Australasia in October 2006.

In 2008, Mike was appointed a Board member of the Self Storage Association of Australasia.

You can contact a member of the Store-it team on **04 473 4800**, or email - **enquiries@store-it.co.nz** visit **www.store-it.co.nz**



What Store-its' customers are saying about them:

“ Your service is excellent! Your facilities are excellent! You are all so friendly and helpful and nothing is ever a problem, please don't change! ”

Michelle Rybinski

“ I think the facilities at store it were great and the staff very friendly. It surpasses both of the other storage facilities I have used in Wellington in the past. ”

Rebecca Sinclair

“ I have appreciated your loyalty, assistance and helpfulness and the unit which I rented proved to be very safe and secure, as well as the premises being very clean and tidy. I will happily be referring you on to friends, colleagues etc. Thank you. ”

Vanessa Johns

“ I think the place is great, I like the easy access when you want it, that's very important, and the security of the place and the cleanliness. Thanks. ”

Riripeti Reedy

“ The entire customer experience with Store-it has been exceptional. You are to be commended for all facets of your business. There's not much else to say, yours is a well managed, highly professional operation that is a pleasure to do business with. ”

Lindsay W

“ Outstanding business - would use again and will recommend to my friends and associates. ”

Bruce Carey

“ I think you offer the best services and facilities in Wellington. I am very happy with all the services received from this great business. ”

Anne Duncan

“ I was very impressed with the service I received from Store-It. I felt very confident that my belongings were in a clean, dry and secure environment. I would definitely use Store-It again if the need arises, and would definitely recommend Store-it to others. Thank you. ”

Sandy Boyle

“ Outstanding service, I couldn't be happier with my store-it experience. ”

Craig Redmond

“ The facilities and staff have all been outstanding. Still cannot believe how lovely and dry the unit was and how unaffected our belongings have been after 8 months in storage. Thanks!! ”

Trudy Morrison

“ Thank you for a great storage experience. We always felt our stuff was very safe and secure and was very easy to access. Staff were very friendly and helpful. We would definitely store with you again and will happily recommend Store-it to others. ”

Donela Keith

