

Office Relocation Checklist

The practical timeline, key dependencies and tasks to complete — from lease to occupation.

An office relocation in Cape Town can take anywhere from **three months to a year or more**, depending on the size of the business, the condition of the new premises and the amount of work required.

~3 mo

UNDER 10 STAFF

~6 mo

10–50 STAFF

12 mo+

50+ STAFF

These are planning guidelines, not statutory timelines. The two issues most likely to determine your move date are **municipal approvals and compliance** and **fibre, telecoms and IT provisioning**. Start both workstreams as soon as the lease is close to being agreed — most other relocation tasks can be scheduled around them.

This checklist is a planning guide, not legal advice. Your exact requirements will depend on the building, lease, intended use and scope of work.

STAGE 01

Before signing the lease

The biggest relocation mistakes are often made before the lease is signed.

Confirm the space is suitable

- ☐ Confirm your current headcount and expected growth.
- ☐ Work out the approximate area you need.
- ☐ Check whether the building's zoning permits your intended use.
- ☐ Confirm whether the premises are handed over as shell and core, CAT A, white box or already fitted.
- ☐ Inspect the existing HVAC, electrical supply and data infrastructure.
- ☐ Ask the landlord for current base-building and as-built drawings.
- ☐ Confirm loading-bay access, lift capacity, parking and building delivery rules.
- ☐ Check whether the building has after-hours work restrictions.

WATCH OUT

If the intended use does not match the current zoning, you may need consent use, rezoning or a departure before the fit-out can proceed. Resolve this before committing to the space.

Review the lease

Confirm:

- ☐ Lease term and escalation
- ☐ Renewal options
- ☐ Tenant installation allowance
- ☐ Landlord approval requirements
- ☐ Fit-out access dates
- ☐ Building rules and working hours
- ☐ Signage rights
- ☐ Reinstatement obligations
- ☐ Notice period on your current premises

COMMONLY UNDERBUDGETED

Reinstatement — returning the old office to its required condition — is commonly underbudgeted. Get an estimate before giving notice.

Also prepare the company documents likely to be requested during FICA and leasing checks, including registration documents, director identification and proof of address.

PHASE 1

Plan the relocation

Once the space is suitable and the lease is progressing, appoint someone to own the relocation programme. Create a simple project plan covering:

- ◆ Target occupation date
- ◆ Lease dates
- ◆ Design and approval dates
- ◆ Construction period
- ◆ IT installation
- ◆ Furniture delivery
- ◆ Physical move
- ◆ Old-office reinstatement
- ◆ Staff and client communication

Assign every major task to a named person. A relocation becomes difficult when responsibilities are shared but ownership is unclear.

APPOINT EARLY

If building work or a change of use is involved, appoint a **SACAP-registered professional** early. Their availability and the approval process may determine when design and construction can begin.

PHASE 2

Design and approvals

Your professional team should confirm which approvals apply to the project. Depending on the scope, you may need to address:

- ◆ Building plan approval
- ◆ Change-of-use requirements
- ◆ Fire compliance
- ◆ Accessibility
- ◆ Energy-efficiency requirements
- ◆ Heritage approvals
- ◆ Occupational health and safety
- ◆ Construction work permits or notifications
- ◆ Landlord and building-management approvals

City of Cape Town plan submissions are subject to statutory processing periods once a complete application has been lodged. Incomplete submissions, technical comments and resubmissions can extend the programme, so include a buffer.

HERITAGE CHECK

If the building or part of it is more than 60 years old, check whether Heritage Western Cape approval is required before altering the structure or its character.

Do not assume that a lack of visible building work means approvals are unnecessary. A change of use or a change to the building's occupancy conditions can still trigger requirements.

Approval checklist

- ☐ Confirm the intended use and zoning.
- ☐ Appoint the required professional team.
- ☐ Obtain accurate base-building drawings.
- ☐ Complete the space plan and services design.
- ☐ Confirm fire and accessibility requirements.
- ☐ Check heritage status and building age.
- ☐ Confirm OHS responsibilities.
- ☐ Obtain landlord approval.
- ☐ Submit building plans where required.
- ☐ Allow time for comments and resubmissions.
- ☐ Confirm whether a construction work permit or notification is needed.

PHASE 3

Procurement and construction

Once the scope is sufficiently developed:

- ☐ Obtain comparable quotations.
- ☐ Confirm exactly what each quotation includes and excludes.
- ☐ Separate construction, furniture, IT, AV and professional fees where appropriate.
- ☐ Allow for contingency.
- ☐ Confirm the construction programme.
- ☐ Appoint the principal contractor.
- ☐ Put the required health and safety documentation in place.
- ☐ Confirm site access, delivery rules and working hours.
- ☐ Order long-lead items early.
- ☐ Coordinate furniture, signage, security and access control with the build.

BUILD TO PLAN

Build to the approved plans. If changes are required during construction, refer them to the professional team before instructing the contractor. Unrecorded changes can create problems during inspection and sign-off.

PHASE 4

IT and telecommunications

IT is one of the most common causes of a delayed office move because it depends on external providers and installation queues. **Start this workstream early.**

- ☐ Confirm fibre or leased-line availability at the exact building address.
- ☐ Order the connection as soon as the lease is close to being signed.
- ☐ Confirm the installation date in writing.
- ☐ Plan structured cabling and Wi-Fi as part of the office design.
- ☐ Confirm server-room, comms-room and power requirements.
- ☐ Start telephone-number porting early.
- ☐ Confirm VoIP or PABX activation at the new premises.
- ☐ Test the new connection before decommissioning the old one.
- ☐ Keep the old connection active during a short overlap period where possible.
- ☐ Prepare a fallback plan for the first week.

ADDRESS-SPECIFIC

Fibre availability can vary between neighbouring buildings. Never assume that a provider serving one building can automatically connect another.

PHASE 5

Inspections and occupation

Practical completion is not necessarily the same as being legally or operationally ready to occupy. Before moving in:

- ☐ Complete the required inspections.
- ☐ Confirm that the work matches the approved plans.
- ☐ Resolve outstanding defects.
- ☐ Obtain the occupancy certificate where required.
- ☐ Confirm fire and safety sign-off.
- ☐ Test access control, alarms and emergency systems.
- ☐ Confirm internet, telephony and Wi-Fi.
- ☐ Complete furniture installation.
- ☐ Confirm cleaning and waste removal.
- ☐ Test meeting-room technology.
- ☐ Prepare staff access cards and visitor procedures.

BUILD IN A BUFFER

Do not schedule the move for the same day as final inspection or IT activation.

PHASE 6

Moving day

Prepare a detailed moving-day schedule covering:

- ☐ Furniture removal from the old office
- ☐ Delivery access at the new building
- ☐ Lift bookings
- ☐ Security and access arrangements
- ☐ IT equipment packing and reconnection
- ☐ Server and network shutdown
- ☐ Staff arrival instructions
- ☐ Emergency contacts
- ☐ Final meter readings
- ☐ Key handover
- ☐ Cleaning and waste removal

Keep essential items accessible, including chargers, stationery, access lists, first-aid supplies, cleaning materials and backup connectivity.

PHASE 7

Change-of-address administration

After the physical move, update the address everywhere it matters.

Business and regulatory records

- ☐ CIPC registered office address
- ☐ SARS registered address
- ☐ UIF and Department of Employment and Labour records
- ☐ COIDA or Compensation Fund records
- ☐ Bank KYC and FICA records
- ☐ Business and public-liability insurance
- ☐ City of Cape Town municipal accounts

Customer-facing information

- ☐ Google Business Profile
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Email signatures
- ☐ Invoices and stationery
- ☐ Social media profiles
- ☐ Client and supplier records
- ☐ Courier and delivery details
- ☐ Building directory and signage

Arrange final meter readings and close-out accounts at the old premises. Keep written confirmation of the handover and reinstatement condition.

AT A GLANCE

The relocation timeline in one view

WORKSTREAM	RECOMMENDED START
Space, zoning and lease review	Before signing
Services and building-condition survey	Before signing
Design and approvals	As soon as the lease is progressing
Fibre and telecoms	Immediately after the address is confirmed
Furniture and long-lead items	During design and procurement
Construction	After approvals and landlord sign-off
Occupancy and final inspections	Before moving day
Change-of-address administration	During the move and immediately after

THE MAIN LESSON

It's a programme, not a move

An office relocation is a coordinated programme involving the lease, building condition, design, approvals, construction, IT, furniture and administration. Start with the two items that can set your date for you: **municipal compliance and IT provisioning**. Then work backwards from the occupation date, assign each task to an owner, and leave buffer between practical completion, final sign-off and moving day.

ESTIMATE YOUR BUDGET

Office fit-out cost calculator →

ONE TEAM, FIRST PLAN TO OCCUPATION

Design and build, Cape Town →