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 **AI Serv**  
SERVICES



## feature



Opposite page: Whether you are moving home or office, AI Serv's fleet of trucks and crew of strong men (Reginald Cassamajor shown here) will deliver and offload all the cargo . . . and even remove any packing debris.  
Above: Raymond Mompremier and Nancy Toussaint take care of business at AI Serv's offices on South Dock Road.

# Making the Move . . .

AI Serv streamlines the moving process.

By Kathy Borsuk ~ Photos By Claire Parrish

For many people, it's a dream come true: the chance to live in one of the world's most beautiful places. It's an opportunity to trade inclement weather, a stressful lifestyle and the claustrophobic cage of urban living for a warm, sunny climate, laid-back, friendly way of life and everyday views of stunningly beautiful seas and sandy beaches.

Whether you're moving to the Turks & Caicos Islands for a job or business opportunity, to retire, to enjoy a second home or to return to your native country, it's an exciting, stimulating and challenging experience. (The same applies to folks who may be leaving the Islands for distant shores.) In any case, the actual physical processing of possessions from here to there can be an overwhelming task . . . unless you have the help of Al Serv's experienced moving team.

When I moved to Providenciales over 16 years ago from my hometown of Chicago, the experience was stressful and fraught with questions: What should I bring? How should I pack it all? How will I get everything to the Islands? How do I clear customs? Do I have to pay import duty? At that time, answers were few and far between, and I relied on the knowledge and help of my new employer. E-mail hadn't been invented and phone rates were very high, so we sent lots of terse FAXes back and forth.

These days, it's much, much easier. (In fact, it almost takes the adventure out of moving to an exotic location.) First of all, nearly everything you need to function can be found on-island. Some of my biggest concerns in 1993 – contact lens solution, tampons, pots and pans, running shoes and spices – are all readily available now, and have been for years. For folks furnishing an apartment or home, the Islands host a number of top-quality interior design firms, while a large variety of furniture, fixtures and fittings are sold in stores.

As for all the rest? Al Serv's specialized moving-management team is here to assist. In business since 1998, Al Services Ltd. is one of the country's full-service freight providers. Besides operating together with G & G Shipping, a twice-weekly ocean freight service, Al Services provides custom brokerage and an experienced team to help people moving to and from the Islands.

According to Sales and Marketing Manager Theresa Hosman, the staff at Al Serv handles over 100 moves of homes and offices each year. They have reliable answers to the many questions people have about moving, and if they don't know, they can find out!

To start, Theresa, who moved to Providenciales from Canada nearly two decades ago and has worked for Al Serv since its inception, has a rich trove of advice gleaned from personal experience and client feedback. "I remind people that it is more practical and economical NOT to ship your entire household to the Turks & Caicos! Once here, you will quickly learn that the lifestyle and climate are not conducive to many furniture and household items from the north.

Styles are more casual and focused on outdoor living, and the heat and humidity must be taken into account. But of course, you should take things that have sentimental value, just be selective when packing and take into consideration the beautiful (and tropical) Turks & Caicos climate. For photos, I recommend that folks scan them for display here and store the originals, since photographs fade very quickly in the island sun." (On the prohibited/restricted list of personal effects are controlled drugs, firearms and explosives and pornography.)

Theresa recommends that her clients have their goods professionally packed to minimize breakage and use a moving company to transport their freight to the south Florida seaport. For out-going moves, Al Services sells packing materials and crates and their trucks will pick up the boxes or full container at your home for transport by sea to south Florida and destinations beyond.

An important task when moving in either direction is making a detailed inventory of everything you are packing and its value (taking depreciation into account for used goods), with invoices for new items. According to Brokerage Director Deserene Lewis, who



Brokerage Director Deserene Lewis helps clients speedily clear their good and personal effects through customs.



Above: Michael Otuonye keeps cargo moving smoothly from place to place in Al Serv's large warehouse near South Dock. Below: When clients need a strong helping hand, Al Serv looks to Merion Nikes.

has 16 years of experience in customs procedures, this is serious business and necessary for the smooth clearance of your goods through customs. She explains that personal effects can be imported duty-free for first-time immigrants to the Islands or returning residents who have spent at least one year abroad. Some stipulations apply, including that the goods be imported within six months of entry into the Islands and that the importer intends to remain in the Islands for at least one year. The items must have been owned and used outside the Islands for at least one year by the importer and can't be sold on-island for at least one year. And, of course, immigrants must hold a work permit or permanent residency certificate valid for at least one year. Duty free status does not apply to vehicles, boats, aircraft, food, tobacco, perfumes, wine, spirits or beer or rugs!

With your comprehensive list in hand, Deserene will do all the legwork necessary to clear your personal effects – including handling any potential examination of goods – usually within 24 hours. Then, one of Al Serv's fleet of trucks and crew of strong men will deliver and offload all the cargo to your home or office . . . and even remove any packing debris!

Deserene can even help you clear your pet, who typically arrives on a commercial air carrier or Turks





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Air. Pets need to have their paperwork in order too, including an import permit, veterinary health certificate, vaccination certificate and laboratory test results.

For outbound moves, Deserene confirms that the same inventory list is required for U.S. and Canadian customs, with certain items prohibited from entry into those countries.

Whether inbound or outbound, the Al Serv team is committed to "taking the hassle out of moving." Theresa explains, "We're here to walk our clients through the process. We are happy to deal with and clear cargo through other shipping companies besides G & G. We want to take the stress off our clients' backs, fill in the gaps and help them feel at ease. Come visit us on South Dock Road in Providenciales for a complimentary consultation and quotation." ♦

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