



FREE RESOURCE — DATACENTRE & SERVER ROOM MOVE PLANNER

Server Room Relocation Guide

A practical, evidence-led guide to relocating a live server room or on-prem rack estate without dropping the business. Risk assessment, environmental design, hardware inventory, cutover runbook, post-move verification and sign-off — one fillable PDF, one source of truth.

7

PHASES FROM
SURVEY TO
SIGN-OFF

60+

RISK &
ENVIRONMENT
CHECKPOINTS

Asset

INVENTORY
GRID
FOR EVERY U
OF RACK

Fillable

TICK & TYPE
IN ANY VIEWER

RISK & SURVEY

POWER & COOLING

HARDWARE INVENTORY

CUTOVER & VERIFY

PREPARED FOR

Cloudswitched Knowledge Library
Cloudswitched Ltd.

PREPARED BY

VERSION

2026 Edition

FORMAT

Interactive PDF

00

How to use this guide

A server room relocation is the highest-risk IT change most SMEs ever attempt. Live workloads, fragile racks, mission-critical power and cooling dependencies, and a fixed cutover window with no soft landing. This guide walks the seven phases that every clean relocation goes through — from the initial risk survey of the destination room, through environmental design, full hardware inventory, the cutover runbook, and the post-move verification gate.

Work it as a **fillable PDF** — tick the risk and environmental checklists, type rack-by-rack hardware details into the inventory grid, and capture sign-off names and dates directly in any modern PDF viewer (Adobe Acrobat Reader, Apple Preview, Foxit, Chrome, Edge). One row per asset, one tick per verified control, one signature per accepted risk.

THREE DOCUMENTS, ONE SOURCE OF TRUTH

By the end of phase 5 this PDF holds the three documents a server room move actually depends on: **(1)** a written risk assessment, **(2)** an evidenced environmental sign-off for the destination room, and **(3)** a rack-level hardware inventory. If any of the three is missing, the move is not ready — regardless of how confident the engineers feel on the call.

The seven phases

- **01 Pre-move risk assessment** — Workload criticality, downtime tolerance, rollback strategy, named risk owners.
- **02 Environmental survey — power & cooling** — Circuits, UPS, generator, BTU load, room temperature and humidity at the new site.
- **03 Environmental survey — fire, security & access** — Suppression, monitoring, physical access control, structural and floor-loading checks.
- **04 Hardware inventory & asset capture** — Every server, switch, firewall, SAN and UPS recorded with serials, U positions and cable map.
- **05 Cutover plan & runbook** — Shutdown order, transit logistics, power-on sequence, dependencies and named owner per step.
- **06 Move-day execution & verification** — Pre-flight gate, decommission, transit, rack-in, power-on, smoke-test and service restoration.
- **07 Sign-off, contacts & lessons learned** — Acceptance signatures, key contacts, accepted residual risks, post-move review actions.

01

Pre-move risk assessment

Before any rack is unbolted, document what would happen if each workload was offline for 1 hour, 4 hours or 24 hours. A clean risk assessment tells you the maximum acceptable outage window, the rollback strategy if the move fails, and the named individual accountable for each accepted risk. Without it, every decision on move-day is being made under pressure with no documented authority.

- ☐ **Move sponsor and IT lead named** — one accountable executive (move sponsor) and one operational lead with written authority to declare go / no-go.
- ☐ **Business impact assessment completed** for every workload in the rack — criticality tier, owning team and maximum tolerable downtime documented.
- ☐ **Cutover window agreed** with the business — start time, planned restore time, hard stop, and signed-off communication to affected users.
- ☐ **Rollback plan written** — if the move fails by hour X, what is restored, where, by whom. Tested against backups and documented in writing.
- ☐ **Full off-site backup taken and verified** within 24 hours of the move — restore-test a sample workload (one VM, one database, one file share).
- ☐ **Single points of failure logged** — standalone servers, unclustered databases, hand-coded scripts on local disk, undocumented cables. Owner per item.
- ☐ **Vendor and warranty status checked** for every appliance being moved — firewall, SAN, hypervisor host. Physical relocation does not void support.
- ☐ **Insurance & liability cover confirmed** for transit, lifting and rigging — specialist datacentre removals firm where hardware exceeds £25k.
- ☐ **Change record raised** in the change management system with risk class, rollback plan, approvers, change freeze window and post-move verification gate.
- ☐ **Communications plan published** — who tells users, customers and senior leadership about the cutover, when, and via what channel.

NO BACKUP, NO MOVE

The single non-negotiable: a verified, restorable, off-site backup of every workload taken inside the 24 hours before transit begins. "We backed it up last week" is not a backup; it is a hope. If the verification restore fails, postpone the move — an outage that lasts an evening is professional, an outage that lasts a week is a redundancy event.

02

Environmental survey — power & cooling

The most common cause of a post-move outage is the destination room running hot the moment the racks come up. Survey the new room before any kit moves — circuits, UPS capacity, generator runtime, room temperature, humidity and BTU load. A spreadsheet of expected heat output beats a thermal trip at 02:00 every time.

- ☐ **Total rack power draw calculated** at peak load — sum of every device nameplate, plus 25% headroom. Compared against the room's circuit capacity in kVA.
- ☐ **Dual-feed A+B power confirmed** at every rack position — two independent circuits to two PDUs. Single-feed kit is documented as accepted risk.
- ☐ **UPS sized and runtime verified** — minimum 15 minutes at full rack load. UPS batteries dated within the last 3 years; load-bank tested if older.
- ☐ **Generator (if present) tested under load** within 90 days of move — fuel reserve, ATS transfer time, monthly test logs reviewed.
- ☐ **Heat load (BTU/hr) calculated** — total kW draw $\times$ 3,412. Compared against cooling capacity. Document the headroom margin in writing.
- ☐ **Cooling units serviced and load-tested** — CRAC / inline / wall-mount AC units serviced in last 6 months; spare unit / N+1 redundancy confirmed.
- ☐ **Hot / cold aisle layout planned** — rack orientation, blanking panels, cable cut-outs sealed. No exhaust into intake of next rack.
- ☐ **Temperature & humidity monitoring live** — sensors in cold aisle, hot aisle and at rack intakes. Alerts route to a person, not a forgotten mailbox.
- ☐ **Acceptable thermal range agreed** — ASHRAE recommended 18–27°C inlet, 20–80% RH non-condensing. Out-of-range alerts trigger paging.
- ☐ **PDU monitoring & per-outlet metering** available — per-rack draw visible remotely; overload thresholds set below circuit breaker rating.

RULE OF THUMB FOR COOLING CAPACITY

Aim for 1.5 $\times$ the calculated heat load as cooling capacity at full draw. A 6 kW rack needs 9 kW (~30,700 BTU/hr) of cooling to ride out a unit failure or a hot day. If the new room cannot meet that headroom, redesign before move-day — you cannot fix a cooling deficit with a fan.

03

Environmental survey — fire, security & access

Cooling and power get the attention; fire suppression, physical security and structural floor-loading are what trip a cyber-insurance underwriting review. Confirm them before the building inspector or the insurer asks — the answers should be in writing, signed, dated and filed against this relocation.

- ☐ **Fire detection commissioned** in the destination room — smoke or VESDA detection, last-tested date documented, output routed to the building fire panel.
- ☐ **Fire suppression appropriate to the room** — clean-agent (FM-200, Novec 1230) or inert-gas system for enclosed comms rooms; portable CO2 / clean-agent extinguisher within reach.
- ☐ **Floor loading verified** — concrete or raised floor rated for full rack weight (a 42U rack fully populated commonly exceeds 1,000 kg). Structural engineer sign-off where unclear.
- ☐ **Water-leak detection in place** — sensors under raised floor or near cooling units; chilled-water route surveyed; condensate drain confirmed working.
- ☐ **Physical access control reviewed** — door card / PIN / biometric, audit trail of entries, last review of authorised holders within 90 days.
- ☐ **CCTV covers all entry points** — recording, retention period documented, time-synchronised, recordings stored off the local network.
- ☐ **Out-of-hours building access agreed** for the move team — security pass, dock / lift booking, lone-worker procedure documented.
- ☐ **Cable route & risers identified** — copper, fibre and power runs to telecoms / meter rooms surveyed; landlord consent in writing if cores are shared.
- ☐ **Asbestos, dust & building-services check** — pre-2000 buildings checked for asbestos in floor voids and risers before any drilling or cabling work.
- ☐ **Emergency contacts posted in the room** — landlord, building security, MSP, fire suppression vendor, UPS vendor. Laminated, dated, current.

DOCUMENT EVERYTHING, EVEN WHAT YOU ACCEPT AS RISK

A perfect server room is rare. What matters for compliance, insurance and the next IT audit is that every gap is *documented as an accepted risk with a named owner and a target remediation date* — not silently ignored. "Single-feed UPS, accepted by FD until Q4 2026 budget cycle" is professional; an unannotated gap is negligent.

04

Hardware inventory & asset capture

Every item that moves needs one row. Capture make, model, serial, current U position, intended U position at the destination, owning workload and the cables in / out. Two racks of grid are provided below — duplicate the page in your viewer (or print extras) for larger estates.

Site / rack header

SOURCE SITE / ROOM DESTINATION SITE / ROOM RACK IDENTIFIER MOVE WINDOW

Rack A — inventory grid

#	ASSET / HOSTNAME	MAKE & MODEL	SERIAL	U	NEW U	OWNER / WORKLOAD
01	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
02	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
03	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
04	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
05	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
06	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
07	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
08	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
09	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
10	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
11	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
12	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

PHOTOGRAPH THE RACK BEFORE YOU UNBOLT ANYTHING

Front and back, every rack, every cable, before disconnection. A phone photograph is worth an hour of cable-tracing on move-day. Save it to the inventory folder named by rack identifier and date.

04

Hardware inventory — rack B

If your estate runs to a second cabinet, capture rack B here. Use one row per asset, mirror the column order from rack A so the inventory reads consistently across the two racks. Duplicate this page in your viewer for a third or fourth cabinet.

Rack B — inventory grid

#	ASSET / HOSTNAME	MAKE & MODEL	SERIAL	U	NEW U	OWNER / WORKLOAD
01	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
02	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
03	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
04	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
05	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
06	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
07	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
08	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
09	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
10	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

PHOTOGRAPH RACK B TOO, EVEN IF IT IS HALF-EMPTY

A rack that looks neat at first glance hides a dozen cables behind the rear door. Two photographs (front, rear) per rack — saved alongside this inventory — are the single best post-move recovery aid.

04

Cross-rack cabling & uplinks

Anything that crosses a rack boundary is, by definition, a re-cable on move-day. Capture every uplink, fibre patch, copper interconnect and shared power feed below. Label both ends in advance — re-cabling at the destination is then a lookup, not a guess.

#	FROM DEVICE / PORT	TO DEVICE / PORT	CABLE TYPE	LABEL	LENGTH
01	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
02	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
03	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
04	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
05	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
06	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
07	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
08	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
09	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
10	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

LABEL BOTH ENDS, IN BOTH BUILDINGS

Every cable must be labelled at both ends with the source and destination port before disconnection — not "switch1 port 24" but the explicit pairing. Buy a label printer if the room does not already have one; it pays for itself the first time.

05

Cutover plan & runbook — pre-cutover

The cutover runbook is the one document everyone on move-day works to. It defines the order of shutdown, the transit logistics, the order of power-on at the destination, the smoke-test that proves each tier is up, and a named owner for every step. Read it aloud at the pre-flight call 48 hours before the move — if anyone has a question, the runbook is incomplete. Phases 01–04 below cover the work up to and including decommission.

Runbook phases 01–04 (T-48 hr to T+1 hr)

01

T-48 hr — Pre-flight gate

Go / no-go call with sponsor, IT lead, MSP, removals firm, landlord and backup verification. Sign-off captured in writing. Any "no" on a critical item postpones the move.

OWNER: IT LEAD • OUTPUT: GO / NO-GO DECISION

02

T-24 hr — Final backup & user comms

Verified backup of every workload, restore-test of one sample. Final user communication: outage window, helpdesk channel, expected restore time.

OWNER: BACKUP & COMMS LEAD • OUTPUT: VERIFIED RESTORE, COMMS LOG

03

T-0 — Graceful shutdown

Shutdown order documented per workload: VMs first, then host hypervisor, then storage, then networking, then power. Each step ticked in writing as it completes.

OWNER: SERVER ENGINEER • OUTPUT: POWER-OFF LOG

04

T+1 hr — Decommission & label

Photograph racks front and back. Disconnect cables, label both ends. Pad and crate rack-mount kit; pallet larger items. UPS batteries removed for transit if vendor requires.

OWNER: DATACENTRE TECH • OUTPUT: LABELLED, CRATED INVENTORY

NO SHUTDOWN IS FAST ON MOVE-NIGHT

Always budget 50% more time for graceful shutdown than your test runs suggest. A live database with open transactions, a vSphere cluster draining VMs, or a SAN flushing cache will all take longer than the lab. Plan for the worst, restore the runbook clock if you are early.

05

Cutover plan & runbook — transit to restore

Phases 05–08 cover the work from transit through service restoration. The tightest dependency is between power-on (phase 07) and service restoration (phase 08) — the power-on order is what makes the smoke-test reliable. Run it in tiers, with a 30-second pause between each.

Runbook phases 05–08 (T+3 hr to T+10 hr)

05

T+3 hr — Transit

Specialist removals firm with insurance cover for hardware-in-transit. Sealed lorry, single drop. Chain-of-custody manifest signed at pick-up and drop-off.

OWNER: REMOVALS LEAD • OUTPUT: SIGNED MANIFEST

06

T+5 hr — Rack-in & re-cable

Kit racked at destination per the new U-plan. Cables reconnected per the labels. Power feeds A and B confirmed on independent PDUs before power-on.

OWNER: DATACENTRE TECH • OUTPUT: RACK-IN SIGN-OFF

07

T+7 hr — Power-on & smoke-test

Power-on order: networking, then storage, then hypervisors, then VMs. Each tier smoke-tested before the next powers on. Temperature monitored throughout.

OWNER: SERVER ENGINEER • OUTPUT: SMOKE-TEST PASS

08

T+10 hr — Service restoration & user opens

End-to-end service tests for every workload. Helpdesk briefed. User communication: services restored, known issues, what to report.

OWNER: IT LEAD • OUTPUT: RESTORED SERVICES LOG

POWER ON SLOWLY, NOT ALL AT ONCE

Bringing every device live in the same minute slams the UPS and trips inrush-current limits. Power on by tier with a 30-second pause between tiers — networking, then storage, then hypervisors, then VMs. The runbook should call out the pause explicitly.

06

Move-day execution & verification

Move-day is the runbook plus the verification gate. Tick each item as evidence lands — not when it is in progress, not when somebody on the call says it should be working. Anything not ticked is not done. The verification list below is the gate that releases services back to users.

- ☐ **Pre-flight go decision recorded in writing** — sponsor, IT lead and MSP signed off 48 hours pre-move; no critical risk outstanding.
- ☐ **Backups verified & restore-tested** within 24 hours of cutover — one VM, one database, one file share each restored successfully.
- ☐ **Graceful shutdown completed** per the runbook order; power-off log signed; no in-flight transactions left unresolved.
- ☐ **Rack-in matches the new U-plan** — cabling labels matched at both ends, dual A+B power feeds confirmed on separate PDUs.
- ☐ **Temperature stable** after 60 minutes of full power-on — intake within ASHRAE band, no thermal alarms, cooling holding headroom.
- ☐ **Networking up** — switches reachable, uplinks operational, firewall WAN healthy, BGP / OSPF / DHCP / DNS confirmed functional.
- ☐ **Storage healthy** — SAN / NAS volumes mounted, multipath active, no degraded LUNs, replication links re-established.
- ☐ **Workloads smoke-tested** — each business application logged in, transaction processed, integration partner confirmed.
- ☐ **External services confirmed** — SMTP delivery, MFA, identity provider, VPN / ZTNA, backup target reachable from the new site.
- ☐ **Helpdesk briefed & user comms issued** — services restored notice published; known issues and workarounds documented for the support team.

STOP THE CLOCK IF VERIFICATION FAILS

If any verification item fails — storage degraded, temperature climbing, a workload that will not start — pause and decide. Rollback to the old site is on the table for the first 4 hours of the cutover window; declare it early. The professional move is the one that did not need a hero on the call.

07

Sign-off, contacts & lessons learned

One page to close the relocation. Names, signatures and dates against the move; named contacts for every vendor who attended; the accepted residual risks the business signed against; and the post-move review actions that close the loop. File it with the change record.

Project sign-off

MOVE SPONSOR (EXECUTIVE)

SIGNATURE / DATE

IT LEAD

SIGNATURE / DATE

MSP / ENGINEER LEAD

SIGNATURE / DATE

FACILITIES / LANDLORD

SIGNATURE / DATE

Key contacts

ISP / WAN CONTACT

UPS / POWER VENDOR

COOLING / HVAC VENDOR

FIRE SUPPRESSION VENDOR

SPECIALIST REMOVALS FIRM

BUILDING SECURITY / OUT-OF-HOURS

Accepted residual risks & post-move actions

Need an experienced hand on your relocation?

Cloudswitched plans and runs server room and datacentre relocations for UK SMEs — risk assessment, environmental design, hardware inventory and overnight cutover, with a written rollback plan and named on-site engineers.

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