



## How One of the United States' Most Secure Think Tanks Moved 800 Associates and Three SCIFs in Two Weeks

The Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) is a private, nonprofit corporation headquartered in Alexandria, VA. Its mission is to answer the most challenging U.S. security and science policy questions with objective analysis leveraging extraordinary scientific, technical, and analytic expertise.

### THE CHALLENGE:

When the nation's most trusted partner, often called upon by the Pentagon and other U.S. government agencies to solve security and science policy questions, chooses to move its headquarters, you can be sure it's no ordinary mission.

IDA needed to move its headquarters from 4850 Mark Center Drive to its newly constructed state-of-the-art Potomac Yards facility at 730 East Glebe Road, Alexandria, VA. The new location, a modern building with plenty of open meeting space, is well-suited for sharing information, making connections, and performing analysis.

Because of its mission, the volume of sensitive information, and the need for access to information at a moment's notice, the IDA had exacting requirements:

- Relocate 800 associates and computer equipment
- Securely move three Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities (SCIF) and data centers
- Maintain an extremely secure environment and chain of custody
- Manage the move without any downtime for the research associates
- Complete the relocation within two weeks and decommission the former location within six weeks.
- Be ready to adapt to changing security and COVID protocols at a moment's notice



### THE SOLUTION:

The IDA's challenge for a lightning-fast, highly secure, agile move required an exacting solution grounded in experience, quality, and precision. Just as the IDA's mission leverages objective data and experienced researchers, the answer to their challenge involves the same principles.

- **Extensive planning**, resulting in a detailed schedule for each day of the operation
- A **single point of accountability** and a single agreement to streamline and simplify the management
- Planning meetings with each group to **collect and assess the unique characteristics** of each group.
- **Documented procedures** explaining how compliance with the IDA's security requirements
- **Well-maintained vehicles** equipped with GPS and well-trained, **experienced moving professionals**.

## APPROACH:

Having executed several similarly complex, security-sensitive relocation projects, the INTERSTATE team fully recognized the gravity of the challenge. INTERSTATE assembled a team of experienced logisticians to establish a plan.

The plan began with a clear understanding of the requirements, assets, access protocols, and security mandates. To accomplish the project, the INTERSTATE team spent time with each department to hear their **unique concerns**. Ongoing access to data, maintaining a highly secure chain of command, and completing the move within two weeks were primary needs that applied to all groups.

The safeguarding of all IDA **classified items** was conducted in accordance with the National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual (NISPOM), DoD 5220.22-M (Sections 5-400, 5-401, 5-408, 5-409, and 5-412, in particular). The chain of custody movement of classified materials was coordinated with IDA Security. INTERSTATE appointed only U.S. citizen employees for the transportation of sensitive materials. IDA Security personnel were encouraged to travel in our vehicles to ensure continual control over the materials. The vehicle positions were monitored continuously while en route to their destination by GPS. No cameras were in use during the project.

**Agility** proved to be an essential component of the plan. Just as the operation was scheduled to begin, and before a significant holiday, IDA's security requirements increased. 1:1 security oversight was stipulated. Not to worry, the logistics team leaped into action and reworked the project plan, accounting for additional personnel to be on the premises during the move. The revised plan broke the operation into several manageable phases and positioned personnel at the former and new locations to compress the timeline and create **efficiencies**.

With the **project plan** built and agreed to by IDA, INTERSTATE staffed the program with vehicles and expert movers. The project required 40 INTERSTATE personnel and six trucks for each shift. The operation included two daily shifts spanned business hours, weekdays, and weekend days responsible for:

- Personnel Moves
- Pre-packing, as required
- Building protection
- Disconnect/Reconnect IT equipment
- Loading
- Secure transport
- Unloading
- wPost-move services

**Communications** were a critical success factor for IDA's move. To keep everyone informed and to set expectations, INTERSTATE created a Relocation Command Center, a relocation handbook, FAQs, town-hall-style meetings, briefings, and a help desk.

To comply with **COVID-19** protocols, INTERSTATE required the use of face masks by all personnel, daily disinfecting of INTERSTATE work areas and sanitization of crates in between moves, adherence to CDC guidelines for social distancing, and regular COVID-19 tests. Additionally, crates were sanitized between movements.

## OUTCOME:

The INTERSTATE team delighted the IDA team with the flawless execution of a well-conceived plan. The results speak for themselves:

- The project was executed 100% on time and on-budget
- The IDA team experienced zero loss or downtime
- Security protocols were adhered to fully.
- Displayed agility and maturity by pivoting the plan to accommodate changing security protocols.
- Complied with complicated and shifting COVID-19 related
- Managed a delicate move over three significant holidays, concluding in February 2022