The Toowoomba Storage & Moving Guide

From Rhett Morrow at Big Top Storage, a drive-up storage yard proposed for Rockville, North Toowoomba. Free, no sales pitch, keep it.

1. How much does a 20ft container actually hold?

A standard 20ft container is 5.9 m long, 2.35 m wide and 2.39 m high inside: about 33 cubic metres, or a bit more than a large removalist truck. In real-life terms:

What you're storing	Fits in a 20ft?	Notes
3-bedroom house lot (lounge, dining, 3 beds, fridge, washer, 40 boxes)	Yes, snugly	Stack to the roof, mattresses on edge, boxes on top of the fridge.
2-bedroom unit lot	Yes, with room to walk in	Leave a walkway down one side so you can reach things.
4-bedroom house with garage gear	Usually two containers	Or one container plus a trailer bay for the mower and bikes.
Tradie's kit: tools, compressor, ladders, materials for 2 jobs	Yes, with space to spare	Put shelving down one wall and it becomes a workshop store.
Small business stock (market stall, online shop)	Yes	Two rows of shelving, aisle in the middle, pick straight from the shelf.
A car	Yes, most sedans and utes	Fold the mirrors; you won't open the doors inside. Boats and vans go in open bays.

Roller-door units (about 5 m^2) hold a spare room: 15 to 20 boxes, a bed, a couple of bikes, or a tradie's overflow.

2. Packing so you can still find things in June

1. **Heavy at the back and bottom, light on top.** Fridge, washer, bookcases first, against the far wall.
2. **Leave an aisle.** Even 50 cm down one side means you can reach the Christmas box without unpacking the lot.
3. **Same-size boxes stack; odd shapes don't.** Buy 20 identical boxes rather than collecting supermarket ones.
4. **Label three sides, not the top.** Once stacked, you can't see the top. Room name plus three key items: "Kitchen: pots, kettle, toaster".
5. **Mattresses on edge, wrapped.** Flat mattresses become a shelf and they sag. Use a mattress bag.
6. **Fridge and washer: clean, dry, door propped open.** A closed fridge in a container smells in a week.
7. **Furniture: take the legs off, wrap in blankets, not plastic.** Plastic traps moisture in Toowoomba's cold snaps.
8. **Put a pallet or a couple of bearers on the floor** under anything that can't get damp, and a moisture absorber (the $6 tub from Bunnings) in each corner.
9. **Photograph the load before you shut the door.** Your future self will thank you.
10. **Keep the "first week" box in the car, not the container:** kettle, chargers, sheets, a torch, the kids' favourite toy.

3. What not to put in storage

- Fuel, gas bottles, paint thinners, chemicals, fireworks, lithium batteries (take them out of tools and store them at home).
- Food of any kind, including pet food and the bag of rice "just in case". It brings mice.
- Plants, anything alive, anything damp.
- Passports, deeds, jewellery, cash. Storage is for stuff, not valuables.
- Anything you'll need next week. If you'll need it, it isn't storage yet.

4. Moving house: the two-week checklist

Two weeks out

☐ Book the removalist or the ute (Toowoomba removalists get booked out at month-end and school holidays).
☐ Sort into four piles: keep, store, sell, dump. Marketplace the "sell" pile now.
☐ Order boxes, tape, blankets, a marker. 20ft container lot = roughly 40 to 60 boxes.
☐ Tell the power, gas, internet and Australia Post the dates.

One week out

☐ Pack everything you won't touch this week: books, decor, off-season clothes, the garage.
☐ Defrost the freezer. Use up the pantry.
☐ Confirm the storage unit and your gate code.

Moving day

☐ Load the container heavy-first (section 2).
☐ Padlock, photo of the load, note the unit number in your phone.
☐ Final walk-through of the old place with the camera on.

5. Caravan and boat owners: the storage questions people forget

- **Insurance:** tell your insurer where the van or boat is kept. Many policies have a different premium for "secure storage facility" versus "street".
- **Batteries:** disconnect or put on a trickle charger; a flat lithium battery can be a dead one.
- **Tyres:** pump them up 10 psi over, and roll the van a metre every month if you can.
- **Fridge and water:** empty, dry, doors open. Water tanks drained.
- **Covers:** a breathable cover beats a tarp; tarps sweat.
- **Council and neighbours:** a van on the verge or across the footpath is a complaint waiting to happen. Behind a gate is simpler.

6. Tradies: the maths on a container versus a bigger van

A 20ft container at $50 a week is about $2,600 a year. A bigger ute or van costs that in extra fuel and finance before you've bought a single tool. And a container doesn't get broken into in your driveway at 2am. Shelving down one side, a bench across the back, and the trailer stays hitched for the next job.

7. The 10 things people wish they'd stored before the reno

1. The lounge suite (dust gets into everything).
2. The good mattress.
3. Books and records.
4. The kids' toys they "don't play with any more" (they will, the week the room's ripped up).
5. Rugs.
6. The dining table (it always ends up as a saw bench).
7. Off-season clothes.
8. The second fridge.

9. Bikes and the treadmill.
10. Anything the tradies would otherwise have to work around.

About Big Top Storage. I'm Rhett Morrow, proposing a drive-up storage yard for Rockville on the north side: 20ft containers, roller-door units, and caravan and boat bays, with your own padlock and a 24/7 gate code. It's an expression-of-interest stage: we build if enough locals register. Nothing to pay, nothing owed. If we open, the first 50 registered get their first month free, a free padlock at move-in, and an extra two weeks free for every mate who registers and names them. Register or read more at **www.bigtopstorage.com.au**, or text Rhett on **0437 186 533**.

© 2026 Big Top Storage. General information only. Check your own insurer, removalist and council for specifics. Prices mentioned are planned prices for the proposed yard, not confirmed.