

PITTSBURGH STORAGE BUYER'S GUIDE



City Center Self Storage is happy to provide this buyer's guide to anyone who needs to find a Pittsburgh storage solution, whether for home or business. Since we only have one facility in Downtown Pittsburgh, the outstanding Pittsburgh storage facility we've created won't be the ideal solution for everyone.

We thought carefully about every aspect of our Pittsburgh storage business from the perspective of you – the Pittsburgh storage customer. Our goal was to create the ideal Pittsburgh storage experience. For this buyer's guide, we used everything we learned, but turned it around into a series of key points and questions you can use to evaluate different Pittsburgh storage options.

Please use our insight and experience to find the best Pittsburgh storage option for you. This guide gives us one more way to give back to the Pittsburgh community that has helped us so much. We hope this information will help you find a great Pittsburgh storage solution, even if it's not with us.

Here are the most important items to look for in evaluating a Pittsburgh storage facility.

Location

Most people gravitate towards the Pittsburgh storage facility that's closest to them. If cost is a primary factor, they will look way outside of downtown, assuming storage out there will be much cheaper. But that's not necessarily the case. Renting at a distant storage facility has hidden costs too. Far away facilities are less accessible so you'll get less out of them. There's also the time spent (either yours or your staff's) traveling back and forth. *What's that worth?* Renting from the facility nearest is to you also may not be the right choice. Keep reading to find out all the other criteria you need to evaluate to find the best facility for your needs.

Security

If your items aren't securely protected, nothing else matters. Evaluate a Pittsburgh storage facility's security by looking at the deterrent value of each security layer. Points to consider in each layer include:

- **Outer Security** – An enclosed building is harder to break into than a fenced outdoor facility, even if it has barbed wire. Minimal entrance points equipped with keypad access and video surveillance is the base line for acceptable outer security. Patrols by human security guards are a big extra deterrent. Traffic is also a consideration. Risk is increased when the facility has other uses that drive additional foot traffic in the same space as storage. *Is the facility you're evaluating accessed for anything other than storage?*
- **Middle Security** – *What deters thieves once inside a Pittsburgh storage facility?* Options include individual unit door alarms and video surveillance. If the facility relies primarily on door alarms, are they directly wired to the police? How do the operators avoid "false alarm fatigue?" (Read more about this in [our blog post on Pittsburgh storage security](#).)
- **Final Security** – The latch and lock on your unit is your final barrier. Most people think the bigger the lock, the better the security. But that's not how thieves think. You'd be amazed how easily big locks in traditional latches can be cut. [See the video inside our blog post on Pittsburgh storage](#)

[security to understand](#). Recessed locks with dimple keys can't easily be cut or picked. Because that's the only lock we allow at City Center Self Storage, thieves know they will face a tough final barrier (and be on camera the whole time) at our facility.

Fire Suppression

How will your belongings be protected in case of fire? Is there a sprinkler system that will activate only in the area of a fire? Does the facility have strong policies to keep anyone from storing potentially hazardous materials in the unit next to yours?

Climate Control

Temperature and humidity are the hidden thieves. Climate control protects your belongings from the elements. For many of the items Pittsburghers store, climate protection can be just as important as physical security. Most people equate temperature control with climate control, but that is only one of the culprits. Humidity (both high levels and low levels) can cause great damage. Unfortunately, many self-storage operators make the same mistake and use the generic term "climate control" when they may do nothing to control humidity. This is a big deal as most Pittsburgh storage facilities charge extra for climate control so you have to be sure you're getting the protection you pay for. You can learn more about what items need climate protection and how to evaluate a facility for climate control in [our Definitive Guide to Pittsburgh Storage Climate Control](#). Here are the top items to look for when evaluating climate control:

- How does the facility monitor temperature and humidity? Do they continually monitor levels of both? Can they show you past data logs for your space?
- What building design features and mechanical systems exist to control temperature and humidity?
- Is the climate control storage area below grade? That can make it cooler, but it usually comes with high humidity so evaluate carefully.

Ease of Access

The facility could be right around the corner from you, but if you can't easily off-load a truck or park your car and move through the facility to get to your locker, the place might as well be miles away. Ask the facility managers to show you where you can park a truck for moving big loads and park a car for a quick run in to your locker. Ask to see what moving aids are available for your use.

Elevators

Elevators are expensive. Most storage facilities will only have one. What happens if you and two other people are moving in at the same time? That's not going to be a great experience. Ask how many elevators the facility has and how many would be available to you when you need them.

Cleanliness

Look around the facility both outside and inside. People who take pride in their businesses keep them clean. This is a good indicator for the quality of service you will get.

Storage Restrictions and Usage

A well-run facility will be very clear about what items cannot be stored. This helps avoid any conflicts for you before you move and keeps potentially dangerous items out of neighboring units. Look to see if they ask for a description of items you will store on the lease. This is an easy way for a facility operator to catch problems upfront. Also, many storage solutions double as rock band practice studios. We have nothing against aspiring musicians and the next AC/DC, but the proximity of food and drink in adjacent lockers can bring unwanted pests (the 4-legged, rodent variety) into close contact with your items.

Supplemental Insurance

Smart businesses help their customers protect against the unexpected. Ask to see if the facility offers supplemental insurance on your items in case your homeowners' or renter's insurance doesn't cover items in storage.

Billing Options

Ask how you can pay. A well-managed Pittsburgh storage facility will offer a range of payments methods. What's simplest is an automatic recurring payment on a credit card or direct deduction from a checking account. Next easiest after that is being able to log into their web site to pay a monthly bill.

Receive/Send Packages

If your storage unit is an extension of your business, you want a facility that will receive packages on your behalf and have others picked up for you.

Work Space

If you're a mobile professional, you're always on the lookout for a convenient Wi-Fi hotspot to get some work done. Some storage facilities will let you grab a chair in their office. A great storage facility will have [a full shared workspace lounge](#) with multiple office style options.

Moving Help

Moves often don't go as planned and run late, or need to be done during off hours. You're all already so busy that the added stress (both physical and mental) of a late night move is not welcome. A great Pittsburgh storage facility will help you find moving help when you need it. Shortening your move time and effort is one way to ensure a great Pittsburgh storage experience.


That's it! See the next page for an easy way to keep track of the scores of the different facilities you evaluate. If all the items on this list are met to your satisfaction, then you've found a great Pittsburgh storage facility for your needs.

We'd love to hear from you if you've found this guide useful or have suggestions for improvement. Just e-mail us at contact@citycenterselfstorage.com.

The Team at City Center Self Storage!

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Criteria	 CITY CENTER SELF STORAGE	Other Pittsburgh Storage #1	Other Pittsburgh Storage #2	Other Pittsburgh Storage #3
Security – Outer Layer	Enclosed building; keypad entry points with video surveillance; patrolled by guards			
Security – Middle Layer	Video surveillance on all areas			
Security – Final Layer	Only recessed, dimple key locks allowed			
Fire Suppression	Individually activated fire sprinklers in all storage areas; strong policies against hazardous materials			
Climate control	Natural climate control, continuous temperature and humidity monitoring			
Ease of Access	Ample free parking; off-loading ramps; interior covered unloading area; late night access point near security guard shack			
Elevators	How many elevators does the facility have? How many will be available to you when you need them?			
Cleanliness	<i>See for yourself!</i> We take pride in our business and believe it shows.			
Storage Use Restrictions	Limitations on what can be safely stored; no practice studio for rock bands			
Supplemental Insurance	Affordable insurance options if your existing policy doesn't cover			
Space to Get Work Done	Work lounge with comfortable working spaces and Wi-Fi			
Send/Receive Packages	We accept deliveries and keep them in a secure area and can arrange pickups.			
Moving Help	Moving Assistants on-call to help			
Location	We are <i>the only</i> storage facility within the Greater Downtown Pittsburgh			
Overall Value	<i>You'll be pleased with our rates!</i>			