

Sellers Guide/Checklist

We have compiled a checklist of items to look for when preparing your house for sale. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive but it does capture most of the important points of preparing your house for sale.

Curb Appeal

This "tired" real estate term describes everything which affects your home from the outside. It includes not only your home's outside appearance, but that of your yard, sidewalk, driveway, mailbox, etc. Unfortunately, it also can include factors over which you don't have any control, such as your neighbor who has been rebuilding a 1959 Truck in his driveway for years. If you want prospective buyers to even consider buying your home you should do the following as a minimum:

- Sweep up any trash in the road, on the sidewalk, etc. near your home, even if it's not yours.
- Do not leave trash cans out.
- Edge your sidewalk, driveway, and curb and get rid of all weeds in cracks.
- Get rid of the junk in front of the garage, and clean up any oil spots. Don't park your car in the driveway.
- Wash your cars.
- Keep your lawn mowed and trimmed.
- Water your lawn, and reseed and fertilize where necessary for a full appearance.
- Weed your flower beds, and trim your bushes and hedges.
- If necessary, paint your mailbox, fence, trim, and any other outside features which are fading or peeling.
- Wash off the outside of your house with a hose and brush. If necessary, repaint.
- Repair any broken windows, screens, and light fixtures. Wash the windows and glass doors.
- Ensure lights are working.
- Repair or replace any roof problems.
- Ensure the front door is clean. Paint the door and trim if required.
- Make sure the doorbell works.
- Ensure the gutters and downspouts are straight and clean/painted. Also, ensure they are clear of leaves.
- Repair defective gates and hinges.



Home Interior - General

The following are general comments concerning what to do to your home's interior to get it ready for prospective buyers. Any investment you make should result in both a faster sale and a higher price.

- Clean and/or paint all trim, especially around doors, and near heavily traveled areas.
- Clean and/or paint walls to get rid of smudges and fingerprints.
- Glue loose wallpaper.
- Clean all linoleum, tile, or hardwood floors.
- If necessary, have carpeted areas cleaned.
- Remove cobwebs from ceiling, corners, around furniture, light fixtures, etc.
- Ensure drapery and blinds are clean, free from dust, etc.
- Clean light switch and electrical outlet plates, or replace them.
- Get rid of unnecessary items and boxes which are cluttering rooms. This includes extra furniture which may obscure the buyer's views, as well as pathways throughout the home.
- Make sure all stairs are clear. Not only does this detract from your home's appearance, but it's a safety hazard as well.
- Rent a storage unit and declutter the home (extra clothing, furniture, boxes, etc.).

- Clean and organize all closets and cupboards. Remove extra items to give the effect of spaciousness.
- Repair any leaking faucets, running toilets, loose doorknobs, and sticking doors and windows.
- During showings, turn off television sets and try to keep noises to a minimum (you can, however, play soft FM music to create a relaxing atmosphere in the home).
- If home is being shown during the Fall or Winter, light the fireplace to create warmth.
- In the Spring or Summer, vases of freshly cut flowers add a freshness that is hard to match.
- Get rid of any strong odors (tobacco, leftover food, pet odors, etc.).
- Turn on lights, and open blinds and drapes.

Specific Rooms

Living Room:



- Put away family-related items such as photo albums, and knicknacks.
- Remove extra furniture.
- Move your furniture around to make the room look larger.
- Clean the fireplace, make sure the screen is in good condition and that all fireplace tools are clean and polished.
- In the winter, have a fire going in the fireplace as mentioned above.
- In the summer, place plants or other decorations at the fireplace.
- Ensure carpets and rugs are cleaned.
- Dust and clean furniture, windows, light fixtures, and trim.
- Wax hardwood furniture with lemon oil.
- Fill in holes and cracks in the wall board with spackle.

Bedrooms:

- Put attractive bedding on beds (e.g., bedspreads, shams, decorative pillows, etc.)
 - Dust and clean furniture, windows, light fixtures, and trim.
 - Wax hardwood furniture with lemon oil.
 - Fill in holes and cracks in the wall board with spackle.
 - In a divorce sale, leave clothing from the opposite sex hanging in the closet of the master bedroom.
- Keep your laundry (dirty or clean) out of sight. Remember people will be looking in your closets.
- Keep knick-knacks to a minimum. You don't want to draw potential buyers' attention away from the home and instead to your decor.

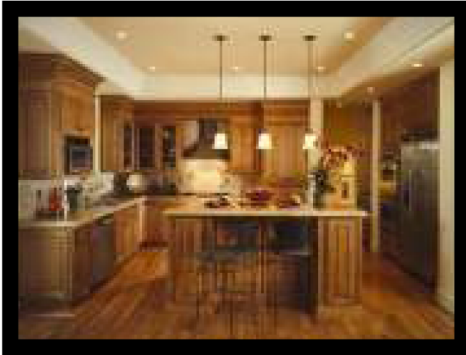
Bathrooms:

- Make sure that caulking around bathtubs and showers are filled in where necessary.
- Sinks, tubs, shower stalls, countertops, and toilet bowls should be completely cleaned and free of stains and mildew.
- Mirrors and faucets should be cleaned and polished.
- Buy a set of new towels and rugs for the bathroom, especially for showings (remove and put them away after the prospective buyer leaves).
- Replace shower curtain if necessary.
- If the toilet seat is old or damaged, replace it. Also keep the lids on all toilets closed. This is inexpensive and makes a big difference in how the home shows.
- Make sure that lights and vent fans work properly and are clean.
- Replace any old or damaged towel racks.
- Put away personal care items such as razors, toothbrushes, etc. and empty the trash container.



Kitchen:

If there is one room in your house worth spending time and money on to ensure that your home sells, it is probably the kitchen.



- Make sure that all appliances are clean and working.
- Consider refinishing appliances that have "old" colors. White is the best color.
- Unclutter and clean off all counter tops - put small appliances, etc. away until after the potential buyers have left.
- Clean light fixtures and replace burnt out bulbs.
- Repaint or wallpaper the kitchen if walls are faded or you have an odd color such as pink or orange.
- Clean the ceiling, refinishing it if necessary.
- Clean and wax the floor, replacing damaged tiles or linoleum.
- Refrigerators seem to attract a lot of clutter. Choose one "magnet" and/or one "child's drawing" and put the others away. Otherwise, keep it clean and empty.

Garage, Basement, Attic, and Utility Rooms:

- Clean and organize basements, garages, attics, and utility rooms. Take all un-needed items to the storage unit.
- Place bright lights in these storage rooms.
- If the walls are too dark, paint them a lighter color.
- Repair any leaking pipes, etc. Be sure the basement is free of dampness.
- Clear out all cobwebs and dust.
- Remove any mouse and roach traps as they indicate that you have pest problems.
- In the garage, clean up oil stains on the floor. Once floor is cleaned, place cardboard under leaking car.

Other

This topic might best be described as "Sellers should be seen, but not heard." Or, even better, "Sellers should not be seen or heard." Your best bet on showing your home is to leave and allow an experienced real estate agent to show it. Here are some additional tips:

- If you have pets, get them out of the house and preferably out of the neighborhood while your house is being shown.
- Try to eliminate traces of pets inside and outside your home, especially pet odors.
- Get the kids over to a friend's or relative's house while potential buyers are viewing your home.
- Don't volunteer information about your home to sellers - answer questions only.
- Don't try to sell home furnishings to potential buyers.

Showing Your Home

Once your home is prepared for selling, here are some ideas for showing it:

- Visual. The rule here is "clean" and "bright". Eliminate the clutter, freshly mow your lawn, weed the flower beds, clean windows and floors, dust furniture, and remove posters and accessories. Also, turn on every light in the house, even during the day.
- Sounds. Get rid of all bothersome noises: barking dogs, yelling children, neighbor's stereo, etc. Instead, have soft background music playing in your home.
- Odors. Have someone else evaluate your home for any strong odors, and remove their source (animals, onions, etc.). Now, originate good odors - potpourri, baking bread, etc.
- Surfaces. Anything a potential visitor may touch needs to be clean: light switches, door handles, table tops, carpet, etc.
- Absence. Be absent from your home for potential buyers and their real estate agents.