



Getting and Keeping Your Home Ready to Sell

Now that you're trying to sell your home, think of it as merchandise sitting on a shelf next to all the other homes for sale in your neighborhood. In order to get top dollar for your home, it's important to get your property in the finest possible condition to impress buyers, agents, appraisers and inspectors. Here are some simple things you can do to polish the merchandise:

1. **Maximize your home's curb appeal.** You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Make sure your shrubs and trees are pruned, the yard is weeded, and the driveway and walkways are clear. If you have a lawn, keep it mowed. Refuse containers, children's bicycles, and other toys should be out of sight. Repair or replace missing window screens. Paint or clean the front door and put out a new welcome mat.
2. **Minor repairs make a major difference.** Repair all loose doorknobs, cabinet hinges, dripping faucets, sticking doors or windows, loose or missing caulking. Fix drawers that don't open and shut easily. Replace burned out light bulbs. If carpet is worn and damaged, consider replacing it with neutral colored, inexpensive, new carpet.
3. **Make your home look as spacious as possible.** Clutter makes spaces seem smaller and turns buyers off. Buyers like to see lots of closet space, so clear out crammed closets. Pack up extra clothes, shoes, and accessories that aren't being used. Box up extra books, photos, knick-knacks, and that china you use for holiday dinners and put it all in storage. Organize home offices, sewing rooms, and laundry rooms.
4. **De-personalize the house.** Pack away personal pictures, mementos, and knick-knacks. Part of the de-cluttering process, this makes it easier for potential buyers to imagine their own personal items in the house.
5. **Light up the inside of your house.** Open drapes, curtains, and blinds to allow plenty of light into your home when showing the home during the day. When showing the house at night, turn the lights on in every room. Use brighter bulbs if necessary. A well-lit home generates comfort and welcomes potential buyers.
6. **Kitchens should be clean and spacious.** The kitchen is the most important room in the house. The emptier it is, the larger it will look to buyers. Keep dirty dishes out of the sink and off the counters. Put countertop appliances in the cupboard or boxed up if you don't use them. Clean the top of the refrigerator and the ventilating hood over stove. Repair or replace worn out flooring.
7. **Bathrooms must sparkle.** Remove stains and hard-water spots from toilets, bathtubs, sinks, and shower doors. Unclog slow moving drains. Hang fresh towels and keep toiletries off the counters. Repair or replace worn out flooring.
8. **Avoid being home when an agent wants to show your house.** Potential buyers often feel uncomfortable and hurry through the house when the seller is present. If you must be present, turn

off the stereo, TV, and radio. Don't force conversation with the buyer or agent. If they have questions, they will ask you.

9. **Keep pets out of the way.** If possible, take your pets with you when an agent is showing your house.
10. **While your home is on the market, run through a quick checklist weekly.** At least once a week, go through the following checklist to make sure your house continues to be in top condition.

LANDSCAPING

- Lawn in good condition
- Hedges trimmed
- Yard cleared of leaves and papers
- Fences in good repair

HOME EXTERIOR

- Painted, clean, and repaired
- Doors work easily and silently
- Doorbells operating
- Driveway free of grease, toys

GARAGE

- Doors work easily and silently
- Workbench and tools neatly arranged
- Floor cleaned and in good condition

LIVING ROOM

- Walls and ceilings freshly painted or clean
- Curtains & blinds clean and in good condition
- Carpet clean and in good condition
- Windows clean and in good repair

KITCHEN

- Stove top and oven clean
- Sink and counters clear of dirty dishes
- Cabinets neat and organized
- Windows clean
- Walls & ceilings freshly painted or clean

BEDROOMS

- Walls & ceilings freshly painted or clean
- Beds made and toys put away
- Closets neatly arranged and cleaned out
- Curtains clean and in good condition
- Windows clean and in good repair

BATHROOMS

- Floors clean and in good condition
- Toilets clean and in good repair
- Showers & tubs clean and in good repair
- Faucets in good repair