



PLANNING TO SELL: A Homeowner's Checklist

So you're planning to sell your home.

As you prepare to begin showing your home to prospective buyers, you might consider taking some of the steps listed here.

Potential buyers often welcome a home that is clean, neat, uncluttered, in good repair, light, airy, fragrant, and quiet.

Here are a few tips that can help you get your home ready to show.

Clean everything. Cleanliness signals to a buyer that the home has been well cared for and is most likely in good repair. A messy or dirty home will cause prospective buyers to notice every flaw.

Unclutter your home before you show it. Have a garage sale. Empty closets. Donate what you can't sell. The less "stuff" in and around a home, the roomier it will seem.

Let the light in. Raise the shades. Open the blinds. Pull back the curtains. Put brighter bulbs in all the lamps (but not bright enough to cause a glare). Bright, open rooms feel larger and more inviting. Dark rooms feel small and gloomy.

Let fresh air in. Get rid of odors that may be unfamiliar or unpleasant. People are most often offended by odors from tobacco, pets, cooking, and musty or sour laundry. Fresh flowers and potpourri can be used to your advantage. Other smells that attract positive attention include fresh baked bread or cinnamon.

Fix anything that is broken. This includes plumbing, electrical systems and switches, windows, squeaky floorboards, TV antennas, screens, doors, and fences; if it can't be fixed, replace it or get rid of it. A buyer might make a much lower offer if your house is in disrepair and will probably still insist that everything be fixed before taking occupancy. You're better off if you leave potential buyers no reason to offer less than you are asking.

Send pets away or secure them away from the house when prospective buyers are coming. You never know if people will be annoyed or intimidated, or even allergic to them.

Send the kids to Grandma's or take them on a walk around the block. Children can be noisy and distracting to someone interested in looking at a home.

Paint. There's nothing that improves the value of a home more than a few cans of paint. And it's so often easier to paint a room than it is to scrub it. Stick with neutral colors.

Keep the noise down. Silence is a restful sound that offends no one. Turn off the TV and radio. Soft instrumental music is fine, but avoid vocals.

Get your home ready to sell! Check out the checklist on the following pages.

This Checklist Will Help You Get Your Home Ready to Show

EXTERIOR

Replace, repair, and/or paint any damaged:

- Plaster
- Wood siding
- Trim
- Rain gutters
- Shutters
- Doors
- Window frames
- Glazing
- Screens
- Hardware
- Fences/gates
- Outdoor lighting

Clean/wash:

- Siding
- Windows
- Screen
- Outdoor BBQ
- AC unit
- Pool/spa
- Clean around service areas/trash cans
- Haul away rubbish
- Straighten woodpile
- Repair leaky faucets
- Clean up pet droppings
- Paint or varnish doors

- Make sure doorbell/knocker works
- Paint or replace street numbers on house
- Make sure septic tank is odor free
- Clean oil stains from driveway/street
- Patch/reseal driveway

Put 100-watt light bulbs in:

- Porch lights
- Carport
- Garage

LANDSCAPING

- Mow/edge lawn regularly
- Aerate/feed lawn
- Overseed bare spots in lawn
- Water lawn regularly
- Remove/replace dead plants
- Prune overgrown/diseased/damaged shrubs
- Prune or remove shrubs/trees blocking window view

- Stake up any sagging trees
- Keep flower beds free of weeds
- Trim around base of walls and fences
- Replace any broken stepping stones
- Adjust any sprinkler system
- Install fences or shrubs to hide any unsightly views

Repair or remove any broken or damaged landscape accessories such as:

- Fences
- Walls
- Gazebos
- Fountains
- Trellises or planters

ALL ROOMS

Clean especially around:

- Doors
- Windows
- Light switches
- Baseboards
- Chair rails
- Wash lace curtains and have draperies cleaned
- Remove or pull back dark curtains

- Lubricate window slides (soap for wood silicon or a candle stump for metal)
- Lubricate doors if necessary
- Clean ceiling light fixtures
- Check for cobwebs in all corners
- Fix any scratches in wooden floors
- Replace worn/broken flooring

- Remove or replace worn carpet
- Use area rugs where needed
- Empty wastebaskets
- Make the beds
- Fluff the pillows

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KITCHEN

Clean/wash:

- Keep dishes and food out of sight
- Clean appliances
- Clean range hood, including light bulbs
- Clean behind appliances
- Keep floor clean
- Clean light fixtures
- Make sure all electrical outlets work
- Eliminate cooking odors
- Deodorize garbage disposal, dishwasher, and refrigerator
- Repair faucets
- Put fresh shelf paper in cabinets
- Organize cupboards
- Clean under sink
- Replace garbage disposal gasket to reduce noise

BATHROOMS

Keep them spotlessly clean:

- Shine mirrors
- Keep wastebaskets empty/clean
- Clean out cabinets and remove nonessentials
- Keep fresh, clean towels on towel racks
- Clean shower door - if sliding door, keep track well lubricated
- Remove soap residue, mildew and mold from sink/tub/shower
- Remove stains from porcelain sink/tub/toilet
- Replace shower curtain
- Clean title grout
- Make sure toilet flushes properly; replace mechanism if necessary
- Clean exhaust fan, heater; replace if broken or noisy

CLOSETS

- Keep closets clean and free of clutter
- Throw out or pack away nonessentials
- Adjust/repair sliding doors
- Lubricate sliding door hardware
- Paint, if needed

LAUNDRY AREA

- Clean out area behind washer/dryer
- Eliminate any mildew odors

BASEMENT

- Eliminate any signs of dampness
- Check for and eliminate cracks

HEATING/AIR CONDITIONING UNIT

- Vacuum
- Replace filter
- Clean intake vent
- Remove any stored items

GARAGE/CARPORT/SHED

- Install 100-watt light bulbs
- Keep area clean/uncluttered
- Hang up/put away tools
- Clear away any cobwebs
- Remove oil/paint stains from floor
- Adjust tension rod to eliminate sag from overhead garage door
- Lubricate/adjust/repair garage door opener
- Paint if needed