

Preparing Your House for Sale

A clean, neat home in need of few or no repairs will sell faster, and at a higher price, than one that is run down. To give your home its best possible presentation, perform a mini-makeover before your home is shown to potential buyers. Then, do a final walk-through to make sure no details have been overlooked.

Here's a list of tips that will help you make your home more attractive. Some of the items below will be part of a buyer's inspection and may need to be repaired or replaced as part of the transaction. As your agent, I will discuss these important items with you.

Exterior:

- Remove peeling and chipped paint; replace with a fresh coat.
- Clear gutters and downspouts.
- Make sure there is good exterior lighting and all walkway lights and front-door lanterns work.
- Remove any moss from the roof.

Yard:

- Mow and trim grass; re-seed and fertilize where necessary.
- Prune all overgrown trees and shrubs.
- Remove or replace dead or diseased plants, shrubs and trees.
- Clean grease and oil stains from driveway.
- Weed flower beds.

Decks/Patios:

- Paint or stain worn areas in wood decks.
- Remove grass growing in concrete cracks; sweep off debris from shrubs and trees.
- Clean all deck rails and make sure they're secure; replace missing slats or posts.

Front door:

- Polish the hardware on the door until it shines.
- Add a fresh coat of paint to get rid of nicks.
- Clean the glass on the storm door; make certain the screen is secure.
- Make sure the doorbell operates properly and there are no squeaks when the door opens and closes.

Windows:

- Clean all windows—inside and out.
- If needed, add a fresh coat of paint to the window trims and sills.
- Make sure all windows open and close easily.
- Replace cracked windowpanes and those with broken seals.
- Make sure window screens are secure; replace any screens with holes or tears.

Entry:

- Clean entryway floors and area rugs.
- Downsize clutter in entry closet to give the appearance of spaciousness.
- Double-check entry lighting to make sure it is operating.

Living room/dining room/family room:

- Give the room a fresh coat of paint, if necessary.
- Repair cracks and holes in ceiling and walls.
- Make sure all wallpaper is secure.
- Repaint any woodwork that is worn or chipped.
- Clean draperies and blinds; open them to maximize light.
- Make sure draperies and blinds open and close.
- Wash windows.
- Steam-clean carpets. Clean rugs and wood flooring, and remove any stains or odors.
- Position the furniture to showcase the size and space of the room.
- Remove and replace any attached items, such as chandeliers and draperies, that you wish to move with you.
- Put away toys and hobby supplies; remove extra magazines and books from tables.

Kitchen:

- Make sure countertops and sinks are clean and stain-free.
- Fix dripping faucets.
- Organize pantry and cupboards so they appear clean, neat and spacious.
- Make sure the refrigerator and freezer are defrosted and free of odors.
- Clean the oven and cook-top thoroughly.

Bathrooms:

- Make sure sinks, tubs, showers and countertops are clean and free of stains.
- Repair any leaky faucets.
- Remove grout and soap stains from tile.
- Replace any missing or cracked tiles or grout.
- Make sure all joints are caulked.
- Make sure all fixtures, including heat lamps and exhaust fans, are operating.
- Install a new shower curtain.
- Store all supplies, such as toilet paper, shampoo bottles and cleansers.

Bedrooms:

- Repair cracks in ceiling and walls.
- Apply a fresh coat of paint if necessary.
- Make sure wallpaper is secure.
- Clean draperies and blinds; open them to maximize light.
- Put away toys, clothes.
- Neatly make up the beds.

Tidy extras:

- Plant flowers to brighten a walkway and enrich the entry.
- Remove any indoor houseplants that are brown or losing their leaves.
- Remove all “fixer” cars, campers and boats from the property.
- Discard the clutter of magazines on the coffee and end tables.
- Hide or get rid of worn-out throw pillows.
- Replace shower curtains and invest in a matching set of towels in the bathroom.
- At night, turn on porch light and outdoor lighting. Buyers often drive by homes they are considering at various times of day.