



PREPARING YOUR HOME TO SELL

If you are thinking of selling in the next few weeks, or even months from now, there are things you should do to get your home into tip-top shape. Here is a list of the most common items that I check when getting a home ready to sell:

Review walls and ceilings for small cracks. Repair these throughout. If there are larger cracks in the ceiling, walls, foundation, or driveway, these might be a sign of a problem that you may want to look at or fix before coming on the market.

Check the paint in each room. If the rooms need to be freshened up, paint is one of the cheapest ways to have big impact.

Wipe down all baseboards and trim. If there are scuffs, dents, or marks, if your trim has a wood look, you can touch up the stain and if they are painted and the scuffs won't come off, you may need to touch up the paint.

Make sure your ceiling is free of cobwebs and dust.

Clean all vents.

In the kitchen, cabinets (both inside and the doors) need a cleaning. I encourage sellers to declutter while they are at it. Buyers will look inside the cabinets, so I recommend boxing up the extra dishes, Tupperware, and spices while you are cleaning and making the insides nice and neat.

While you are in the kitchen, clean and tidy up the fridge. Again, less is more, so use up or toss all those extra salad dressing containers, mustard, and hot sauce packets.

Give appliances a thorough cleaning including the inside of the stove, the stovetop, grease traps, vacuum the back of the fridge, etc.

Remove all the papers and magnets that might be on the fridge.

Kitchen counters seem to attract a lot of clutter. I recommend clearing everything off and only putting back a few things that you are going to need for the next 90 days and that aren't visually distracting. For example, you might need a toaster and a coffee maker. As long as those look neat and in working order, they can stay. But don't leave a can of coffee on the counter. That goes in a cabinet.

The same type of cleaning you did in the kitchen cabinets need to be done in the bathroom. Clean out all drawers and cabinets and only replace what you need in the next 90 days. Remove everything from the bathroom counters except for soap or nicely-organized jars with Q-tips and cotton balls. Everything else should be stowed in cabinets neatly.

Edit your shower collection of shampoos, conditioner, body soap, etc, to only one bottle of each and remove extra razors and scrub brushes.



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Edit your towels to a single color that enhances the bathroom décor and make sure all family members know how to hang up the towels properly after use.

Check tile grout and replace if necessary. Do the same with the caulk.

Clean the bathroom fan.

Clean out the shower and tub drains.

Check all the light fixtures in the house to make sure they are working properly and to replace all burned out bulbs.

While you are doing that, check each light switch and clean the switchplates. You can also make sure that the plates for the outlets are in good working order.

Service the furnace and water heater. If you live in a rural area, it might be a good idea to have the septic inspected as well, although rules in different areas may affect when exactly you want to do this.

Usually I suggest that carpets get cleaned.

If wood floors are scuffed up, they may need to be refinished.

Clean all blinds and window treatments.

Clean out the fireplace and have the chimney inspected. Stage a log or two in the fireplace if you like. Clean glass doors and remove excess materials from the hearth and mantel.

Review your houseplant situation. Any that are barely hanging on should be removed or replaced.

Wash all windows and outside doors and make sure they slide freely. You may want to replace all windows that have a broken seal.

Analyze each room to make sure the function is clear. Any items that don't support that function should be removed. For example, if in the

master bedroom, there is workout equipment, a desk with piles of paperwork, and a dog crate, I would suggest removing the workout equipment, dog crate, and packaging up the paperwork. We want a nice, calm space.

While you are analyzing each room, declutter as much as possible. That means removing extra artwork that is cluttering up the walls, removing family tchotchkes and photography, and removing collections of things. For example, if you have collections of plates, Star Trek memorabilia, bells, etc, I suggest packing those up so the buyers can picture themselves in your home.

If you have kids, getting the house ready to sell can provide you with a great opportunity to go through their toys and clothes and get rid of things they have outgrown. Since toys can create a lot of clutter, give them a choice of perhaps 10 things they can keep while the home is on the market, and then make sure they know how to put those away when they are done playing.

Is anything broken or in need of repair? Believe it or not, the cost to fix these items now may be less than the perceived value the buyer may put on disrepair when making an offer. If your dog has scratched up a door beyond repair, there are deck boards broken, or a kitchen door is missing a handle, get it fixed before the home goes on the market. We want the buyers to feel that your home is well-taken care of.

If there is a challenge with odors in your home, you can possibly use room deodorants or disinfectant sprays (but beware that some buyers are sensitive to these so don't overuse). There are also products out there specially-designed to handle pet odors and you may want to rent an ozone system if the smell cannot be otherwise overcome or identified.

If the weather has done some damage to your home outside, repainting and caulking the seams is a good plan.

Make sure the front door looks especially, clean, freshly painted if applicable, and inviting.

Verify decks and railing are in good repair and are freshly stained and/or painted.



Get the roof cleaned of moss and dust and make sure there are no issues that should be addressed before the home goes on the market.

Clean the gutters.

Remove webs and bird droppings from eaves.

Pressure-wash all cement surfaces such as driveways and walkways.

Prune plants and trees so there is at least six inches or more of space between the plant and the house.

Prune or remove plants that are partially dead or don't look great and make sure to deadhead all dead flowers.

If your trees need work, such as removing dead branches, go ahead and get this taken care of.

Determine if mulch (bark, rocks, etc) needs to be replaced and do so.

Make sure all container plants and pots look fresh and organized neatly.

Areas that are graveled may need a fresh coat of gravel.

Wind up the hose neatly.

Keep the grass trimmed neatly. If there are bare patches, cultivate some grass and keep it green.

Apply the same decluttering principles to the deck and outdoor living spaces. If furniture and décor is mismatched, this will distract the buyer.

Make sure outdoor furniture cushions are cleaned. Add a pop of color with outdoor pillows, freshly-potted plants, and hanging baskets.

Clean the BBQ.

Make sure garage door opener works.

Remove excess clutter from garage. Belongings should be neatly organized on racks or in cabinets wherever possible.

Clean the garage. Keep the floor swept. Depending on what you have in the garage, some people will use a leaf blower to clean out dust that is sitting on belongings and in corners.

If applicable, make sure crawl space under the house is clear of garbage, pests, etc. We may want to put down new plastic sheeting on the ground if needed.

And of course, give your home a thorough cleaning!

There may be additional custom items for your home that need to be added to this list. Although this may seem overwhelming, addressing each item will bring in more potential buyers. If you are ready for your custom plan, give me a call.