

Preparing Your Home To Sell

The condition of your home can either detract from or enhance its appeal. This checklist is designed to provide you with an easy and systematic approach to improving your home's sales appeal. Six steps are outlined in the checklist. Please note:

- The checklist is most effective when you review the steps in order.
- Some items (i.e. lawn, kitchen, bath, etc.) appear in multiple categories. However, you will be checking for different things in each category.
- The first three steps involve removing detractions. These are must-do's because they will catch the buyer's attention and leave a negative impression if not corrected.
- The last three steps involve making enhancements. These are suggestions that may help your home shine and stand out from others on the market.

Be sure to consult with your real estate professional and get his or her suggestions for your personal selling situation.

Good Luck — you're well on your way to a successful sale!

Major Repairs

The items in this section may result in substantial expense; but if you have obvious problems, it's important to fix them or they may prevent your home from selling.

Following are the items buyers will perceive as needing major repairs. **Consider replacing, repairing or repainting if they are damaged, defective or worn out.**

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| EXTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Windows | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Heater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalks | <input type="checkbox"/> Screens | <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steps | INTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driveway | <input type="checkbox"/> Flooring | <input type="checkbox"/> Basement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foundation | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceilings & Walls | (moisture) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Siding | <input type="checkbox"/> Paint & | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roof | Wallpaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Septic Tank |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gutters/ Downspouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Trim | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fencing | <input type="checkbox"/> Countertops | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Appliances | |

Depersonalizing

Depersonalizing involves removing those items that reflect your family's personal tastes. It is an inexpensive process that will have a great impact on your home's appearance.

Remove and store the following...either out-of-sight or neatly packed up and out of the way.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| EXTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening Tools Toys & Sports Equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicles (put in garage) | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailers | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn Equipment |

INTERIOR

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerator | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines/ Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> Awards/Trophies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magnets | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal | <input type="checkbox"/> Collections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Valuables | <input type="checkbox"/> Knick-Knacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Photos | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters | <input type="checkbox"/> Curios |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork |

Cleaning & Maintenance

A house that is dirty and disorganized will stop a buyer cold. Before putting your home on the market, perform a thorough cleaning and maintenance check. Remember...your home must be ready to show at ALL times, so continue with ongoing daily and weekly cleaning.

MAINTENANCE

Make certain each of the following are operable and in good condition (i.e. secure, not broken or damaged, etc.).

EXTERIOR

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees & Shrubs | <input type="checkbox"/> Door Hinges | <input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Windowpanes | <input type="checkbox"/> Door Handles & Locks | <input type="checkbox"/> Tub and Shower Caulking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Windows (move freely) | INTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Drains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chimney | <input type="checkbox"/> Walls (spackle & paint) | <input type="checkbox"/> Faucets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Lights | <input type="checkbox"/> Handrails | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garage Door Opener | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Switches & Plugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioner & Furnace Filters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doorbell | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Fixtures | |

MAJOR CLEANING

Perform a "cleaning overhaul" of your home. The items on this list should be cleaned from top to bottom and neatly organized or manicured. You may even want to consider professional services.

EXTERIOR

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceilings | <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen (must be extra clean) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shrubs & Trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Fixtures | • cupboards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garage (grease spots) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceiling Fans | • drawers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Front Entrance | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Cords (remove or hide) | • refrigerator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace (incl. chimney) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fireplaces | • freezer (defrost) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closets | <input type="checkbox"/> Closets | • oven |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sinks (leak stains) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sinks (leak stains) | • stove and vent fan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plants (remove if unhealthy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Plants (remove if unhealthy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom (must be extra clean) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boxes (store in neat piles) | <input type="checkbox"/> Boxes (store in neat piles) | • regrout tile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace | <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioner | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioner | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attic | <input type="checkbox"/> Attic | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basement | <input type="checkbox"/> Basement | |

ONGOING CLEANING

Continue with daily/weekly yardwork (i.e. mowing, trimming) and general cleaning (i.e. vacuuming, dusting, disinfecting, picking up)

EXTERIOR

- Lawn
 - remove pet droppings
- Shrubs
- Driveway
- Sidewalks
- Front Entrance
- Patio/Deck
- Remove Snow (if applicable)
- Rake Leaves (if applicable)
- Close Garage Doors

INTERIOR

- Litter Boxes
- Trash Cans
- Ashtrays
- Laundry
- Carpets/Throw Rugs
- Wood & Tile Floors
- Windows
- Furniture
- Woodwork
- Mirrors & Glass
- Make beds

- Clutter (picked up, inside & out)
- Kitchen Counters & Appliances
- Dishes
- Bathrooms

5-Sense Appeal

Buyers will discover your home through the five senses... sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. By enhancing your home to appeal to each sense, you maximize the likelihood that buyers will desire your home.

Consider doing the following steps to increase your home's sales appeal... the rewards could be substantial.

SIGHT

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manicure the front lawn | <input type="checkbox"/> Turn all lights on for showings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trim low tree limbs | <input type="checkbox"/> Open or remove curtains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prune shrubs | <input type="checkbox"/> Remove unnecessary pieces of furniture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remove weeds | <input type="checkbox"/> Rearrange furniture to create space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Powerwash the exterior | <input type="checkbox"/> Light a fire in the fireplace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paint or stain the front door | <input type="checkbox"/> Repaint walls that reflect personal taste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polish house numbers, front door handles & mailbox | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use higher wattage light bulbs | |

SOUND

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Close windows that back up to busy roads | <input type="checkbox"/> Play soft music (jazz or easy listening) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turn off all televisions | <input type="checkbox"/> Remove yourselves, pets & children during showings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turn off all appliances (i.e. dishwashers, laundry) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fix all squeaks (i.e. stairs, floors, hinges) | |

5-Sense Appeal (cont'd from page 4)

TASTE

- Make home appear appetizing. Buyers should be able to visualize themselves eating there.
- Sanitize kitchen sink and counters
- Clean oven
- Clean refrigerator (put fresh baking soda on shelf)
- Display a basket of fruit

TOUCH

- Add soft/padded rugs to hard floors
- Oil drawers, cabinets and door mechanisms
- Set room temperature around 68°-72°
- Run a dehumidifier in the basement

SMELL

Eliminate negative smells:

- Pet odors (may require professional cleaning)
- Smoke (may require professional cleaning)
- Food odors (i.e. garlic, cooking oil, fish)
- Air fresheners (they make it seem as if your hiding something)
- Trash cans & compactors (add baking soda)

Add pleasant scents:

- Fresh flowers
- Light potpourri (cinnamon or vanilla)
- Candles (they absorb odors)
- Put a lemon down the dispoal
- Sprinkle vanilla extract on oven walls, heat to 350°
- Cinnamon or pinch of cloves in boiling water
- Lilac and rose scented soaps in the baths

Detailing

Detailing is the process of adding extra touches and accents that are subtle but have a huge impact on buyers' emotions. These extra touches will make it easier for buyers to see themselves living in the home. **Consider adding the following details:**

EXTERIOR

- Sealcoat driveway
- Replace old storm doors with full view doors
- Replace old house numbers with brass numbers
- Replace old mailbox & outside light with brass
- Add flowers in window boxes
- Add potted or hanging flowers to the front entrance
- Hang a wreath on the front door
- Consider adding shutters painted with contrasting colors
- Clean downspouts/gutters

INTERIOR

- Display fresh or dried flower arrangement in living room & entry way
- Place fresh flowers on dining and coffee tables
- Display large green plants throughout the home (be careful not to overdo it)
- Set dining table with plates, flatware, glasses & cloth napkins w/rings
- Apply polyurethane to cabinets, woodwork and exposed brick
- Paint ceilings with a pure white semi-gloss
- Add trim moldings to enhance rooms with standard eight-foot ceilings
- Replace economy light fixtures with attractive fixtures
- Install combination ceiling fan/light fixtures where appropriate
- Install a dimmer switch in the dining room
- Replace switch or plug plates with brass or wood
- Cover switch or plug plates with matching wallpaper
- Add a set of matching towels, flowers & scented soaps in bathrooms
- Replace shower curtains
- Install flourescent lighting in basement.
- Replace ordinary slab doors with paneled doors

SEASONAL TIPS

Summer

- Set air conditioning to cooler temperature
- Keep lawn watered

Fall

- Hang a harvest wreath on door
- Display pumpkins and autumn flower arrangements

Winter

- Setup a place for boots and shoes
- Place a rug and/or plastic runner near front door
- Keep a crackling fire burning in the fireplace
- Shovel sidewalks then sand any ice
- Build a snowman in the front yard

Spring

- Plant outdoor flowers (especially in front)
- Hang a bright-colored wreath on the front door

Major Improvements

In most cases major improvements rarely result in a dollar-for-dollar return, but they might mean the difference between selling or not selling. Be careful not to overimprove by adding amenities that are uncommon in your neighborhood or price range.

NOTE: This list may include items that seem extreme for your geographic region, neighborhood or price range. The list is designed to provide you with ideas and certainly not all of them will apply.

Before making any major improvements, please check with your real estate professional; he or she has the experience to make suggestions for your home.

- Garage Door Opener
- Additional Telephone Outlets
- Skylights
- Security System
- Yard Lights
- Deck or Patio
- Yard Shed
- Garage
- Fireplace
- Central Air Conditioning
- Sprinkler System
- Bay or Garden Windows
- Hot Tub or Swimming Pool
- Landscaping
- Update/Remodel Kitchen
 - replace outdated appliances
 - add disposal
 - add a double oven
 - install new flooring
 - add new countertops
- Update Bathrooms
 - add whirlpool tub
 - new ceramic tile
 - new toilet or vanity
 - add an additional or guest bath

Inclusions & Exclusions

This section deals with those items that you do not intend to sell, but are often mistaken as fixtures by buyers. Whenever practical, remove items not intended for sale prior to showings.

Be sure to talk with your real estate professional about the items on this list and any others that might be applicable to your own selling situation.

- Appliances
- Chandeliers/Light Fixtures
- Shelving
- Bookcases
- Mirrors
- Draperies
- Faucets
- Firewood
- Gazebos
- Basketball Hoops
- Dog Runs/Kennels
- Fuel Oil
- Carpeting
- Grills
- Birdhouses
- Landscaping/Yard Ornaments

Compliments of: