

HOME SALE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

CLEAN

- Remove clutter: picture frames, accessories, papers, files, books, music, magazines, small appliances, electronics, collectibles, toys, and decorative objects.
- Scrub all surfaces—think hotel clean.
- The home should be free of all smells including animals, food, and cigarette smoke. Remove potpourri, scented candles, and air fresheners.
- Clean the baseboards in the entire home—this is where the most dust and dirt collects that is often overlooked.
- Clean windows and sills inside and out—let the light in!
- Don't neglect the closets—potential buyers will peek in here too. Keep them tidy and clean.
- Large appliances should be cleaned inside, out, and under.
- Clean all light fixtures and ceiling fans—dangling spiderwebs are not attractive to home buyers.
- Have carpets professionally cleaned and consider replacing them if they are too worn.
- Hardwoods should be mopped and oiled or waxed to give new life and shine.
- Steam curtains and dust blinds.
- Keep the bed linens clean and the beds made.
- Remove caked-on peeling paint from window casings and sills—top with fresh coat of paint.
- Clean off shelves and display just a few purposeful objects.
- Remove grease and grime from kitchen cabinet doors.
- Clean and tidy inside the kitchen and bathroom cabinets.

REPAIR

- Check all doors to make sure that the hardware is in good working order, and replace if needed.
- Do all the windows open easily and have a secure window lock?
- Re-glaze the bathtub if needed—this is an easy way to cover pink and aqua of times past.
- Check that caulking is clean and not peeling away in kitchen and bath—if so, have it replaced.
- Repair any cracks in ceilings and walls.
- Fill in holes left by picture hangers and wall art.
- Touch up paint.
- Repair any leaky faucets or supply valves.
- Replace showerheads and toilets with low-flow models that meet government retrofit criteria.
- Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors to comply with current regulations.
- Make sure water heater is double strapped to comply with current regulations.
- If you can, repair chipped or broken tiles you have in the house.
- Ensure all outlets and light switches are working, hire an electrician if they need to be fixed or replaced.
- Adding dimmers is an inexpensive luxury that potential buyers will appreciate.
- Replace old, dirty, and paint-covered electrical covers with new ones.
- Put the right bulbs in light fixtures—make sure there are no bulbs burned out inside or outside of the home.

DECORATE

- Take down overly fussy window-treatments—replace with simple, clean blinds or curtains to allow light in.
- If you are taking certain fixtures with you, remove and replace them before listing the home. A buyer can't argue about wanting them if they don't see them.
- Keep colors neutral on the furniture and walls, but don't be bland. Introduce a little color through thoughtfully-placed accessories like pillows or pottery.
- A fresh coat of paint can do wonders—consider using a low-VOC/non-toxic paint to eliminate the overpowering new paint smell.
- Place vases of fresh flowers or potted plants inside for added life.
- Mow the lawn, plant flowers in beds and window boxes, and place a few bright pots at the entry.
- Each room should have a clear use—rearrange and move furniture if necessary for buyers to see how the room can be used.
- Buy a pretty house-number sign for the front door.
- Keep clean, crisp towels in the bathrooms. Buy new ones if your existing towels are worn.
- Add mirrors to add light and spaciousness.

This is the one time to make the home look as neutral and depersonalized as a catalog!