

Home Preparation Checklist

Good pictures are crucial marketing tools for selling a home. It begins with a home professionally photographed as an important part of effective marketing. Homeowners and Realtors® depend on high-quality, high-resolution images not just to sell the home, but to sell it at a higher price, sooner.

I will be photographing both the inside and outside of your home. I'll be photographing all of the major rooms. We normally do not photograph the garage unless it has special features (finished or has a heater).

If you have special features of your home that are not obvious, please let me know to be sure I include them in the shoot.

Key Advice: De-Clutter and De-Personalize!

The goal is to enable potential buyers to project themselves into the home.

Remember that you are selling the room and not the furniture.

This list is DETAILED & COMPLETE but you don't have to check off everything!

Inside

- Make the home look as roomy as possible. This may require storing some items
- Dust everything!
- Windows and mirrors should be clean
- Remove rugs. Unbroken floor space increases perceived square footage.
- Turn on all interior lights and make sure all light fixture bulbs are working
- De-clutter rooms which may be excessively furnished. They do not photograph well.
- Walls should not have too many items hanging on them such as family photos or art work.
- Keep shelves free of too many books

Kitchen

- Clear countertops almost completely. Just leave out a couple "nice" items.
- Leave out max of one small appliance (ex. coffee maker)
- Sink should be free from dishes or other items
- Clear outside of refrigerator of magnets, photos, etc.
- Hide the pet food bowls

Dining Room/Table

- Clear table, dust and polish the table top
- Use decorative place setting if available
- Feature one center piece such as a bouquet of flowers or bowl of fruit
- Straighten all chairs and space them evenly
- Remove child seats/booster chairs

Living/Family Room

- Arrange furniture to create a beautiful & comfortable space
- Have a nice coffee table book as décor
- Remove magazines (look trashy & cluttered)
- Bookshelves: arrange in nice pattern
- Clean up electronic cords
- De-clutter fireplace mantel/hearth
- Clean interior of fireplace and re-paint if needed
- Remove kid's toys in main living room

Bedrooms

- Beds are made & tidy
- Excess pillows and throw blankets should be put away
- Clothes hung, or folded and put away
- Clear nightstands of all personal items
- Remove all clutter from top of dressers
- Remove personalized names from walls
- Remove wall stickers/posters
- Remove diaper genies
- Walk In Closets: Clean, tidy, nicely hung clothing, floors clean. Photo usually taken from across the room and rarely is there a single image of just the closet.
- Clean under bed, removing items that may show in the photos
- Put away tissue boxes

Bathrooms

- Clear countertops completely of personal items. **No** soap, toothbrushes, medications, deodorant, etc.
- Clean mirror
- Clean or replace shower curtain
- Close toilet seats.
- Remove cloth toilet lid covers & floor mats
- Shower and tub: remove the shampoo, soaps, washcloths, and baby toys

Laundry Room

- Remove clothes
- Hide cleaning supplies, brooms, mops

Garage

- Remove all vehicles
- Clean, de-cluttered
- As much off the floor as possible

Outside

- Remove all vehicles from driveways and do not park directly in front of the house
- Close garage door
- Move garbage cans to the street (or hide them)
- Clean up yard: mow, trim bushes, rake yard & remove all garden tools
- Trim trees and overgrown shrubs. Try to have a clear view of the front of the house
- Remove empty planters
- Clean & Sweep driveways, sidewalks, decks, staircases
- Wrap up garden hoses & put them away in the garage or shed
- Remove toys, sports balls, etc.
- Check all light fixtures
- Remove cobwebs
- Pool should be clean with clear water
- Shovel the snow in winter
- Clear back yard of pet waste/toys

Other

- Pack up personal or seasonal collections (your moving anyway)
- Try to make all your rooms look as spacious and neat as possible
- Contain pets in the garage or out of sight. Hide the pet toys, food bowl, bed, etc.

Just Prior to the Photographer Arriving

- Fresh flowers or a bowl of fruit in the kitchen adds some color & decoration
- Open the blinds/curtains for good light
- Turn ALL interior and exterior lights ON
- Turn OFF all ceiling fans
- Turn OFF the TV(s) & Computer Screens
- Turn ON the fireplace
- Turn on pool fountains/water features
- Fluff and arrange furniture pillows

Hide or Remove (out of site):

- Personal photographs (or replace with general landscape/object photographs)
- Small floor rugs to reveal actual flooring
- Place all shoes/jackets in closets
- Garbage cans
- Cleaning Supplies
- Magazines
- Tissue Boxes
- Personal items in the bathrooms (soap, toothbrushes, shampoo...)
- Open the shower curtain(s) and have no items in the shower
- Evidence of pets (bowls, bed, toys)
- Remove Child Gates or other visible child-proof equipment
- Pets should be out of site (take them for a walk or hide them in a room temporarily)
- TV Remotes
- Religious Items
- Political Items

A Little Bit of Preparation Goes a Long Way

If your real estate photographer arrives, and they see that the home has not been prepared for the photo shoot, then you might be charged a cancellation fee and be forced to reschedule. Or, the photographer might move forward with the photo shoot, but the results will be unprofessional and they will not look good on your real estate listing. It is very important that you spend the time that is needed to make sure that your home is prepared so that the photographer has something to work with.