



The Ultimate Pre-Listing
**HOME SALE
PREP GUIDE**



PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

Congratulations on taking the Step to Sell your *home!*

While you've likely heard about cleaning and decluttering, ***successful sellers know that true preparation goes far beyond the basics.*** This comprehensive guide will walk you through not just the obvious, but also the hidden elements that make a dramatic difference in how buyers perceive and experience your home.

Buyers aren't just purchasing a house—they're imagining their future life. Every detail, even ones you might not notice after years of living in your home, shapes their emotional connection to the property.

Have you ever wondered what buyers are really thinking during a showing? Or where they're actually looking? This guide answers those questions with insights gathered from hundreds of successful home sales.



***Let's prepare your home to make the
strongest possible impression!***



ENTRY & LIVING AREAS

FIRST IMPRESSION ESSENTIALS



- Remove ALL pet evidence (beds, toys, bowls)
- Check ceiling corners for cobwebs
- Wipe down light switch plates and door handles
- Vacuum furniture (including under cushions)
- Ensure entry and main living area lights work
- Remove excess furniture to create open flow
- Clear entryway of shoes and jackets

UNEXPECTED PLACES BUYERS LOOK



- Inside the coat closet (yes, they check storage!)
- Under the sofa (when they sit down)
- Inside built-in cabinets
- Your bookshelves (what do they say about you?)
- Around TV areas and electronics
- Behind doors (for wall damage)
- Inside drawers in living room furniture



What Not To Worry About?

- ✓ Minor scuffs on walls
- ✓ Slightly worn carpet in low-traffic areas
- ✓ Small nail holes from pictures
- ✓ Cosmetic issues that would be part of future updates
- ✓ Features that would require major renovation

Valuable *Reflection*

Have you walked into your home as if for the first time? Try entering through the front door with fresh eyes. What catches your attention first? Is it positive or negative?



KITCHEN & DINING



FIRST IMPRESSION ESSENTIALS

- Empty the sink completely (no soap, sponges, etc.)
- Clear ALL countertops (minimal appliances only)
- Clean inside the microwave and oven
- Remove all magnets/papers from refrigerator
- Clean major appliance exteriors thoroughly
- Remove garbage cans or ensure they're empty
- Clear table of all items or set simply



HIDDEN ELEMENTS BUYERS NOTICE

- Under-sink area (buyers always check this)
- Inside the refrigerator (yes, they look!)
- Pantry organization (even behind closed doors)
- Inside the oven (they'll check!)
- Above cabinets (dust collects here)
- Under the kitchen table (for crumbs)
- Inside the microwave



What Not To Worry About?

- ✓ Older appliances still in good working condition
- ✓ Cabinets doors with minor imperfections
- ✓ Minor grout discoloration
- ✓ Well-maintained but outdated countertops
- ✓ Older fixtures that still work well
- ✓ small scratches on countertops

Valuable *Reflection*

What three spots in your kitchen would draw immediate attention? Focus your efforts there for maximum impact.

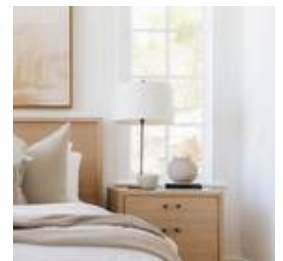




BEDROOMS & CLOSETS



FIRST IMPRESSION ESSENTIALS



- Make beds with clean linens
- Remove items from under beds (buyers look here!)
- Pare down closets to show space (50% capacity ideal)
- Remove personal items from nightstands
- Ensure bedroom lighting works well
- Remove excess furniture if space feels tight
- Secure valuables and personal items

SECURITY & PRIVACY PRIORITIES

- Remove and secure ALL valuables (jewelry, cash, firearms)
- Secure medication in locked containers or remove entirely
- Hide financial statements, mail, and bills
- Remove personal photos you don't want handled
- Secure important documents
- Hide keys to other properties or vehicles
- Remove personal journals/diaries

THE UNEXPECTED PLACES BUYERS LOOK



- Under mattresses (yes, really!)
- Inside dresser drawers
- On shelves in walk-in closets
- Inside bedside tables
- Behind headboards
- Inside decorative boxes
- Between mattress and box sprin

What Not To Worry About?

- ✓ Minor scuffs on walls
- ✓ Small carpet wear in low-traffic areas
- ✓ Slightly dated light fixtures that work
- ✓ Window treatments that function but aren't stylish
- ✓ Minor cosmetic issues that would be part of future updates

Valuable *Reflection*

How does your bedroom make you feel when you first walk in? Calm? Cluttered? Your bedroom should evoke feelings of tranquility and space—does it?



BATHROOMS



FIRST IMPRESSION ESSENTIALS

- Remove ALL personal hygiene products
- Keep medications secured outside the bathroom
- Clear countertops completely
- Replace shower curtain if not pristine
- Clean thoroughly, especially around fixtures
- Hang fresh, matching towels
- Empty trash cans completely
- Clean mirrors to sparkle

THE UNEXPECTED PLACES BUYERS LOOK

- The medicine cabinet (empty it!)
- Inside the shower/tub (check corners for mildew)
- Behind the toilet
- Under the sink
- Inside linen closets
- Inside the toilet bowl (stains)
- At ceiling for evidence of moisture

What Not To Worry About?

- ✓ Older countertops in good condition
- ✓ Dated but clean tile
- ✓ Cosmetic fixture issues if they function properly
- ✓ Minor grout discoloration (if clean)
- ✓ Older but functioning ventilation fans
- ✓ Minor cosmetic flaws likely to be updated later

Valuable *Reflection*

Bathrooms are critical selling points! Is yours sparkling clean even if not updated? Cleanliness will play a huge role in their buyers buying decisions.



GARAGE & STORAGE AREAS



FIRST IMPRESSION ESSENTIALS

- Clear enough floor space to walk easily
- Organize visibly with simple systems
- Clean up major oil/fluid stains
- Ensure adequate lighting for showing
- Organize storage boxes neatly
- Secure any dangerous items/chemicals
- Ensure the garage door opener works

SECURITY & PRIVACY PRIORITIES

- Remove expensive tools and equipment
- Clean out the refrigerator/freezer if you have one
- Remove personal memorabilia and valuables
- Secure bicycles and expensive sporting equipment
- Hide financial records in storage boxes
- Move valuable lawn equipment to a secure location

THE UNEXPECTED PLACES BUYERS LOOK

- Inside storage cabinets
- At the ceiling (for water stains)
- Behind stored items (for wall condition)
- At electrical panels
- Inside utility sinks
- In rafters and overhead storage

What Not To Worry About?

- ✓ Minor floor stains
- ✓ Wall dings and marks
- ✓ Unfinished areas that are typical for garages
- ✓ Lack of built-in storage systems
- ✓ Older but functioning garage door systems
- ✓ Concrete cracks that aren't structural

Valuable *Reflection*

Garages should appear functional and spacious. Does yours have enough clear space to imagine parking and still accessing storage?



OUTDOOR SPACES

FIRST IMPRESSION ESSENTIALS



- Remove children's toys from the yard
- Store garbage and recycling bins out of sight
- Clean outdoor furniture
- Sweep walkways and patio/deck
- Remove personal decor (flamingos, gnomes, etc.)
- Trim bushes from walkways and windows
- Mow lawn and edge for neat appearance
- Add simple, colorful potted plants at entry

THE UNEXPECTED PLACES BUYERS LOOK

- Side yards (often forgotten)
- Under deck or patio
- Behind sheds or outbuildings
- Pool equipment areas
- Window wells
- A/C unit surroundings
- Garden hose condition and storage
- Behind bushes near the foundation

What Not To Worry About?



- ✓ Small concrete cracks that don't pose a hazard
- ✓ Less than perfect lawn if generally maintained
- ✓ Dated but functional patio furniture
- ✓ Older but functional outdoor lighting
- ✓ Cosmetic fence issues if structurally sound
- ✓ Features that would require major renovation
- ✓ Older play equipment that's safe and functional

Valuable *Reflection*

The outdoor space is your home's first impression. Stand at the curb and look at your property. What draws your eye first? Focus your effort there.



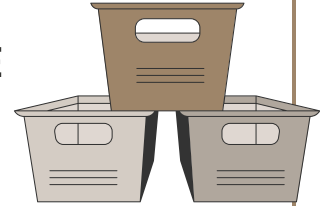
LIFESTYLE ADJUSTMENTS

SHOW-READY



DAILY LIFE

MAKING DAILY LIFE SHOW-READY



- Create a "showing day" bin for quick cleanup
- Designate a hidden spot for charging electronics
- Plan for pet accommodation during showings
- Create systems for mail and package management
- Prepare "grab and go" bags for quick exits
- Create a showing day checklist
- Establish a family routine for showing prep

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Work From Home:** Create a clean, organized workspace
- **Children:** Simple toy storage solutions
- **Pets:** Have a plan for pet removal during showings
- **Hobbies:** Organize equipment neatly
- **Medical Equipment:** Store discreetly but accessibly
- **Package Deliveries:** Create a management system
- **Laundry:** Keep caught up and stored away

What Not To Stress About?

- ✓ Evidence that children live there
- ✓ Home office if organized
- ✓ Functional hobby areas if tidy
- ✓ Pet areas if clean
- ✓ Normal daily living can continue
- ✓ Perfect styling in every room

Valuable *Reflection*

What aspects of your daily life would be most challenging to manage during showings? Focus your systems there to reduce stress.



SHOWING DAY QUICK-FIXES

PRIVATE SHOWING PREPARATION (15-MINUTE PLAN)

- Open all blinds/curtains for maximum light
- Turn on ALL lights (even in closets)
- Set thermostat to comfortable temperature (72° in
- Quick vacuum of high-traffic areas
- Wipe down bathroom counters and toilet seats
- Empty all trash cans
- Check for pet hair on furniture
- Put away personal items on counters
- Secure valuables and medications
- Leave the house 15 minutes before showing time
- Close closet doors if contents aren't perfectly organized
- Quick check for fingerprints on glass and mirrors



OPEN HOUSE PREPARATION (ADDITIONAL STEPS)

- Remove all valuables and sensitive documents
- Secure smaller electronics or remove them
- Put away ALL family photos
- Schedule pet boarding if possible
- Lock office/desk drawers
- Hide all medications completely
- Secure garage and storage areas
- Remove keys from key hooks/storage
- Hide mail and financial documents





LAST-MINUTE EMERGENCY FIXES

- **Smells:** Vanilla extract in oven at low temperature
- **Dusty surfaces:** Dryer sheets work in a pinch
- **Water spots:** Microfiber cloth with vinegar solution
- **Fingerprints on stainless:** Small amount of olive oil
- **Floor debris:** Sticky lint roller
- **Scuffed walls:** Magic eraser for quick touch-ups
- **Pet hair:** Rubber gloves run over surfaces
- **Wrinkled bedding:** Quick spritz of wrinkle release

Digital Security Reminders



- ✓ Password protect all computers
- ✓ Log out of all accounts
- ✓ Turn off smart speaker listening
- ✓ Hide router information
- ✓ Lock down smart home features
- ✓ Check TV browser history

Valuable *Reflection*

*What's your 15-minute emergency cleanup plan?
Having a system prevents panic when last-minute showings are requested.*



FINAL WALKTHROUGH CHECKLIST

Room-by-Room *Final Check*

➤ ENTRY/LIVING AREAS

- Entry clear of shoes and coats
- Living spaces decluttered
- Pillows arranged neatly
- Technology wires managed
- Remote controls hidden

➤ KITCHEN/DINING

- Counters clear and wiped
- Sink empty and clean
- Appliances wiped down
- Dining table clear or set simply
- No evidence of recent meals

➤ BEDROOMS

- Beds made
- Nightstands organized
- Clothing put away
- Nothing visible under beds
- Closet doors closed

➤ BATHROOMS

- Personal items removed
- Counters clear and clean
- Shower curtain/doors closed
- Fresh towels displayed
- Toilet clean

➤ OUTDOOR AREAS

- Entry swept
- Garbage bins hidden
- Toys put away
- Door and walkway clear

QUICK SCAN CHECKLIST

- All lights turned on
- All doors unlocked for easy flow
- Temperature set to comfortable level
- All personal items secured
- All counters cleared and wiped
- Pet evidence removed
- Trash emptied completely
- Fresh towels in bathrooms
- Toilet lids closed
- Beds made
- Window treatments open
- Floors cleared of obvious debris
- No dishes in sink
- Mail and paperwork hidden

Let's prep *smart* together!

I understand the balance between preparing your home effectively and avoiding unnecessary stress or expense. This practical approach helps you make a great impression without overspending on items that can be addressed during negotiations.

The goal is to *showcase your home's potential while making the selling process as smooth as possible* for you and your family.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PREPARING YOUR SPECIFIC PROPERTY? LET'S TALK!

Jenny Graham

LOCAL MARKET EXPERT

Santy Phillips Group at REAL Brokerage



559.904.6436



jengrahamrealtor@gmail.com



jengrahamrealtor.com

LET'S FOCUS ON WHAT TRULY MATTERS—
CHAT WITH ME TO GET STARTED!

