

The Pre-Listing Repair Triage Sheet

A simple, room-by-room way to know what's actually worth fixing before you list your Virginia Beach home — and what to leave alone, based on real cost-vs-return data.

Before you spend a dollar getting your home ready to sell, sort every project you're considering into one of three piles below. Most sellers over-invest in the wrong things and under-invest in the ones that actually move a buyer. This sheet fixes that in about five minutes.

● Fix This First

Low cost, broad appeal, strong return — do these on almost every listing.

- ✓ **Deep clean, top to bottom** — carpets, grout, windows, baseboards. Costs almost nothing, buyers notice it immediately.
- ✓ **Declutter & depersonalize every room** — the cheapest square-footage "upgrade" there is.
- ✓ **Fresh neutral paint** on scuffed walls or bold accent colors. **Consistently one of the highest-returning projects.**
- ✓ **Fix anything actually broken** — leaky faucets, running toilets, loose railings, dead outlets. Small broken things make buyers assume big hidden ones.
- ✓ **Curb appeal basics** — mow, edge, fresh mulch, pressure-wash siding & driveway, clean or repaint the front door.
- ✓ **Lighting** — swap dated fixtures, use warm high-wattage bulbs, replace anything burnt out.
- ✓ **Minor kitchen refresh** — new hardware, re-caulk counters, deep-clean grout. **Often returns well over 100% of cost.**
- ✓ **Garage door & front entry door**, if dated or damaged. **Two of the highest-ROI projects nationally.**

● Skip This

Expensive, poor return, and it can shrink your buyer pool — leave these alone before you list.

- ✗ **Installing a swimming pool.** **~25% return** — many buyers see it as a liability, not a feature.
- ✗ **A full, high-end kitchen gut.** **~40% return** on \$80K–\$150K spent — do the minor refresh above instead.
- ✗ **A primary suite or major addition.** **~35% return** — can also price your home above what your street's comps support.
- ✗ **Solar panels bought just to help the sale.** **~25–30% return**, and loan or lease terms can complicate closing.
- ✗ **Converting the garage** into an office or bonus room. **~30% return** — and it removes a feature many buyers, especially relocating families, are counting on.
- ✗ **An elaborate backyard patio or landscaping overhaul.** **~35–45% return** — easy to out-improve your own block.

● Ask Me Before You Decide

These genuinely depend on your specific home, your buyer pool, and your timeline — not a one-size-fits-all answer.

- ? **Roof age or visible wear** — sometimes worth replacing, sometimes fine to disclose and credit at closing.
- ? **HVAC age or performance** — depends on age, inspection risk, and your buyer pool.
- ? **Flooring** — new carpet vs. refinishing existing hardwood underneath it.
- ? **Popcorn ceiling removal.**
- ? **Reversing a prior conversion** — e.g., turning a converted garage back into a garage.
- ? **Fence repair or replacement.**
- ? **Anything flagged on a pre-listing inspection.**

Room-by-Room Walkthrough

KITCHEN

- ☐ Deep clean appliances
- ☐ Re-caulk counters
- ☐ Update hardware
- ☐ Fix sink leaks

EXTERIOR & CURB APPEAL

- ☐ Mow & edge
- ☐ Pressure-wash
- ☐ Fresh mulch
- ☐ Clean/paint front door

BATHROOMS

- ☐ Re-caulk tub/shower
- ☐ New toilet seat
- ☐ Fresh grout
- ☐ Fix running toilets

GARAGE

- ☐ Keep it a garage
- ☐ Fix dented door
- ☐ Clean & organize

LIVING AREAS & BEDROOMS

- ☐ Declutter fully
- ☐ Touch up paint
- ☐ Depersonalize decor
- ☐ Patch nail holes

SYSTEMS & SAFETY

- ☐ Test smoke/CO alarms
- ☐ Address visible leaks
- ☐ Fix exposed wiring
- ☐ Note roof/HVAC age

Not sure which pile something on your house belongs in? That's exactly the conversation I have with Virginia Beach homeowners every week — whether you're buying, selling, investing, or figuring out a relocation.

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Know your home. Know your numbers. **Know** your move.