

Preparing a House to Sell

Many buyers peruse neighborhoods looking at listed properties from the outside before inquiring with the listing agent to show them the inside. A first impression is hard to shake and if the prospective buyer doesn't like the house from the outside, they probably won't inquire at all. To get them past the front door, you need to add some curb appeal. Here's a list of items that will definitely add value to your home.

Outside Maintenance

- *Clear* your gutters and downspouts of debris (leaves, sticks, etc.) that may block the flow of water from your roof.
- *Properly grade* the area under your downspouts and around your house, so rainwater flows away from your foundation. Splash blocks can help rainwater at downspouts flow in the proper direction. If necessary, add extensions to your downspouts.
- *Plantings* should be set away from the foundation to ensure regular watering does not add to soil moisture around the basement. Lawn sprinklers should not hit the house or the area next to the foundation.
- *Ensure* that landscaping around the foundation (sidewalks, patios, gardens, etc.) starts at 8 inches down from the top of your foundation wall and slopes away from the home. Failure to do so may cause moisture to build up at or around the foundation and promote the environment for mold growth.
- *Keep mulch*, dirt and other landscaping material away from veneer drainage system weep holes commonly found on, but not limited to masonry and stucco homes. The veneer drainage system diverts water away from the interior of the exterior wall system and the weep holes allow the water to escape the wall. If the weep holes are blocked or clogged with debris, mold may form on the interior of the exterior walls. The weep holes are found at the bottom of the finished veneer.
- *Sidewalks*, steps and exterior foundation cracks should be filled or pared to bring up to date.
- *Caulking* around windows, doors, chimney/siding cavity, foundation, and other common leakage points is necessary to prevent any moisture intrusion.

Inside Maintenance

- *Clean* everything in sight. The kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms and general living spaces, and clean/test household appliances and equipment. No matter what physical condition the property is in, it should be clean, tidy and uncluttered.
- *You want buyers* to view your home as their potential home. Therefore put away family photos, sports trophies, collectable items, knick-knacks and souvenirs. Put them in a box or a rented storage area for a few months.
- *Shampoo* rugs and wax floors.
- *Wash walls* and use a broom to clear cobwebs from the corners of rooms and closets.
- *Wash windows* and clean blinds or draperies.
- *Repair* those small things now, like leaky faucets, missing tiles or broken screens.
- *Replace* all burned-out light bulbs.

- *Properly insulate* (12" of blanket or 8" of blown-in insulation) and ventilate the attic of your home.
- *If you are a smoker*, clean, prime and paint any nicotine stained walls and ceilings thoroughly and refrain from smoking in the home.

Basement

- *Neaten up* the basement.
- *Clean up* and correct any water problems in your basement, including upgrading the foundation with a mortar paring at all loose cavities and cracks.
- *Test sump pump*

The Day of the Showing

- Before you leave, turn on all lights, open all curtains and shutters to let in as much light as possible but screen out unappealing views.