

PREPARATION GUIDE & CHECKLISTS

Get the Home Ready Before the Market Sees It.



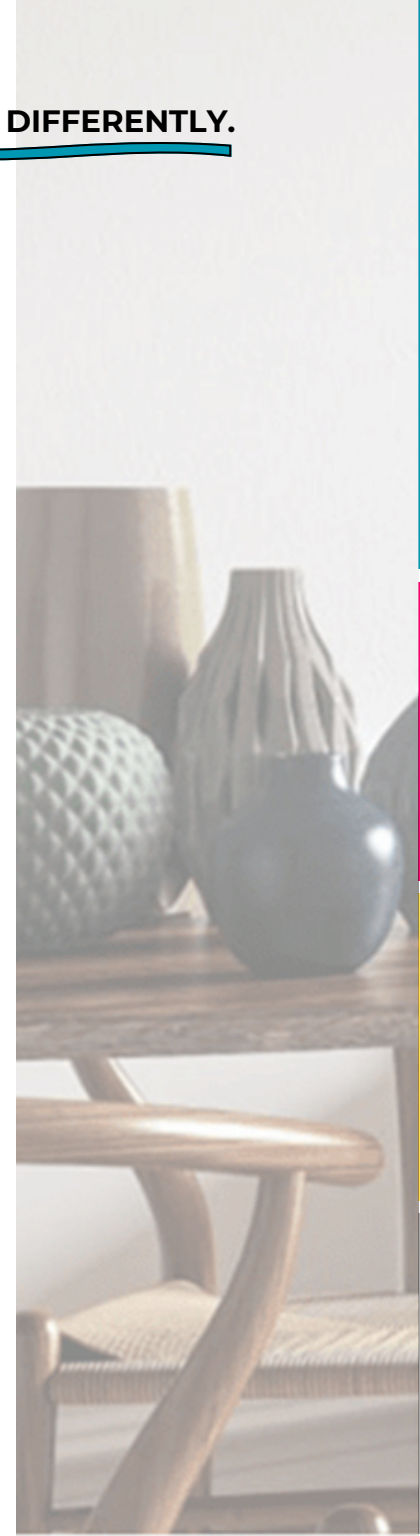
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PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SALE 101

OUR RULE: Spend where buyers notice. Skip work that costs more than it is likely to return. The goal is a cleaner, clearer, more confident first impression - not an unnecessary renovation.

1

PLAN THE PREPARATION

A written plan protects your time and budget, keeps preparation from expanding halfway through the job and lets photography, staging and launch happen without last-minute panic.

2

DECLUTTER BEFORE YOU DECORATE

Decluttering makes rooms feel larger, makes storage look more useful, improves photography and lets buyers notice the home instead of the contents. It also reduces what you have to pack and move later.

3

CLEAN LIKE A BUYER IS LOOKING FOR PROBLEMS

A clean home photographs brighter, smells better and signals that the property has been cared for. Buyers are also less likely to turn ordinary dust, grime or odour into a larger story about maintenance.

4

PREPARE FOR PHOTOS AND SHOWINGS

Most buyers meet the home online before they ever step inside. Strong photos earn the showing; a consistent in-person presentation helps the showing live up to the photos.

PLAN THE PREPARATION

START HERE

1

Goal. Decide what the preparation must accomplish: stronger presentation, fewer buyer objections, easier showings, a quicker move or all four.

2

Timeline. Work backward from the target photo date. Build in time for sorting, cleaning, repairs, trades and one final reset.

3

Budget. Set the preparation budget before work begins. Separate must-do maintenance from optional cosmetic improvements.

4

Support. Decide what you will do yourself and what should go to cleaners, painters, organizers, movers, junk removal or qualified trades.

DECIDE WHAT IS WORTH DOING

DECIDE

Use four decision buckets

1

MUST DO Safety, leaks, active damage, broken items, major cleanliness issues and anything that makes the home difficult to photograph or show.

2

SHOULD DO Low-cost repairs and presentation work that improves buyer confidence or removes an obvious distraction.

3

NICE TO DO Improvements that may help, but only when cost, time and likely return make sense.

4

SKIP Projects that delay the launch, require major capital or are unlikely to return more than they cost.

LESS IS MORE

DECLUTTER

1

Move. Things you use and want in the next home. Pack non-daily items now and label each box by destination room.

2

Store. Seasonal, sentimental and bulky items you are keeping but do not need during the listing period.

3

Sell / donate. Items with value or usefulness that will not make the move. Set a deadline so they do not become a second project.

4

Recycle / dispose. Broken, expired, duplicate or unwanted items. Book bins, junk removal or municipal collection early when needed.

DECLUTTER CHECKLIST



Whole House

- Remove excess furniture to make rooms feel bigger
- **Clear out personal items** (family photos, collectibles, religious or political décor)
- **Declutter surfaces** - no mail, paperwork, or random items on tables and counters
- **Organize closets** - buyers WILL look inside! Keep shelves tidy and store out-of-season items elsewhere
- **Get rid of unused or broken items** - don't move clutter to your next home!



Living Room

- **Minimize Furniture** – Arrange for open flow and remove any bulky pieces
- **Declutter Surfaces** – Keep only a few decorative items on tables
- **Fluff & Straighten** – Arrange pillows neatly and fold blankets
- **Hide Wires & Remotes** – Conceal power cords and store remote controls
- **Stage Thoughtfully** – Add a small plant, book, or neutral décor



Kitchen

- Keep only essential small appliances on the counter (coffee maker, toaster)
- Remove fridge magnets, notes, and personal items
- **Organize pantry and cabinets** - neatly stacked and minimal clutter inside
- Toss expired food, old spices, and unused gadgets
- Keep dish soap, sponges, and cleaning products out of sight



Bedrooms

- **Keep nightstands clear** - just a lamp and a book is enough
- **Store away personal photos** and excessive décor
- **Keep under-bed storage neat** (or empty, if possible)
- **Add decorative pillow**
- **Declutter dressers** and limit visible clothing



Bathrooms

- Store away toothbrushes, razors, and personal care products
- Keep only fresh, matching towels on display
- **Organize cabinets** - buyers will open them! Keep essentials only
- Hide laundry hampers and personal items
- **Remove extra rugs** - one simple bath mat is enough.



Front Yard & Curb Appeal

- **Mow the Lawn** – Trim grass, remove weeds, and edge neatly
- **Clear Driveway & Walkway** – Remove cars, bikes, and trash bins
- **Sweep and Shovel Porch & Entryway** – Remove dust, leaves, snow and cobwebs
- **Stage the Porch** – Add a small plant or seating if space allows
- **Clean Front Door & Windows** – Wipe down for a welcoming look

LESS IS MORE

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CLEAN LIKE A BUYER IS LOOKING FOR PROBLEMS

CLEAN

The detailed cleaning list

Windows + glass. Interior glass, mirrors, patio doors, tracks and frames. Remove obvious smears and cobwebs and open the view.

Kitchen. Cabinet fronts, handles, range hood, backsplash, sinks, faucets, appliance fronts, fridge seals and visible crumbs or grease.

Bathrooms. Shower glass, tubs, toilets, mirrors, grout, caulking, exhaust covers, floors and the base around fixtures.

Living + bedrooms. Dust furniture, vents, baseboards, fan blades and lamps. Vacuum upholstery and remove visible pet hair.

Floors + stairs. Vacuum edges, corners and stairs; mop hard floors; address obvious carpet stains and traffic patterns.

Basement + mechanical. Dust and vacuum around equipment, keep filters presentable where appropriate, remove cobwebs and clear access.

Garage + exterior. Sweep floors and walks, remove cobwebs, clean the front door and glass and clear litter, leaves or pet waste.

Pet areas. Wash bedding, litter areas, bowls and floors. Remove hair from furniture and vents and keep food, leashes and toys stored neatly.

CLEANING CHECKLIST

Whole House

- ☐ Dust ceiling fans, vents, and light fixtures
- ☐ Wash windows (inside and out) and wipe down window sills
- ☐ Clean baseboards and door frames
- ☐ Vacuum and mop floors (including under furniture)
- ☐ Remove scuff marks from walls and touch up paint if needed

Kitchen

- ☐ Wipe down cabinets and drawers (inside and out)
- ☐ Clean stainless steel appliances for a streak-free shine
- ☐ Scrub backsplash and wipe down walls
- ☐ Deep clean the oven, stovetop, and microwave
- ☐ Sanitize sink and faucets

Bedrooms

- ☐ Vacuum carpets and rugs thoroughly
- ☐ Dust furniture, headboards, and nightstands
- ☐ Wipe down light switches and door handles
- ☐ Wash or replace old bedding and pillows
- ☐ Remove pet hair from furniture and bedding

Living Room

- ☐ Vacuum upholstery and fluff cushions
- ☐ Dust all furniture and shelving
- ☐ Wipe down TV screens and electronics
- ☐ Clean up pet areas (toys, beds, and litter boxes)
- ☐ Sweep and mop hardwood or tile floors

Bathrooms

- ☐ Scrub shower, tub, and grout
- ☐ Clean toilet inside and out
- ☐ Wipe down all mirrors and glass surfaces
- ☐ Wash or replace old shower curtains and bath mats
- ☐ Polish faucets and hardware for a sparkling finish

Garage & Exterior

- ☐ Power wash driveway and front walkway
- ☐ Clean garage floor and organize storage
- ☐ Wash front door and porch area
- ☐ Clean gutters and check for cobwebs
- ☐ Ensure exterior lights work and fixtures are clean

STAGING CHECKLIST

Tip: Stage your home to feel inviting, spacious, and neutral so buyers can picture themselves living there!

Whole House

- ❑ **Use neutral décor** and remove bold artwork or loud patterns
- ❑ **Arrange furniture** to create open walkways and maximize space
- ❑ **Add soft lighting** (lamps, accent lighting) to create a warm atmosphere
- ❑ **Place fresh flowers** or greenery in key areas
- ❑ **Lightly scent the home** with a mild air freshener or essential oils

Living Room

- ❑ **Position furniture** to highlight space and flow
- ❑ Use neutral or lightly patterned throw pillows and blankets
- ❑ Add a stylish tray with a candle or book on coffee tables
- ❑ **Showcase the fireplace** (if applicable) as a key feature
- ❑ **Use mirrors** to make the room feel larger

Bathrooms

- ❑ Use a white or neutral shower curtain and towels
- ❑ Place a small plant or simple décor on the counter
- ❑ **Keep counters nearly empty**—just soap and a candle or tray
- ❑ **Roll or neatly fold extra towels** for a spa-like feel
- ❑ **Remove bath mats** for a cleaner look in photos.

Bedrooms

- ❑ **Use fresh, neutral bedding**—nothing too loud or personal
- ❑ **Use matching lamps** and minimal décor on nightstands
- ❑ **Ensure closets look spacious**—half-empty is ideal
- ❑ **Arrange pillows neatly** and fluff up bedding

Kitchen

- ❑ **Add a bowl of fresh fruit or flowers** to the island/counter
- ❑ **Store away pet bowls**, food, and water dishes
- ❑ **Ensure counters and surfaces** are as clear as possible
- ❑ **Hide trash cans** if possible

Exterior

- ❑ **Add a fresh doormat** and potted plants by the entrance
- ❑ **Arrange patio furniture neatly** and add outdoor pillows
- ❑ **Ensure lawn is mowed**, and garden beds are tidy
- ❑ Clean and arrange the BBQ and outdoor dining area (if applicable)
- ❑ **Sweep walkways** and remove any debris

CLEAN LIKE A BUYER IS LOOKING FOR PROBLEMS

PHOTO-DAY STANDARD

The detailed cleaning list

Windows. Open blinds and curtains consistently unless a specific view or exposure requires another treatment.

Lights. Turn on interior lights and lamps. Check under-cabinet, pendant and exterior lighting when it contributes to the image.

Kitchen. Empty the sink, remove dish soap and drying racks, simplify counters and take magnets, calendars and papers off the refrigerator.

Bathrooms. Close toilet lids, hang clean towels, remove bulky bath mats when they shrink the room and hide personal toiletries.

Bedrooms. Make beds tightly, straighten pillows, remove laundry and clear nightstands except for simple decor or lamps.

Pets. Remove crates, bowls, litter boxes, beds and visible pet supplies from photographed rooms where practical.

Exterior. Move vehicles, bins, hoses, toys and equipment. Sweep the approach, decks and balconies and make the entrance intentional.

PHOTOS DAY CHECKLIST

Whole House

- ❑ **Declutter** – Remove personal items, excess furniture, and knick-knacks
- ❑ **Deep Clean** – Dust surfaces, vacuum carpets, mop floors, and wipe down walls
- ❑ **Let in Light** – Open curtains, clean windows, and turn on all lights
- ❑ **Depersonalize** – Remove personal photos, religious items, and anything polarizing
- ❑ **Check for Repairs** – Fix chipped paint, loose handles, scuff marks, etc.

Living Room

- ❑ **Declutter Surfaces** – Keep only a few decorative items on tables
- ❑ **Fluff & Straighten** – Arrange pillows neatly and fold blankets
- ❑ **Hide Wires & Remotes** – Conceal power cords and store remote controls
- ❑ **Stage Thoughtfully** – Add a small plant, book, or neutral décor

Kitchen

- ❑ **Clear Counters** – Remove small appliances, dish racks, and clutter
- ❑ **Spotless Sink & Faucet** – No dishes, water spots, or dirty sponges
- ❑ **Organize Fridge & Pantry** – Remove magnets, photos, and old food
- ❑ **Shiny Surfaces** – Wipe down stainless steel appliances and cabinets

Bedrooms

- ❑ **Make Beds Perfectly** – Smooth out sheets and use neutral bedding if possible
- ❑ **Clear Nightstands** – Remove chargers, books, and clutter—keep it simple
- ❑ **Tidy Closets** – Organize clothes and clear excess items to show spacious storage
- ❑ **Minimize Décor** – Remove posters, personal pictures, and busy decorations
- ❑ **Hide Personal Items** – Store away jewelry, personal care items, and laundry

Bathrooms

- ❑ **Remove Toiletries** – No toothbrushes, soap bottles, or razors visible
- ❑ **Clean Mirrors & Glass** – No streaks or water spots
- ❑ **Fresh Towels** – Use neatly folded white or neutral-colored towels
- ❑ **Close Toilet Lids** – Always keep the lid down for photos
- ❑ **Clear Shower & Tub** – Remove shampoos, loofahs, and bath mats

Front Yard & Curb Appeal

- ❑ **Mow the Lawn** – Trim grass, remove weeds, and edge neatly
- ❑ **Clear Driveway & Walkway** – Remove cars, bikes, and trash bins
- ❑ **Sweep and Shovel Porch & Entryway** – Remove dust, leaves, Snow and cobwebs
- ❑ **Clean Front Door & Windows** – Wipe down for a welcoming look

PROTECT PRIVACY BEFORE THE BUYERS ARRIVE

PREPARE FOR SHOWINGS

1

Paperwork. Remove bills, calendars, school schedules, names, account information and anything with personal data.

2

Photos + valuables. Reduce family photos and put jewellery, collectibles, medications, spare keys and portable valuables away.

3

Screens. Remember that mirrors, televisions and computer monitors can reveal reflections or private information.

SHOWING CHECKLIST

Before every showing, use this checklist to present your home at its best! ✨

Whole House

- ☐ Turn On All Lights – Bright rooms feel bigger and more inviting
- ☐ Open Curtains & Blinds – Let in natural light for a welcoming feel
- ☐ Tidy Up – Quick sweep, vacuum, and wipe down surfaces
- ☐ Declutter Surfaces – No mail, keys, or personal items on tables and counters
- ☐ Adjust Temperature – Keep it comfortable (warm in winter, cool in summer)

Living Room

- ☐ Fluff & Arrange Pillows – Make furniture look cozy and inviting
- ☐ Hide Remotes & Cables – Keep them out of sight
- ☐ Stage Neatly – A book, plant, or neutral décor adds a nice touch
- ☐ Check for Pet Hair – Use a lint roller or vacuum if needed
- ☐ Diffuse a Fresh Scent – Lightly scented candles or an air freshener work well

Kitchen

- ☐ Clear Counters – Remove dishes, small appliances, and clutter
- ☐ Take Out the Trash – No odors lingering
- ☐ Clean Sink & Faucets – No water spots or food scraps
- ☐ Put Away Food & Dishes – No dishes in the sink or on counters
- ☐ Leave a Neutral Touch – A bowl of fruit or fresh flowers adds warmth

Bedrooms

- ☐ Make the Beds – Smooth, crisp, and inviting
- ☐ Clear Nightstands – No phone chargers, glasses, or personal items
- ☐ Tidy Closets – Buyers may peek inside! Keep things neat
- ☐ Put Away Laundry – No clothes on the floor or furniture
- ☐ Lightly Spray Fresh Linen Scent – Keep it subtle but fresh

Garage

- ☐ Close Garage Doors – Ensure the exterior looks polished
- ☐ Organize & Declutter – Keep it looking spacious and clean
- ☐ Turn On Lights – A well-lit space looks larger
- ☐ Remove Vehicles (If Possible) – A clear garage looks bigger
- ☐ Sweep the Floor – No dust or debris

Front Yard & Curb Appeal

- ☐ Mow Lawn & Trim Plants – Keep everything looking fresh
- ☐ Sweep Walkway & Porch – No leaves, dirt, or cobwebs
- ☐ Remove Cars from Driveway – A clear driveway looks better
- ☐ Wipe Down Front Door & Windows – First impressions matter!
- ☐ Stage the Entryway – A small plant or doormat adds warmth

Before You Leave

- ☐ Secure Valuables – Lock up jewelry, electronics, and personal items
- ☐ Take Pets with You – Or secure them in a crate if needed
- ☐ Leave the House – Buyers need space to picture themselves living there!
- ☐ Double-Check Everything – A final walkthrough ensures nothing is out of place

ABOUT US:

We believe that every buyer and seller deserves professional service from a skilled and knowledgeable Realtor, that truly puts their clients' priorities over their own.

As your Realtors, our priority is your success. We want to help make your dreams become reality and be there for you throughout your real estate journey. To learn more about our signature process and how we can help you move, please contact us today!



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