

STAGING YOUR HOME INSIDE & OUT

EXTERIOR / CURB APPEAL

- If your home needs painting now is definitely the time. It's an investment you should recoup at the time of sale. If you don't want to paint the whole house, consider giving it a facelift by painting just the trim.
- Neatly trim around a fire hydrant, municipal post office box, lamp post, or other outside structure. If it's an eyesore, contact your city to request permission to paint.
- Remove any visually distracting lawn accessories or ornaments.
- Consider adding a splash of color with flowers as well as trimming overgrown bushes and trees.
- Take a picture of the front of your home. What is your immediate impression? What is the first thing that strikes you about the picture? This may provide a different view of what might be easily improved.

FACT: If someone drives by your home the impression may be given in only 15 seconds or less.

ENTRYWAY

- Remove dated wallpaper and consider painting with a neutral color. Removing the wallpaper may not be as hard as you might think and can do wonders for the appearance.
- Replace burned out light bulbs and clean other bulbs.
- Clean switch plates, fixtures, grills, or permanent wall and ceiling items. Replace items such as intake grills that cannot be cleaned and that can be easily replaced. If the fixture or attachment cannot be cleaned consider painting to improve the appearance.
- Remove any large furniture from the area and store. The object is to create the illusion of space without appearing empty.

KITCHEN

- Eliminate odors from cooking oils, gas, and strong spices.
- Remove dated or old wallpaper and, as in other areas, consider painting with a neutral color.
- If your wood cabinets are outdated or worn a coat of white enamel paint can transform them "instantly" making the room feel larger and brighter.
- If the cabinet hardware is not too worn it can be removed prior to painting and replaced without cost. If it is not usable consider replacement.
- If flooring is worn or dated consider replacing with neutral linoleum or tile.

BATHROOMS

- Paint or wallpaper in a neutral color
- Use neutral shower curtain and towels
- Replace flooring and cabinetry if it is worn or dated
- Consider replacing all cabinet hardware
- Clean cabinets with linseed oil or repaint

BEDROOMS

- Paint a restful neutral color and consider an "accent wall" of color behind the bed.
- Remove distracting posters and other personalized belongings.
- Purchase new bedding in neutral colors with just a splash of color in pillows.
- Add candles in the same color as the added accent pillows and use accent colors in groups of threes.
- Straighten or pack away all unnecessary clothing and shoes allowing closet to look larger.
- Store all packed boxes neatly in the garage or off site.

LIVING ROOM / DINING ROOM / FAMILY ROOM

- Walls and ceilings should be painted a neutral color. Use the same paint color for rooms that flow together.
- Remove distracting posters or art. If there is a "collection" wall, pare it down and rearrange it.
- The tops, bottoms, and sides of frames should be aligned for a "gallery" look.
- Remove all family photos.
- Replace flooring that is worn or dated.
- Replace dated fixtures and ceiling fans. Any retained items should be thoroughly cleaned.

BASEMENT / GARAGE / ATTIC

- Consider painting the trim white and use a neutral carpet or other flooring. This will assist potential buyers to see possibilities for additional uses and make the area seem larger.
- Paint the laundry room especially if it's in the basement.
- Add clip-on lights or change bulbs in an attic to enhance visibility.
- Replace dated carpeting with a neutral non-Berber style. **TRICK:** Use inexpensive carpet with a plush pad underneath
- If you have dated paneling consider painting it for a more up-to-date "washed" cottage look.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Change all burned out or malfunctioning light bulbs and broken fixtures.
- Deep clean each room until it sparkles.
- Remove pet food, water, and litter to garage or a hidden area.
- Wash pet bedding and change litter weekly at a minimum.
- Add pleasant smelling candles, potpourri, or scents such as Glade scents to every room.
- Smokers should smoke outside the home until the home is sold.
- Have any retained carpets and drapes professionally cleaned.
- To the extent possible repair any items that are broken.
- Remove any heavy drapes or broken window coverings.

Remember: Houses are just like people...they have to work at looking young and fit

UNCLUTTERING INSIDE AND OUT

EXTERIOR / CURB APPEAL

- Clean the street in front of your home to the extent possible.
- Pick up and organize any exposed tools and gardening equipment as well as hoses.
- Weed garden and shrub areas with removal of sticks and leaves.
- Mow and groom your yard demonstrating attention to care.
- Trim plants and shrubs.
- Remove and replace as needed any dead or dying shrubs.
- Clear bikes, toys, and extra cars from the driveways as well as other items.

ENTRYWAY

- Clean, paint, and consolidate clothes in closets as removal of shoes or equipment.
- Clean hall tables of mail or other items.
- Remove any trash from containers.

KITCHEN

- Clear all counters.
- Store small appliances, gadgets, pots, pans, and bowls.
- Clean or paint interiors of cabinets and drawers.
- Group and organize items in cabinets and drawers.
- Clean organizers and replace if worn or damaged.
- Use dividers and organizers for utensil drawers.
- Organize your "junk" drawer for pencils, tape, scissors, etc.
- Consolidate refrigerator items and remove unnecessary items.
- Clean shelves and containers.
- Remove odors with baking soda or other special deodorants.
- Consolidate and remove unnecessary items from under the sinks.
- Use organizers for under-sink items and boxes.
- Remove dirty sponges and rags.
- Clean cabinets under sinks including floor of cabinet.
- Place cleaning products in a container.
- Remove unhealthy plants as well as unused pots and containers.
- Remove extra papers, magnets, notes, etc.

BATHROOMS

- Clean counters and store all personal care items.
- Consolidate and remove unnecessary items from vanities, cabinets, and closets.
- Store makeup in cases or containers.
- Group any cleaning supplies in containers.
- Clean all shelves or consider replacement.

BEDROOM

- Consolidate and remove unnecessary items from drawers and built-ins.
- Remove extra furniture to create space.
- Remove and store toys and children's play items.

LIVING ROOM / DINING ROOM / FAMILY ROOM

- Remove all papers and magazines from coffee and end tables.
- Remove or rearrange furniture for openness.
- Remove hanging, extra, or unhealthy plants.
- Order and weed out excess books from bookcases.

BASEMENT / GARAGE / ATTIC

- Box or remove stored items from the home.
- Sort, box, or store tools, equipment, and projects.
- If not removed from sight, hang hand tools, sports equipment, and lawn equipment on walls.
- Place items such as paint and supplies out of sight or on shelves.
- Sort and group any exposed laundry supplies.
- Remove old unused clothes, rags, or cleaning supplies.
- Box and store attic items as much as possible.

BACKYARD / DECK / BALCONY

Pick up and store all toys, gardening tools, and equipment

Cover or remove and store any building or repair projects in progress

Remove excess railing decorations, hangers, and pots

Leave only minimum furnishings for an open look

CLEANING INSIDE AND OUT

EXTERIOR / CURB APPEAL

SIDEWALK AND WALKWAY

- Sweep completely clean.
- Remove any weeds or grass growing in surface cracks.
- Hose down sidewalks and walkways for a clean, inviting look.
- Fastidiously dispose of any and all pet debris.
- Clean up oil and other stains from driveway.
- Wash siding for a fresh, bright look and consider professional services if necessary.
- Use glass cleaner on inside and outside of windows to ensure a bright, clean sparkle.
- Clean and remove debris from gutters.
- Hose down eaves.

ENTRYWAY

- Clean windows to a sparkle.
- Paint or clean walls and ceilings.
- Clean or replace curtains and drapes.
- Scrub and polish floors.
- Clean and polish woodwork and doors.
- Polish door knobs and light fixtures.

KITCHEN

- Clean cupboards and drawers using lemon scented products to prolong clean scent.
- Wipe down the insides making sure all surfaces are clean.
- Use a soft cleanser on laminate shelves.
- Use a glass cleaner on the outside of laminate cupboards.
- Use a wood soap on wood cabinets and if necessary a scratch cover for finish.
- Wipe down small appliances before storing for a well cared for look and feeling.
- Wipe down the outside of the refrigerator including the top.

▪ **STOVES**

- Use a razor blade or cleaners to clean baked-on grease on doors.
- Use glass cleaner to complete cleaning.
- Replace the oven light bulb if necessary.
- Clean and replace burner liners if in use.
- Clean exterior depending on type of surface.
- Clean and deodorize vents and exhaust hoods.

▪ **SINKS**

- Clean and polish.
- Remove stains and mineral buildup around faucets.
- Clean tile grout or re-caulk.
- Run a lemon section through the garbage disposal for a fresh smell.

- Clean all windows
- Clean all cooking residue from walls and ceiling
- Launder or replace curtains and drapes
- Light fixtures and track lighting
- Wipe off light bulbs
- Replace broken or damaged light bulbs
- Clean fixtures or vacuum inside of track lighting

- Wash and wax floors with removal of old wax
- Wipe down and polish woodwork and doors using scratch cover as necessary

BATHROOMS

- Clean windows.
- Wipe down walls and ceilings to remove spots.
- Launder or replace curtains and drapes.
- Scrub and wax floors depending on surface.
- Clean and polish woodwork and doors.
- Use lemon cleaning products for pleasant odor.
- Polish all chrome including pipes, laundry sinks and vanity.
- Remove all rust stains from sinks, toilets, tubs, and showers.
- Remove mineral buildup around faucets.
- Remove all mildew from tub and shower areas.
- Clean all grout and re-caulk or replace as needed.
- Scrub tile and clean with glass cleaner.
- Wash or replace shower curtains.
- Clean and shine shower doors with removal of soap residue.
- Add toilet bowl cleaner and sanitizer and close lid.

BEDROOMS

- Launder or dry clean comforters and bedspreads.
- Clean all windows.
- Launder or replace curtains and drapes.
- Wash and polish wood floors.
- Clean carpets.
- Clean and polish woodwork and doors.
- Wash and clean lighting fixtures and lamps.

LIVING ROOM / DINING ROOM / FAMILY ROOM

- Clean all windows.
- Clean walls and ceilings painting a light color as needed.
- Launder or replace curtains and drapes with replacement of dated or damaged blinds.
- Clean and polish furniture, woodwork, and floors using wood oil and appropriate polish.
- Clean and deodorize carpet and rugs.
- Clean and polish all lighting fixtures.
- Clean inside and outside of fireplaces as well as exposed tools.

BASEMENT / ATTIC / GARAGE

- Vacuum basement floors and ceilings.
- Check for insects or rodents with professional extermination as needed.
- Vacuum attic floors and clean as necessary.
- Sweep garage floors and remove grease to the extent possible.
- Clean all windows.
- Clean and deodorize all pet areas.
- Wipe down all appliances such as washers, dryers, water heaters, etc.
- Clean and restore any wood paneling.

BACKYARD / DECK/ BALCONY

- Clean any decks and use sealers or stains as necessary.
- Wipe down all lawn furniture, grills, and pool or spa equipment.
- Hose down screens in windows, gazebos, or porches.
- Wipe down railings on balconies.

SHOWTIME CHECKLIST

EXTERIOR

- Pick up lawn tools and toys.
- Pick up after pets.
- Remove obstructions from curb view.
- Clear driveways and walk areas.
- Use a leaf blower or hose down walk areas for a neat and tidy look.
- Clear away debris from pool or hot tub.

INTERIOR

- Empty wastebaskets.
- Pick up dirty clothes.
- Clear papers and notes from desks, counters, and tables.
- Check for hazards such as extension cords, throw rugs, etc.
- Put away personal care items in bathrooms.
- Straighten and stage children's play areas.
- Do a once over cleaning, i.e. vacuum, sweep, and dust.
- Wipe down counters, sinks, and bathtubs finishing with glass cleaner.
- Deodorize pet areas.
- Arrange fresh flowers throughout the home.
- Make sure rugs are straight and clean.
- Open shades and drapes.
- If possible open windows to freshen rooms.
- Turn on lights.
- Add the smell of fresh baking.

LAST MINUTE DYNAMIZING

- Arrange tables with flowers and linens.
- Set out a game, book, or hobby project.
- Arrange show towels in bathrooms and kitchen.
- Play soft music and turn off television.
- Set a comfortable temperature.
- Final check every room.
- Leave and take your pet with you or to a kennel.

PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR AN INSPECTION

When pre-owned homes come onto the market, they are rarely in perfect shape and most of them have that special “lived in” look. That is why you want to have a professional home inspection. The value of a professional home inspection is to confirm the proper working condition of major systems in the home: electrical, mechanical, plumbing and the integrity of its structural components on the day of the inspection. However, minor items often are identified during this inspection process.

Individually, these items are not a big issue, but the cumulative effect of many small items could be discouraging for a potential buyer. If a home seller and their agent know what to look for, many of these minor items can be identified and addressed prior to a professional inspection.

As a service to you and your clients, we have compiled a checklist of minor items often found in need of repair during a whole house inspection. If repairs are needed plan to do them before the professional inspection is performed. It will ensure a smoother sale and contribute to a positive home inspection experience.

ELECTRICAL

- Are any receptacles, switches or their covers broken or loose?
- Are all receptacles “hot” and switches operable?
- Do any light bulbs, fluorescence or cosmetic lights need replacing?
- Do the ceiling fans work properly?
- Do the reset buttons of GFCI receptacles pop out when the test button is pressed? (This indicates they are functioning properly)
- Do the front and back door bells work?
- Is the main electrical service wire entering the home secured to the exterior of the house?
- Do the electrical junction boxes have covers?
- Do smoke alarms function when the test button is pressed?
- Does the built-in microwave work?
- Do all of the electrical range-top burners and ovens work?
- Does the kitchen exhaust fan work?

INTERIOR

- Do wall and ceiling surfaces have holes or cracks that need patching?
- Do all the windows have operable latches?
- Can all the windows be opened and closed properly?
- Do any of the windows have cracked panes or broken seals?
- Do windows need caulking?
- Are any of the windows painted shut?
- Are stair railings loose?
- Are moldings loose, broken or missing?
- Do interior doors stick, or open and close smoothly?
- Are kitchen or bathroom tiles cracked?
- Can you explain the existence or repair of old water penetration stains on walls and ceilings?
- Does the chimney damper open and close properly?
- Does the chimney need cleaning?
- Does the chimney mortar need pointing?
- Is there insulation present in the attic?
- Is the insulation in the attic blocking attic vents?
- Is there a distracting amount of clutter in any of the rooms that would prevent a thorough inspection?
- Are there any signs of insect infestation?

EXTERIOR

- Are there horizontal or vertical cracks in the foundation walls?
- Does the grading around the house direct rain water away from the foundation?
- Are any roof shingles missing?
- Are the gutters and down spouts connected and secured to the house?
- Are the gutters and down spouts clean and free from debris and weeds?
- Is the exterior wood trim in good condition?
- Is the wood trim around the door in good condition?
- Are there any wood surfaces in direct contact with soil?
- Are stair or porch railings loose?
- Are the wood or concrete steps in good condition?
- Does any of the siding need repair or replacement?
- Are any of the landscape timbers rotted?
- Do the retaining wall or fences need repair?
- Are the sidewalks and driveway in good condition?

PLUMBING

- Do the bases of the faucets leak?
- Do the faucets shut off completely, preventing water from dripping?
- Are the faucet and shower head screens clear, allowing full water flow?
- Are any drains clogged?
- Do the stopper mechanisms of sinks and bathtubs open and close properly?
- Is there insulation on the water pipes in unheated areas of the home?
- Is there access to the main water shut off valve?
- Is there access to the main gas shut off valve?
- Are the bathtub and shower enclosures properly caulked?
- Are the toilets loose at the floor or at the tank?