

Before Putting Your Home up for Sale

Here are a few items to take care of before listing your home. This can make the sale process quicker and easier in the long run.

- **Consider a pre-sale home inspection.**

An inspector will be able to give you a good indication of the trouble areas that will stand out to potential buyers, and you'll be able to make repairs before open houses begin.

- **Organize and clean.**

Pare down clutter and pack up your least-used items, such as large blenders and other kitchen tools, out-of-season clothes, toys, and seasonal items. Store items off-site or in boxes neatly arranged in the garage or basement. Clean the windows, carpets, walls, lighting fixtures, and baseboards to make the house shine.

- **Get replacement estimates.**

Do you have big-ticket items that will need to be replaced soon? Find out how much it will cost to repair an older roof or replace worn carpeting, even if you don't plan to do so. The figures will help buyers determine if they can afford the home, and they'll be handy when negotiations begin.

- **Locate warranties.**

Gather up the warranties, guarantees, and user manuals for the furnace, washer/dryer, dishwasher, and any other items that will remain with the house. It may seem like this task can be left until closing, but you don't want lost paperwork or last-minute scrambling to cause the deal to fall through.

- **Spruce up the curb appeal.**

Walk out to the front of your home, close your eyes, and pretend you're a prospective buyer seeing the property for the first time. As you approach the front door, what is your impression of the property? Do the lawn and bushes look neatly manicured? Is the address clearly visible? What do you see framing the entrance, if anything? Is the walkway free of cracks and impediments?