

# PREPARING YOUR HOME TO SELL GUIDE

**Introduction:** Homes that are clean, well-maintained, and professionally presented often attract more buyer interest, receive stronger offers, and spend less time on the market. Preparing before listing helps buyers focus on your home's strengths instead of its shortcomings.

## 1. Decluttering Why It Matters

Clutter makes rooms feel smaller and distracts buyers from your home's best features.

Focus On:

- ☐ Remove excess furniture
- ☐ Clear countertops
- ☐ Organize closets
- ☐ Pack personal collections
- ☐ Remove family photos
- ☐ Store seasonal decorations
- ☐ Organize the garage
- ☐ Remove excess storage from shelves

**Goal:** Buyers should notice your home—not your belongings.

## 2. Deep Cleaning First Impressions Matter

A spotless home suggests it has been well cared for.

Clean Every Room

### Kitchen

- ☐ Appliances
- ☐ Cabinets
- ☐ Countertops
- ☐ Sink

### Bathrooms

- ☐ Showers
- ☐ Toilets
- ☐ Mirrors
- ☐ Grout

### Living Areas

- ☐ Windows
- ☐ Baseboards
- ☐ Ceiling fans
- ☐ Light fixtures
- ☐ Carpets
- ☐ Flooring

Don't Forget

- ☐ Air vents
- ☐ Door handles
- ☐ Light switches
- ☐ Window tracks
- ☐ Garage floor

**3. Repairs:** Small problems often make buyers wonder about larger hidden issues.

### Repair Items Such As

- ☐ Leaky faucets
- ☐ Running toilets
- ☐ Loose doorknobs
- ☐ Broken light fixtures
- ☐ Damaged drywall
- ☐ Chipped paint
- ☐ Missing caulking
- ☐ Sticky doors
- ☐ Broken screens
- ☐ Cracked outlet covers

**Bigger Repairs:** Discuss with your Realtor whether larger repairs -should be completed before listing or reflected in the asking price.

**4. Improve Curb Appeal:** Buyers begin judging your home before they walk inside.

### Exterior Checklist

- ☐ Mow the lawn
- ☐ Trim shrubs
- ☐ Weed flower beds
- ☐ Add fresh mulch
- ☐ Sweep sidewalks
- ☐ Wash windows
- ☐ Clean gutters
- ☐ Pressure wash concrete
- ☐ Touch up exterior paint
- ☐ Replace burned-out exterior bulbs
- ☐ Make sure house numbers are visible
- ☐ Add a welcoming front doormat
- ☐ Consider seasonal flowers

**5. Staging Your Home:** Staging helps buyers imagine living in the space.

### Keep It Simple

- ☐ Open blinds and curtains
- ☐ Let in natural light
- ☐ Use neutral décor
- ☐ Remove oversized furniture

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- ☐ Make beds neatly
- ☐ Add fresh towels
- ☐ Keep kitchen counters mostly clear
- ☐ Add a few tasteful decorative items
- ☐ Remove pet items
- ☐ Eliminate strong odors

**Less Is More.** A clean, bright, open room almost always photographs and shows better.

**6. Photography Preparation** Today's buyers usually see your home online before scheduling a showing.

Professional photos can dramatically increase buyer interest.

## Before Photos

- ☐ Turn on every light
- ☐ Open all blinds
- ☐ Remove vehicles from the driveway
- ☐ Hide trash cans
- ☐ Remove pet bowls
- ☐ Put away cords
- ☐ Close toilet lids
- ☐ Straighten pillows
- ☐ Vacuum floors
- ☐ Remove magnets from the refrigerator
- ☐ Hide personal paperwork
- ☐ Stage outdoor furniture

**After Photography:** Most buyers decide whether to schedule a showing based on the online photos. Spend extra time preparing for picture day.

**7. Showing Preparation-** Your home should always be ready for a buyer to visit.

## Before Every Showing

- ☐ Make all beds
- ☐ Empty kitchen sink
- ☐ Wipe countertops
- ☐ Take out the trash
- ☐ Turn on lights
- ☐ Open blinds
- ☐ Set thermostat comfortably
- ☐ Secure valuables
- ☐ Remove pets if possible
- ☐ Leave the home during showings

**Final Walkthrough-**Stand at the front door and look through the house as though you're seeing it for the first time.

Ask yourself:

"Would I be excited to buy this home?"

**Pro Tip:** Buyers don't pay more for clutter—they pay more for space. Removing unnecessary furniture can make rooms feel noticeably larger.

## Seller Preparation Timeline

### Four Weeks Before Listing

- Complete repairs
- Begin decluttering
- Schedule professional photography

### Two Weeks Before Listing

- Deep clean
- Finish landscaping
- Stage the home

### One Week Before Listing

- Touch-up cleaning
- Prepare marketing materials
- Final walk-through

### Listing Day

- Turn on lights
- Open blinds
- Remove vehicles
- Welcome buyers

### Final Thoughts

Preparing your home before listing can help it sell faster, attract stronger offers, and create a better experience for both you and potential buyers. Many of these improvements cost very little but can have a meaningful impact on buyer perception.

### Quick Seller Success Checklist

- ✓ Decluttered
- ✓ Deep Cleaned
- ✓ Repairs Completed
- ✓ Improved Curb Appeal
- ✓ Staged
- ✓ Photography Ready
- ✓ Ready for Showings

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| Task          | Time     | Typical Cost                        |
|---------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| Declutter     | 1–3 Days | \$0                                 |
| Deep Clean    | 1 Day    | \$0–\$400                           |
| Minor Repairs | 1–7 Days | Varies                              |
| Landscaping   | 1 Day    | \$50–\$500                          |
| Staging       | 1–3 Days | Varies                              |
| Photography   | 1 Day    | Usually included or varies by agent |

Actual preparation time and costs vary depending on your home's condition, market, and local service providers.

## Utah Homeownership Authority Educational Series

Preparing your home before listing is one of the best ways to maximize buyer interest and showcase your home's full potential. This guide is intended for educational purposes and should be used alongside advice from your real estate professional.

### Final Seller Readiness Checklist ✓

- ☐ Decluttered
- ☐ Deep Cleaned
- ☐ Repairs Completed
- ☐ Improved Curb Appeal
- ☐ Home Staged
- ☐ Photography Ready
- ☐ Showing Ready

Preparing your home one step at a time can help you make a stronger first impression, attract more qualified buyers, and position your home for a successful sale. Even small improvements can make a meaningful difference.

### Common Seller Mistakes

- ✓ Leaving too many personal photos
- ✓ Ignoring small repairs
- ✓ Overcrowding rooms with furniture
- ✓ Forgetting to eliminate odors
- ✓ Skipping professional photography
- ✓ Staying home during showings
- ✓ Pricing the home before understanding its current market value.

### Seller Bonus Tip ★

Ask a friend who has never visited your home to walk through it before listing. Fresh eyes often notice small details that homeowners overlook.