

How to Prepare for the Open House

Beyond the Basics - Tips from an Inspection Perspective

We all know that problems with larger items or systems like roofs, or basements can become issues when selling a home. But often—it is not the “big” things—but many smaller items “all added-up” that can cost or slow down a sale.

Luckily, making some smart choices and small repairs prior to the open house can cost very little, but make a big difference. Here are some ideas—beyond the basics—to help prepare the home for the open house (and, incidentally, the home inspection that will soon follow when all your hard work pays off!):

Make Sure It's Accessible

- All exterior doors should be accessible. Just because the secondary entrance is not currently in use, doesn't mean that others won't want to check it out.
- All interior areas should be accessible. Don't lock the dog in a spare room or otherwise reduce access to the features in the home for buyers and inspectors.
- The crawl space access should be clear.
- Make sure the A/C unit is uncovered and de-winterized.
- Remove anything blocking the Electrical Panel. It needs to be accessible to the inspector later.
- Remove excess belongings from utility rooms used for storage.
- Make sure the attic is accessible and the stairs can be pulled down *without* endangering belongings or people below.
- Remove excess personal belongings from closets, so they are clear for buyers and inspectors.

Make Sure It's On

- Make sure the sprinkler system is turned on.
- Make sure the A/C System is on, as seasonally applicable.
- All utilities should be on (Electricity, Gas, Water and all Pilots lights).

Make Sure It Works

- All door locks should be operable.
- Doors should also open and close properly, and with ease.
- Make sure smoke detectors are working and have fresh batteries.
- Make sure CO detectors are installed and have fresh batteries.
- Make sure appliances are working: dishwasher, oven, microwave, and garbage disposal.
- Replace any burned-out light bulbs. You don't want to leave any questions about the integrity of the electrical system.

Make Some Necessary Repairs

- Repair Leaks, drips, or water stains. If there is water anywhere where it shouldn't be, it's time to take care of it and repair the damage it left behind.
- Make sure all light switches operate properly, eliminating any “mystery switches” that could give buyers doubts about the quality of the electrical system.
- Eliminate anything that wiggles, shakes or teeters. While homeowners may know where to grab the basement handrail so it doesn't wobble, buyers won't and inspectors will be sure to list the item in the report.
- If you have any water penetration issues, in a basement for example, it's better to address it now, rather than later.

Complete A Few Chores

- Remove debris from gutters/downspouts.
- Trim shrubs away from the foundation and away from A/C Condenser Unit.
- Remove wood, debris or stored items away from the foundation.
- Clear debris from under the refrigerator.
- Remove debris from shower drains.
- Clear the clutter.
- Dryer vents should be cleaned/cleared.

the entire home, so the garage and the backyard are not a great idea.

- Repair pet damage. Scratched or urine-soaked wood floor, wood trim, walls, or carpet should be repaired or replaced.

When There Are Children/Babies

- Consider propping baby gates open so that walking through the home is easy.
- Reduce toy clutter if possible.



- Remove “creative wiring” such as extension cords used in attic, interior and exterior spaces.
- Install a clean heating/A/C filter.
- Consider having the A/C unit cleaned and serviced especially if it's been a while.
- Consider having the fireplace and chimney cleaned.

When There Are Pets

- It's best that pets are removed from the premises when possible. Also keep in mind that buyers (and inspectors on inspection day) need access to