

THE COMPLETES 2026 FOOTHILLS HOME-PREP CHECKLIST

Your Personalized Guide to Selling Smart in the Catalina Foothills

More than a checklist — this is your strategic playbook for maximizing value, minimizing surprises, and presenting a home that stands out in one of Tucson's most desirable neighborhoods.

Section 1: Staging ROI — "The Investment That Pays You Back"

REAL FOOTHILLS RESULT

A seller on **Calle Barril** invested **\$9,600** in professional staging for his \$1.4M listing. The home sold in just **4 days** — attracting a strong offer and closing at \$1.35M after skilled negotiation. That \$9,600 investment helped generate urgency, multiple showings, and a **\$50,000 negotiation lift** from the initial offer.

Staging by the Numbers

National Average Staging ROI

3,551%

(RESA, Q3 2025)

Average Staging Investment

\$3,813 nationally

Staged Homes Sell For

6–10% more

(NAR)

Average Sale-to-List Ratio (Staged)

109% — ~9% over asking

Staged Homes Sell

73% faster

Buyer's agents who say staging helps clients visualize

82%



TopTucsonHomes.com
520-548-2096

Staging Essentials

Hire a professional stager experienced with Foothills-style homes

Stage primary living room, kitchen, and primary bedroom at minimum

Style the outdoor patio / courtyard as a fully furnished "outdoor room"

Use desert-toned textiles — warm whites, clay, sage, sand

Remove personal photos and collections; let architecture speak

Arrange furniture to frame mountain or sunset views

Add fresh greenery (potted succulents, desert arrangements)

Ensure every room has clear purpose and flow

Light every space — open blinds, add lamps, replace dim bulbs

Stage the entryway: console table, mirror, statement plant

Staging Cost Considerations

Get at least two staging quotes — compare occupied vs. vacant staging

Ask your REALTOR® about staging concessions or cost-sharing

Budget approximately 0.5%–1% of list price for professional staging

Factor in staging duration — most contracts run 60–90 days

Consider virtual staging for vacant secondary rooms to reduce cost

Section 2: Pre-Inspection Advantage — "Control the Narrative"

REAL FOOTHILLS RESULT

For a recent **Paseo Aquimuri** listing, the seller ordered a pre-listing inspection before going to market. By addressing items proactively, the home showed with confidence — and the transparency helped the deal move smoothly to close. The pre-inspection removed uncertainty and positioned the seller as prepared and trustworthy.

Why Pre-Inspections Win

- Eliminates surprises that can derail deals during escrow
- Gives sellers time to make repairs on their own schedule and budget
- Strengthens pricing confidence — you know exactly what you're selling
- Builds buyer trust — sharing the report signals transparency

- Can reduce or eliminate buyer inspection contingencies
- Faster, smoother closings with fewer renegotiation requests

Before the Inspector Arrives

Schedule inspection 4–6 weeks before your target list date

Hire a licensed inspector familiar with Foothills construction (block, stucco, tile roof)

Ensure all utilities are on and all areas are accessible (attic, crawlspace, electrical panel)

Clear storage from around the water heater, furnace, and electrical panel

Unlock gates, sheds, and pool equipment areas

Have your maintenance records organized and available

Common Foothills Inspection Items to Address

HVAC system service and filter replacement (critical in desert heat)

Roof tile inspection — check for cracked, shifted, or missing tiles

Water heater age and condition (replace if 10+ years old)

Plumbing — check for leaks under sinks, at hose bibs, and irrigation connections

Electrical panel — ensure proper labeling and no double-tapped breakers

Smoke and CO detectors — test and replace batteries

Garage door safety sensors — test auto-reverse function

Pool/spa equipment — ensure pumps, filters, and heaters are operational

Check for evidence of termites or wood-boring insects (common in AZ)

Verify GFCI outlets in kitchens, bathrooms, garage, and exterior

After the Inspection

Review the report with your REALTOR® — prioritize items by impact

Get repair estimates for any material issues

Complete repairs and document with receipts and before/after photos

Prepare a "Pre-Inspection Summary" to share with serious buyers

Decide disclosure strategy with your REALTOR® for any items not repaired

Section 3: Foothills-Specific Outdoor Prep — "Where Desert Meets Design"

In the Catalina Foothills, outdoor spaces aren't just yards — they're extensions of the home. Buyers here expect desert landscaping that's both beautiful and intentional, stucco that's pristine, rooflines that are maintained, and outdoor living areas that feel like a lifestyle upgrade. This section covers the details that matter most in our unique environment.

Sun Exposure & Orientation

- Identify south- and west-facing elevations — these take the most UV punishment
- Check for sun-bleached exterior paint, faded shutters, or discolored garage doors
- Inspect window seals and weatherstripping on sun-facing windows
- Evaluate shade structures — ramadas, pergolas, shade sails — for wear and stability
- Clean and inspect solar panels if present (efficiency drops with dust buildup)
- Test exterior lighting — replace bulbs, update fixtures for evening curb appeal
- Ensure outdoor ceiling fans and misters are operational

Desert Landscaping

- Audit plant health — remove dead or overgrown specimens
- Trim palo verde, mesquite, and ironwood trees for clean canopy lines
- Refresh decomposed granite (DG) — rake, level, and top off faded areas
- Edge all planting beds with clean borders (steel, stone, or natural rock)
- Add seasonal color — lantana, desert marigold, penstemon, or bougainvillea
- Assess boulder and rock placement — ensure natural, intentional arrangement
- Clear debris from washes, drainage swales, and dry creek beds
- Check for erosion around foundations, retaining walls, and slope areas
- Verify drip irrigation coverage — walk every zone, check emitters and timers
- Replace cracked or leaking drip lines and adjust watering schedules for season
- Remove weeds from gravel areas — apply pre-emergent if listing in spring

Stucco Care

- Walk the entire exterior — inspect all four elevations at different times of day
- Look for hairline cracks, especially near windows, doors, and corners

Check for thermal cracks — "stair-step" patterns from expansion/contraction

Identify staining — brown streaks near windows, green algae on north-facing walls

Test for chalking — run your hand across the surface; white residue = UV degradation

Check for soft spots or crumbling near the base (possible moisture intrusion)

Seal hairline cracks with flexible elastomeric caulking

Schedule professional stucco repair for cracks wider than 1/8 inch

Power-wash gently (low pressure only — high pressure damages stucco)

Repaint or recoat if last painted 7+ years ago — use UV-resistant elastomeric paint

Match existing stucco color precisely — get a professional color match

Roofline & Roof Considerations

Inspect clay or concrete tile for cracks, chips, or shifts from thermal movement

Check flashing around vents, skylights, and chimney penetrations

Clear debris from valleys and behind parapet walls (monsoon prep)

Inspect flat-roof areas for ponding, membrane cracks, or coating failure

Check fascia and soffit for UV damage, peeling paint, or pest intrusion

Examine roof-mounted equipment (satellite dishes, swamp cooler pads, solar racking)

Clean gutters and downspouts where present — verify proper drainage

Trim tree branches within 6 feet of the roofline

Look for evidence of packrat nests in roof areas (common Foothills issue)

Get a professional roof inspection if the roof is 15+ years old

Outdoor Living Spaces

Deep-clean patios, courtyards, and pool decks (stained concrete, flagstone, pavers)

Inspect and clean the pool or spa — crystal-clear water for showings

Service pool equipment — pumps, filters, heaters, automatic cleaners

Check outdoor kitchen/BBQ — clean grill, test gas lines, verify function

Power-wash and seal outdoor countertops and bar areas

Test and clean the fireplace or fire pit — stock with clean firewood or decorative fire glass

Inspect courtyard walls and gates — hinges, latches, paint

Pressure-test outdoor plumbing for misting systems and water features

Stage outdoor furniture — remove worn cushions, add fresh textiles

Ensure all exterior doors (French doors, sliders, patio doors) operate smoothly

Section 4: Interior Prep — Room by Room

Kitchen

Deep-clean appliances inside and out — especially oven, range hood, and refrigerator

Declutter countertops — leave only 2–3 curated items (cutting board, plant, cookbook)

Organize pantry and cabinets — buyers will open them

Fix leaky faucets, update hardware if dated

Ensure all lighting works — under-cabinet, pendant, recessed

Clean grout lines on backsplash and floor tile

Bathrooms

Re-caulk tubs, showers, and vanities — fresh caulk signals care

Replace old toilet seats and update faucet hardware if needed

Deep-clean glass shower doors and tile

Organize vanity drawers and medicine cabinets

Add fresh, matching towels and a new shower curtain

Primary Bedroom & Closets

Create a hotel-like bed setup — fresh linens, layered pillows, simple styling

Clear closets to 50% capacity — install matching hangers

Remove excess furniture — keep only bed, nightstands, and one seating piece

Ensure window coverings are clean and operate smoothly

Living Areas

Arrange furniture to create clear conversation groupings

Remove bulky or excess pieces — aim for spacious, open flow

Clean all ceiling fans, light fixtures, and window blinds

Repair any wall damage — patch, sand, and touch up paint

Clean carpets professionally or consider replacing if worn

Garage & Storage

Declutter to show at least one open parking space

Organize shelving and storage areas

Sweep, clean, and consider epoxy-coating the garage floor

Verify garage door opener, sensors, and remote function

Remove hazardous materials, old paint cans, and chemicals

Section 5: Systems & Mechanicals

Service HVAC — clean ducts, replace filters, verify cooling output (essential in AZ)

Flush water heater and check anode rod

Test all light switches, outlets, and GFCI resets

Verify water pressure at multiple fixtures

Check water softener function and salt levels

Test whole-house fan or attic ventilation system

Inspect weather stripping on all exterior doors

Verify deadbolts and all exterior locks function

Test garage door balance and auto-reverse

Document all recent service dates and vendor contacts

Section 6: Paperwork & Documentation

Gather all appliance manuals and warranty documents

Compile HOA documents — CC&Rs, financials, meeting minutes

Collect records of all home improvements with permits and receipts

Prepare a utility cost summary (last 12 months — SRP/TEP, water, gas)

Obtain a preliminary title report

Prepare Seller's Property Disclosure Statement (SPDS)

Locate original survey or plat map

Compile pest control service records

Document pool maintenance history and equipment warranties

Prepare a "Know Your Home" guide for the next owner — irrigation schedules, vendor contacts, neighborhood tips

Section 7: Final Countdown — Last 48 Hours Before Listing

Complete a final walkthrough — check every room, closet, and outdoor area

Set thermostats to 74–76°F for comfortable showings

Open all blinds and curtains — maximize natural light

Turn on all lights including accent and landscape lighting

Light a subtle, clean-scented candle in the kitchen (not overpowering)

Put out fresh flowers or a succulent arrangement at the entry

Lock up valuables, medications, and personal documents

Confirm lockbox is installed and accessible

Verify MLS photos and listing description are accurate and live

Do a final exterior drive-by — see your home the way buyers will

"Every Foothills home has a story. Our job is to help you tell it at its best — from the moment buyers see your listing online to the moment they walk through your front door. This checklist is your head start. When you're ready to talk strategy, we're here."

— **Steve**

Catalina Foothills Specialist

Long Realty - Foothills

Have questions about your specific home?

Let's schedule a personalized walk-through and create a custom prep plan together.

Prepared by Steve Redmond | Catalina Foothills Specialist | Long Realty Foothills