

# ALL POINTS CHECK LIST FOR SELLING YOUR HOME

COURTESY OF THE KEY TEAM

## SPRUCE UP THE YARD AND THE EXTERIOR

1. **PAINT:** Few things will enhance the salability of a house quite so much, as painting the outside. Before painting, scrape or water blast any blistered or peeling paint, repair gutters and down spouts and replace wood showing dry rot. Wood, trim works, gutters and wrought iron should receive primary attention.
2. **FRONT ENTRY:** Give special care to this area. This where buyers get their first chance to make a close inspection and they will pick it a part looking for flaws, so eliminate them. All woodwork should be freshly and neatly painted, including the door if necessary. Replace a badly worn or broken doorbell button. Polish the door brass. Repaint or replace unsightly mailbox. Put out new or clean doormat. Do a thorough weeding and pruning job on any flowerbeds near the entry, and try to have some flowering plants growing.
3. **YARD:** Mow and trim the lawn. Weed flowerbeds, remove or replace dead plants or trees. Water regularly during growing season. With desert landscaping make sure that no underlying plastic is exposed, that rocks and sand are tidy, and that weeds and grass are removed.
4. **DRIVEWAY, GARAGE/CARPORT:** Clean up grease or oil spots, remove the soil at least, if not the stain. See that garage door opens freely and that the automatic opener is in good working order. If possible don't park cars in front of the house or driveway, and try to have very few parked cars on the street or near the house. Recreational vehicles or boats should be parked in garage or carport or behind a fence in the back. Derelict cars or ones being overhauled should not be visible from the street and preferably should not even be present.
5. **FENCE:** A few missing stakes or slats are real eyesores to buyers, yet are usually inexpensive and easy to fix. Repair, paint or stain as necessary.
6. **ROOF:** Remove visible debris, straighten the TV antenna if necessary. Remove any tree branches bearing on the roof.
7. **AIR CONDITONERS:** Repaint or replace any rusted exposed metal. Correct improper draining.
8. **PATIO:** A nice spread of outdoor furniture looks very appealing. If necessary, borrow from a friend to enhance show ability.

## **LOOK AT THE BASICS AROUND THE HOUSE**

- 1. WINDOWS:** Repair or replace torn or bent screens. As a last resort, remove them entirely, no screens are better than unsightly ones. Replace any cracked or broken panes. Also notice foliage near windows. An outside window framed in ivy can give a warm, homey feeling, but cut it back if foliage is restricting light coming into the room. Drapery rods should be affixed firmly to walls and work smoothly, draperies should be reasonably clean and hang properly.
- 2. DOORS:** Repair or replace doors with holes. One method of repair short of replacement is to cover a hole with a mirror or piece of paneling. Check to see that all doors open and close freely, including closet doors and patio sliding glass doors. Oil any squeaky doors. Tighten the hardware particularly doorknobs and while making this kind of adjustment, tighten hardware in kitchen and bathroom cabinets too.
- 3. WALLS:** As with the exterior, painting will pay dividends out of all proportion to the time and effort spent. Wallpaper should be clean and adhere smoothly to walls. Patch major holes in wallboard and plaster. Loose handrails should be secured to walls. Clean or paint air-vent covers.
- 4. FLOORS:** Replace or repair missing or damaged pieces of tile, polish if needed. Repair a loose stair tread-plate or loose carpeting on stairway is a top priority.
- 5. CARPETS:** Steam cleaning, preferably by a Professional Carpet Cleaner, is the best answer for soiled carpet; shampooing seldom does the job where show ability is concerned. If pet odors are present, be sure to clean the carpet some time before the home is placed on the market to be sure that odors have been eliminated. Loose carpet should be anchored properly.

## **CHECK MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL FEATURES**

- 1. LIGHTS:** Every socket in and around the house should have a good bulb of adequate wattage. Don't overlook those outside, in the garage, utility room, halls, closets, over the kitchen sink, in the oven and exhaust hood.
- 2. SWITCHES AND FIXTURES:** Repair or replace wall switches, outlets and light fixtures that don't work, replace any broken switch plates. Note: If you are not fully competent to handle these repairs, call in a professional electrician.

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3. **APPLIANCES:** Those will be sold with the home should be in good working order. If specific equipment doesn't work and you don't intend to repair it, point this out.
4. **PLUMBING:** Badly chipped or irreversibly stained sinks or tubs should be re-enameled, patched or replaced. Leaky or excessively noisy toilets should be fixed as well as any dripping faucets.
5. **SPRINKLER SYSTEMS:** These should be working properly with no defective heads.

### ARRANGE FOR A SPACIOUS LOOK

One of the best and inexpensive ways to improve the show ability of your home is to open as much space as possible. Openness stimulates positive feelings in buyers. Overstuffed rooms or closets give the impression of being smaller than really are. You can't change the size of what you have, so try to present it pleasing way. If necessary, rent a mini-warehouse to store your extra belongings while the house is on the market.

1. **CLOSETS & STORAGE AREAS:** One of the most frequently voiced requirements of buyers is for closet and storage space. Open up your storage areas by getting rid of item you are not using.
2. **COUNTERS & CABINETS:** The same principal applies here. Over crowding gives the impression of inadequacy. This applies to bathrooms and kitchens, with the kitchen being most important. Store infrequently used counter-top appliances. Do some prudent discarding in cabinets.
3. **GARAGE:** Buyers will pay a premium for a garage if they can visualize it being value to them, but it's hard to sell the virtues of a garage when it's filled to overflowing. If your garage has become a two-car attic, move the excess to a mini-warehouse for the duration.

### HINTS ON HOUSE KEEPING

The following comments touch only on areas often neglected or overlooked.

1. **BATHROOMS:** Few places in the home can get so dirty so fast, and yet few things will "unsell" a house as fast as dirty baths. Vanity, sink, faucet hardware, and mirror are the focal points, but other potential problems might be soap residue in a shower, a moldy

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shower curtain, accumulated dirt in the track of sliding shower door, soiled or missing grout, stained toilet bowls, and dirty battered bath mats.

2. **KITCHEN:** Like baths, kitchens get dirty all by themselves. Most buyers will inspect this area carefully, so extra time invested here is well spent. Clean the stove inside out. Replace badly stained or corroded plates under the heating elements on electric range tops. Don't neglect the exhaust hood, buyers generally check this area as a clue to general housekeeping.
3. **WINDOWS:** Clean windows are an absolute necessity if a house to look its best, yet very often overlooked. Hiring a professional to do this is a great way to make a nice shining impression!
4. **WATER HEATER:** Perhaps because it is so unusual, a clean sparkling water heater really impresses buyers and it takes so little time and effort.

### SNIFF OUT UNPLEASANT ODORS

1. **WET TOWELS AND WASHCLOTHS:** Residents of a home frequently aren't aware of what a potential source of bad odor these are. Replace all used towels with fresh ones before a showing.
2. **SOILED CLOTHES:** When the house is being shown, keep dirty laundry out of the living area, move it to the utility room, garage or storage area. This applies especially to the dirty diaper pail.
3. **GARBAGE:** Take all trash and garbage out of the house, particularly any food related discards for the kitchen and make sure no potatoes or onions going bad under the sink or in the pantry. After running garbage through a disposal unit, grind up part of a lemon to add afresh smell.
4. **SEWER GAS IN THE HOUSE:** Do whatever necessary to correct this problem before the house placed on the market.
5. **CATS & DOGS:** As a first step, moves the cat's litter box out of the house. And be sure to clean up after the dog before showings.

## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS**

1. **VALUABLES:** You may have valuable possessions that you like to display in your home, but when the house is being shown to strangers is not the time. Never leave small valuable items lying around the counters or visible in closets or cabinets. Get them out of sight if not out of the house. Don't invite a problem.
2. **EXCLUSIONS FROM THE SALE:** Make a note now of the items you do not intend to include with the sale of the house. Freestanding items are generally not included, when in doubt spell it out. Some items often cause misunderstandings are light fixtures, draperies, large mirrors, water softeners, garage door openers and TV antennas.
3. **KEYS:** As you are readying the house for the market, make a note to gather all the keys for the house, including keys for doors, deadbolts, garage doors and any padlocks around the property.
4. **INSTRUCTION MANUALS:** As with keys gather manuals and warranties for the mechanical equipment in the house-kitchen appliances, water heater and softener, air conditioning and heating units, evaporative cooling units, pool and filtration equipment and electronic air filters.

## **TIPS FOR SHOWING**

1. **LIGHTS:** Open all draperies unless there is an objectionable view. In most rooms you should turn on lights for a bright and cheerful look. Lamps and indirect lighting is preferable, but use overhead light if that's all there is in a particular room.
2. **LIGHT SWITCHES:** If some wall switches operate wall outlets, plug in a lamp or radio to demonstrate that switch works. When a buyer flips a switch and nothing happens, he instinctively suspects a problem.
3. **AROMAS:** Set out some fresh flowers, both for their appearance and fragrance. Right before an agent showing place a small dish of vanilla extract in your oven at 250 degrees. Bottled Oils with Reeds provide a consistent, pleasant aroma and are a great addition to bathrooms and living areas.
4. **CLOSETS:** Keep doors closed except for walk-in closets. Have those doors slightly ajar and turn on the lights to draw attention to this special feature.

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5. **POSTERS AND SIGNS:** We live in a tolerant age but don't take a chance on offending a potential buyer. Remove all posters or signs that might be considered offensive.
6. **ASHTRAYS:** Dirty ashtrays are both unsightly and source of objectionable odor to non-smokers. Keep them clean.
7. **UTILITY BILLS:** Have copies of the 12-month's bills available or at least written summary of the amounts paid monthly for the period.
8. **PETS:** Get them out of the house, if not the property. Some people don't like dogs, and nobody likes muddy paw prints on a clean suit or a dress. Cats can be just as objectionable to the person who doesn't like them, invariably a cat will single out the cat-hater to use as a rubbing post.
9. **MUSIC:** Soft background music will help create relaxed mood that prompts buyers to linger and enjoy, but no music is better than loud music. Never leave the TV on when the house is being shown.