

When you examine your property, look at it with a fresh set of eyes, as if you are the Buyer seeing it for the first time. This is not a time to be stubborn or make statements. Take this opportunity to begin packing, so that you are more organized when things start to get crazy.

HIGHEST PRIORITY – These Items Represent the Greatest Deterrent to Attract Good Offers

- ODOR is the number one deterrent in procuring the initial emotional connection necessary to engage your buyer's interest. "The" first and lasting impression on your potential buyer is a heavy scent as they enter your home. Pet odor, smoking, kitty litter, oily or spicy cooking, overbearing deodorizers trying to mask all the above are potential deal breakers. Third party analysis or anonymous feedback from buyers or Realtors is the only way you will know, if that is what is killing your sale.
- CLUTTER is the next on your to do list. Even the most experienced real estate investor is distracted as eyes are drawn to personal effects instead of the Real Property. Counter tops should be cleared, fridge magnets removed, bulletin boards taken down, toys stowed away, trophies off display, posters need to come down. Even family pictures and sentimental items have no place in the home staging process. Remember if you have your way, this is not your home anymore. Make it look like their dream home, not yours!
- WINDOWS AND SCREENS are vital in the home staging process. The windows should be the brightest, cleanest windows possible. Corner to corner, inside and out, cleaning all windows, screens, sills, and blinds. The best gain for the time invested. Lubricate all cranks, locks, and sliders, as you clean.
- PAINT is cheap!!! Paint goes a long way in the home staging process. Your personal taste in colors is not always the best for everyone. Remove everything from the walls, then patch, and paint with a neutral paint color. If you're not good at painting, get someone who is! It must look professional.
- CURB APPEAL is a broad term. It means that the lawn is cut and free of brown spots. The Landscape is pruned, and the beds have been mulched. There are no weeds growing through the sidewalks or steps. The sidewalk and porch are swept and free from mold and mildew, grease, or grime. The doorway is clean with fresh paint, door handles shining, and in good condition, no rust, cobwebs, or clutter in sight, as you approach the entryway.
- DARK, DAMP OR DINGY – The room or closet that needs the most attention. Empty it out completely, even if it is your entire garage. Open the windows, air it out, and put back only the things that add value.
- DUST, COBWEBS, CEILING LIGHTS/FANS, CEILING STAINS, CARPET STAINS – All must be cleaned. Kilz should be applied before painting any ceiling stains, if they no longer are leaking. Everything, should be cleaned. Don't neglect things like high corners, and other areas you don't normally look at.
- WOOD ROT should be addressed. – Any rotting area will be flagged in an inspection. Handle any and all of these items **BEFORE** the inspection. You want to do it before you show, so it's not even a question. It's a red flag you don't need. It will only bring further criticism or unease to your Buyer's.
- Edge of grass meeting sidewalk, driveway, and street.
- Lawn dark green color, weed whack, grass cut to proper height.
- Driveway stains, pits, holes, cracks, color, clean, clutter-free
- Trash cans out of sight, toys away, tools stored, planters filled.
- Front Porch is free of clutter, décor is well maintained, floor covering is spotless.
- Trees and bushes are trimmed, free of dead leaves, low hanging branches should be removed and foliage should not touch the home. Too much landscaping or not enough? Less is more.
- Beds are free from weeds, and fresh mulch or stones have been put down to spruce things up.
- Impatiens or another flowering ground cover in season, will make a huge splash of color for a minimal investment.
- Check the roof from the street. Are there any broken tiles or shingles slipping, do your vents look secure? Are they rusted?

- Is there any rotten wood or exposed concrete visible as you walk up to the house?
- Are the numbers on the mailbox straight and visible, how about the numbers or the name on the house?
Any name plates should be removed.
- Is the mailbox clean and well maintained, does it need paint, is it rusty?
- What does your welcome mat say about your home, a new one is very cheap, something simple will do well.
- Analyze the front door, locks, knobs, hinges, brass, kick plate and paint.
- How do the windows and screen look?
- Check the eaves drip edge and all the overhangs for cobwebs, wasp nests, leaves, or water leaks.
- Are the gutters functional, free of debris and cosmetically in proper order, are they connected properly?

Experts agree: Remove rope swings, tire swings, old bird houses, worn signage, knick-knacks, toads, elves', ducks, lawn men statues, religious symbols, flags, stickers, wood carvings, personalized stepping stones, and other unnecessary items. LESS IS MORE IN HOME STAGING. IT IS THE OPPOSITE OF INTERIOR DESIGN. Let the customer envision their own personal items in the space.