
Why My *Home* Is **SPECIAL**

We're sure you have enjoyed being in your home and have been pleased with its many features. We want to make sure we tell perspective buyers about all the special features of your home. Please fill in the items below so we can target our marketing efforts to those prospects most likely to buy your home.

Home features we have really enjoyed...

The type of person I think would love my home the most is...

...Because of these features...

How would you describe your home to a buyer?

What are the features you like the most about your neighborhood or area?

My Home's UPGRADES

When pricing your home, we want to take into account the investment you made in improving your property. Please list all of the upgrades you did and the approximate amount you spent and the approximate value of the upgrades. We will use this information to show to prospective buyers so they can understand our pricing strategy. ~ Thanks!

INTERIOR OF THE HOME:

UPGRADES:	DATE:	COST:
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		
4. _____		
5. _____		
6. _____		
7. _____		
8. _____		
9. _____		
10. _____		
11. _____		
12. _____		

EXTERIOR OF THE HOME:

UPGRADES:	DATE:	COST:
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		
4. _____		
5. _____		
6. _____		
7. _____		
8. _____		
9. _____		
10. _____		
11. _____		
12. _____		

YARD AND LANDSCAPING:

UPGRADES:	DATE:	COST:
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		
4. _____		
5. _____		
6. _____		

ADDITIONAL BLDGS, SHEDS, ETC.:

UPGRADES:	DATE:	COST:
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		
4. _____		

Total Approximate
Cost of Upgrades

\$ _____

Increasing Your *Home's* MARKETABILITY

What changes would you make to your home's condition, style, or staging in order to move it to the front of the line?

Would you make changes in its physical condition - improvements or repairs, changes in design, or the way the home shows (staging)? Or would you make the impact with pricing and/or offering attractive terms like financing, closing, possession, or inclusions so that you are in a better position than the competition.

If you were to stay in your home another 5 years, is there anything you would do to your home?

AVERAGE MONTHLY UTILITIES

Water & Sewer:	\$ _____
Electric:	\$ _____
Gas:	\$ _____
Phone/Internet/Cable:	\$ _____
Waste Pickup:	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

Landscaping:	\$ _____
<i>(terms)</i>	_____
Pest Control:	\$ _____
<i>(terms)</i>	_____
Alarm/Security:	\$ _____
<i>(terms)</i>	_____

Is Your *Home* READY FOR SALE

Our goal is to present your home at its best. Your goal should be to present a clean, spacious, clutter-free home – the kind you would like to buy! Some simple task, if not paid attention to, could possibly affect the sale of your home. So we've created a checklist to help you prepare your home for sale:

Curb Appeal

- Keep lawn mowed and shrubs trimmed
- Edge gardens and walkways
- Remove all cars from driveway
- Hide garbage cans inside garage
- Sweep walkways and driveways
- Remove branches, litter, and toys
- Add color and fill bare spots with plantings
- Remove mildew or moss from walls or walks with bleach and water
- Take stains off your driveway with cleaner or kitty litter
- Clean and pressure wash patio and deck areas. Make repairs if necessary
- Remove any broken/worn outdoor furniture
- Make sure pool is sparkling clean
- Remove screens from front windows
- Replace old storm/screen doors
- Check for broken/misaligned roof shingles
- Repair broken windows/shutters, replace torn, screens, make sure frames and seams have solid caulking
- Pressure wash exterior siding, replace damaged bricks or wood
- Clean and remove rust from any window A/C units or store them away
- Paint the front door and mailbox
- Add a new front door mat and consider seasonal door decoration
- Clean or repaint hardware on front door, exterior lighting fixtures, etc.
- Make sure doorbell is in working order

General Interior Tips

- Add a fresh coat of interior paint in light, neutral colors
- Shampoo carpeting, replace if necessary

- Remove rugs, floor mats, door mats to enhance perception of floor space size
- Clean, wax or refinish hardwood floors
- Clean and wash kitchen and bathroom floors
- Wash all windows, vacuum blinds, wash window sills
- Clean the fireplace
- Clean out and organize closets, add extra space by packing clothes and items you won't need again until after you've moved
- Remove extra furniture, worn rugs, and items you don't use, especially from stairs
- Repair easy fixes: loose doorknobs, cracked molding, leaky taps and toilets, squeaky doors, closet or screen doors off their tracks, etc.
- Add scented potpourri or scented candle
- Secure jewelry, cash, or other valuables

Master Bedroom

- Organize furniture to create a spacious look with sitting, sleeping, and dressing areas
- Organize and minimize clutter in closet

Kitchen

- Make sure appliances are clean inside and out
- Make sure all appliances are in working order
- Clean often-forgotten spots: on top of fridge and under sink
- Wax or sponge floors to brilliant shine, clean baseboards
- Organize items inside cabinets, pre-pack anything you won't be using
- Keep counters as clear and empty as possible

Living Room

- Make it cozy and inviting, remove chipped or worn furniture and frayed or worn rugs
- Consider packing away personal photos
- Remove as much clutter as possible

Bathrooms

- Remove all rust and mildew
- Make sure tile, fixtures, shower doors, are immaculate and shining
- Stow all personal hygiene items
- Put out fresh towels and linens

Basement

- Sell or give away all unnecessary items
- Organize and create more space by hanging tools and placing items on shelves

- Clean water heater and drain sediment
- Change furnace filter
- Make inspection access easy
- Clean and paint concrete floors and walls
- Provide strong overhead lighting

Attic

- Tidy up by discarding or pre-packing
- Make sure exposed insulation is visible and in good condition
- Make sure air vent is in good working order
- Provide strong overhead lighting

Top 8 Interior IMPROVEMENTS

“spring cleaning” throughout... no matter what the season is. Give special attention to the following: windows and screens, counter and appliance tops, mirrors, ovens, sinks, toilets and tub/shower areas.

1. Buyers take special notice of light & bright homes. Buy high-intensity light bulbs and be sure to clean all light shades and covers.
2. Buyers notice especially clean homes. Do a
3. Buyers notice clean windows, freshly laundered drapes & curtains.
4. Buyers notice freshly cleaned carpets. Replace or repair damaged areas of the floor or floor covering. Having your carpet stretched can make a dramatic improvement on its appearance.
5. Buyers notice spacious rooms; arrange furniture and decorations to improve each room. Remove unnecessary items that don't fit in.
6. Buyers notice colors that will blend with their decor and furnishings. Consider brightening things up with a fresh coat of paint. Think white, off-white or greige. Such colors make a room look bigger and brighter, and these colors are most likely to go with the new buyer's furnishings.
7. Buyers notice closet & cabinet space. Neatly arrange everything in your closets, cabinets and other storage areas including the basement and garage. Get rid of all unnecessary items.
8. Buyers pay attention to tiny details. Fix all of the “little things”... loose door knobs, leaky faucets, towel racks, clean and repair caulk areas.

Your *Photographer's* CHECKLIST

The goal of real estate photography is for the viewer to look at the photos, rather online or in print, and to imagine this is their home. By following these simple steps, you can be sure to have the highest quality photographs for your prospective buyers.

General Areas

- Replace all light bulbs with matching bulbs.
- Clean all windows inside and outside.
- Remove all personal items e.g. photos.
- Tidy/hide all power cords/cables.

Den/Living Areas

- Turn off TV and put remotes away.
- Remove all toys, fans, game consoles.
- Remove exercise bikes, equipment.
- Arrange DVDs, games, books, neatly in shelves.
- Turn off and clean ceiling fans.

Kitchen/Dining Areas

- Put away all dishes, cutlery.
- Remove all counter top appliances.
- Clean back splash and range hoods, especially if stainless steel.
- Remove all detergents, dish cloths, dish rack.
- Ensure range hood lights are working.
- Remove all objects from refrigerator e.g. pictures, magnets.
- Remove pet bowls.

Bedrooms

- Remove toys, books, games, tissue boxes.
- Remove all personal items.
- Ensure bedside lamps are working.
- Remove posters/stickers from walls.
- Clear away all clothes.

Bathrooms

- Clean tub and shower area.
- Remove all soaps, face washers, shampoo, bath mats, toys, scales.
- Remove all toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, hair dryers.
- Make sure glass and mirrors are spotless.
- Remove all non-matching towels.
- Remove toilet cleaning utensils.
- Ensure toilet roll is not empty.

Outside Areas

- Mow the lawn and trim hedges.
- Rake leaves and sweep driveway if needed.
- Remove all gardening equipment e.g. hoses, rakes, wheelbarrows.
- Remove weeds from garden area.
- Remove all vehicles or boats from driveway. Don't park in front of house.
- Remove all toys.

Pool/Spa Area

- Ensure pool is clean.
- Remove all pool cleaners and poles.
- Remove all pool toys.

60 Minutes Before Photo Shoot Checklist

- Set the table (optional).
- Open all blinds.
- Turn on all lights.
- Turn off ceiling fans.
- Turn off all TVs.
- Put pets away.
- Ensure vehicles can't be seen.

If your home makes a lackluster appearance, whether onscreen or in print, you'll lose buyer interest before they ever pull up to the curb. That's why it pays to put a professional behind the camera.

Home SHOWING GUIDELINES

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- ❑ Leave the home at least ten to fifteen minutes before it is shown and return after the agent and buyers have left. You want the agent and the buyers to feel relaxed and to take their time when looking at your home.
- ❑ Keep pets outdoors and caged/chained when the house is being shown. It would actually be BEST if all pets could find a new home while the house is on the market.
- ❑ Leave a welcome note for the agent and the buyers in a highly visible place (taped to the front door). The note should welcome them and tell them where the “HomeBook”, “Home Feature Sheet” and other information about the home can be found.
- ❑ Before vacating the house for showing, do a quick check, to make sure:
 - ❑ Curb appeal... how does your property look from the curb? If potential buyers don't like the looks of the house from the curb, they become disappointed and often times won't go in the house.
 - ❑ Clutter... eliminate it everywhere: closets, garage, attic, each room, yard, etc.
 - ❑ Clean... everywhere, everything. People value cleanliness...both in what theysee and smell.
 - ❑ Remove valuable personal property like jewelry, etc.
 - ❑ Make sure the lockbox system is placed on or by the front door.
- ❑ Open drapes, turn on lights and play soft music. Remember, you are trying to make the buyer *feel at home!*

Vacant Home

UTILITIES CHECKLIST

If your home is vacant it is advised that you have the utilities turned on within the home prior to inspection. To help facilitate the inspection being completed on the scheduled date and without added trip costs. We ask that you confirm the items below are on:

- ➞ **Water Service Turned On ?** Please check that all necessary valves **inside the home** are in the **ON** position prior to the inspectors arrival, this should be done after the water has been turned on at the street at least 24 hours prior to the inspection).
- ➞ **Gas Service Turned On ?** Operate the gas appliances such as Gas Furnaces & Water Heaters to confirm that the gas has been turned on.
- ➞ **Electric Service Turned On ?** (All necessary Breakers & Switches **inside the home** must be in **ON** position prior to the inspectors arrival, this should be done at least 24 hours prior to the inspection).
- ➞ **Heating / Cooling Systems Turned On ?** (Depending on the weather, Turn on the air conditioning systems at least 24 Hrs prior to the inspection, **set systems to normal living settings - Auto Mode – between 68 -76 degrees & Pilot On**). This does not apply if the outside temperature have been and or is below 65 degrees within the past 24 hours. Air conditioning systems should not be operated if the outside temperature has been below 65 degrees within the past 24 hours.
- ➞ **Water Heater Turned On ?** (Check toilets and sinks for water flow, Confirm Pilot is on & set to normal range/temperature). Check to see that there is hot water by operating the kitchen and bathroom sink faucets.

Due to insurance and liability restrictions, Please do not ask the Inspector to turn on any main utility shut off valves/switches (these must be turned on by utility company) – shut off valves at fixtures and or breakers/switches within electric panels at the time of inspection, as this is considered part of a De-Winterization.

The Inspector is not equipped to handle nor will have the time to handle adverse problems (such as valves that break and or water/plumbing leaks) that may arise and possibly flood a property by performing these functions. The above mentioned items will help ensure that all systems are able to be checked. Again for liability reasons the Inspector will not turn on any system, fixture, appliance, component, pilot light, safety/system switches and or breakers that are otherwise shut down or turned off. The house needs to have all utilities, components and systems turned on and ready for operation by the seller or other arrangement prior to scheduling of the home inspection.

Your *Pre-Inspection* CHECKLIST

Use a checklist like this to make sure that you are looking at all parts of the house. Check off those items that are in good condition and make notes about those that are not. (Note that this list describes an ideal house, but in our experience no house is perfect – not even brand new ones!!)

Grounds

- Proper grading drainage away from house
- No evidence of standing water
- No leaks from septic tank or leech field
- Yard, landscaping, trees and walkways in good condition
- No branches or bushes touching house or overhanging the roof
- Exterior structures (fences, sheds, decks, retaining walls, detached garages) in good condition, no evidence of termite damage or rotted wood
- Railings on stairs and decks are adequate and secure
- Driveways, sidewalks, patios, entrance landings in good condition, and pitched away from structure
- Downspout drainage directed away from structure

Structure

- Ridge and fascia board lines appear straight and level
- Sides of house appear straight, not bowed or sagging
- Window and door frames appear square (especially bowed windows)
- Visible foundation in good condition - appears straight, plumb, with no significant cracks

Exterior Surfaces

- Adequate clearance between ground and wood siding materials (6" minimum); no wood-to-earth contact

- Siding: no cracking, curling, loose, rot or decay
- Masonry veneers: no cracks in joints, no broken, spalling or flaking components Stucco: no large cracks (discuss all stucco cracks with a professional inspector) Vinyl or aluminum siding: no dents, damage, no bowing or loose siding
- No vines on surface of structure
- Exterior paint or stain: no flaking or blisters
- No stains on exterior surfaces

Windows, Doors and Wood Trim

- Wood frames and trim pieces are secure, no cracks, rot or decay
- Joints around frames are caulked
- No broken glass (window or storm panes) or damaged screens, no broken double-paned, insulated window seals.
- Muntin and mullion glazing compound in good condition
- Storm windows or thermal glass used
- Drip caps installed over windows

Roof

- Composition shingles: no curling, no cupping, no loss of granulation particulate, no broken, damaged or missing shingles, no more than two layers of roofing
- Wood shingles or shakes: no mold, rot or decay, no cracked/broken/missing shingles, no curling
- Flat roofs: no obvious patches, no cracks or splits, minimal blisters/"alligatoring" and wrinkles, no silt deposits (indicates improper

Please Note:

This checklist should not be relied upon as a home inspection report, nor should it be considered a substitute for a home inspection. This list is representative, but NOT exhaustive. If you require a home inspection, contact Total Home Inspection or another qualified, educated, licensed, experienced ASHI certified home inspector in your area.

- drainage), sealed tar at flashings
- Flashing around roof penetrations
- No evidence of excess roofing cement/tar/caulk
- Soffits and fascia: no decay, no stains
- Exterior venting for eave areas: vents are clean and not painted over
- Gutters: no decay or rust, joints sealed, attached securely to structure, no bending or sagging, no sections of gutter or downspout missing, gutters clean, no mud deposits
- Chimneys: straight, properly flashed, no evidence of damaged bricks or cracked joints, mortar/cement cap in good condition

Attic

- No stains on underside of roofing, especially around roof penetrations No evidence of decay or damage to structure
- Sufficient insulation and properly installed insulation (moisture barrier installed closest to the heated area of the house)
- Adequate ventilation, clear path into attic for air entering through soffit vents, adequately sized gable end louvers, all mechanical ventilation operational
- No plumbing, exhaust or appliance vents terminating in attic No open electrical splices

Interior Rooms

- No stains on floors, walls or ceilings
- Flooring in good condition
- No significant cracks in walls or ceilings
- Windows and exterior doors operate easily and latch properly, no broken glass, no sashes painted shut, no decay; windows and doors have weather-stripping
- Interior doors operate easily and latch properly, no damage or decay, no broken hardware
- Paint, wall covering, and paneling in good condition
- Wood trim installed well and in good condition
- Lights and switches operate properly
- Electrical outlets test properly (spot check)
- Heating/cooling vents open/clean
- Fireplace: no cracking or damaged masonry, no evidence of back-drafting (staining on fireplace façade), damper operates properly, flue has been cleaned

Kitchen

- Working exhaust fan that is vented to the exterior of the home
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (“GFCI”) protection for electrical outlets within 6 feet of the sink(s)
- Dishwasher: drains properly, no leaks, baskets,

- door spring operates properly
- No leaks in pipes under sinks
- Floor in cabinet under sink solid, no stains or decay
- Water flow in sink adequate
- No excessive rust or deterioration on garbage disposal or waste pipes
- Built-in appliances operate properly
- Cabinets in good condition: doors and drawers operate properly

Bathrooms

- Working exhaust fan that doesn't terminate in the attic space
- Adequate flow and pressure at all fixtures
- Sink, tub and shower drain properly
- Plumbing and cabinet floor under sink in good condition
- If sink is metal, it shows no signs of rust, overflow drain doesn't leak Toilet operates properly
- Toilet stable, no rocking, no stains around base
- Caulking in good condition inside and outside of the tub and shower area
- Tub or shower tiles secure, wall surface solid
- No stains or evidence of past leaking around base of bath or shower

Miscellaneous

- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors where required by local ordinances
- Stairway treads and risers solid
- Stair handrails where needed and in good condition
- Automatic garage door opener operates properly, stops properly for obstacles

Basement

- No evidence of moisture
- Exposed foundation; no stains no major cracks, no flaking, no efflorescence
- Visible structural wood: no sagging, no damage, no decay, no stains, no damage from insects, sills attached to foundation with anchor bolts

Crawl Space

- Adequately vented to exterior
- Insulation on exposed water supply, waste and vent pipes
- Insulation between crawl space and heated areas, installed with vapor barrier towards heated area
- No evidence of insect damage
- No evidence of moisture damage

Plumbing

- Visible pipes: no damage, no evidence of leaks, no signs of stains on materials near pipes; drain pipes slope slightly down towards outlet to septic/sewage system
- Water heater: no signs of rust, vented properly, sized to produce adequate quantities of hot water for the number of bedrooms in the house.
- Hot water temperature between 118-125 degrees Fahrenheit

Electrical

- Visible wiring: in good condition, no exposed splices, cables secured and protected
- Service panel: adequate capacity, all cables attached to panel with cable connectors; fuses or breakers are not overheating
- No aluminum cable for branch circuits

Heating/Cooling System

- Appears to operate well throughout (good air flow on forced hot air systems)
- Flues: no open seams
- No rust around cooling unit
- No combustion gas odor
- Air filter(s) clean
- Ductwork in good condition

If You are Hiring a Contractor to Make Improvements/Repairs, Consider these Points...

- Shop around...don't rush into choosing a contractor
- Get at least three written estimates for the identical work so that you can compare bids
- Get references from the contractors so you can check on their work
- After you have made a choice of contractor, don't let work begin without a signed contract.
- Be sure to specify what is to be done and when work is to be completed

Make sure the agreement contains:

- Who will do the work
- When the work is to be completed
- A detailed list of specific materials to be used
- The appliances and/or fixtures to be supplied
- The dates for beginning and completing the job
- Monetary penalties for non-completion of project on time
- A provision for the clean up of the premises
- Don't sign a contract that reads "work as per agreement"
- Specify that contractor will obtain all necessary licenses and permits
- Specify contractor will meet all zoning regulations & building codes
- Be sure contractor will indemnify you in case of not meeting all regulations
- Be sure that the contract states the contractor is responsible for any damages to your property
- If contractor guarantees the work, be sure it specifically states what is guaranteed and for how long
- Contract should state when payment is due. Never pay full price in advance; link payments to certain stages of completion of the entire job
- Final payment and the signing of any completion