

# Home Selling Preparation Checklist

© Aaron Zapata

[www.AaronZapata.com](http://www.AaronZapata.com)

Your home is likely your greatest asset and I want you to get as much money as you can for it! Before your home goes on the real estate market, take the following items into consideration.

Ask yourself these three questions:

1. Does it look good?
2. Does it smell good?
3. Does it make you feel good?

If you can't answer YES to these three questions about ANY part of your home, you may need to make a change.

Here are items to review prior to selling:

☐ **Consider Curb Appeal**

What is the first thing people see when they come to your home? They see grass, landscaping, windows, roof, piles of debris, old cars in the driveway, front door, etc. Make sure it looks great from the outside.

☐ **Declutter**

When you have too much inside, it takes away from your home's layout, space, and design. Remove items that create too much clutter.

☐ **Depersonalize**

I'm not one that says all personal photos have to come off the walls, but if you have more than a few, take them down. I believe it's more important to remove clutter, but I have seen hundreds of buyers start looking at photos on the walls instead of the home. Besides, do you really want your hairdo and the outfit you wore in the 70s to be on display?

☐ **Repaint to Neutral Colors**

I know your kids love their purple, blue, or pink rooms that make them so “cute,” but buyers don’t want “cute”. They want to know walls have been freshly painted and the ceilings have been scraped. Neutral tones are best for conveying this message.

☐ **Repair Broken Systems**

If you know something is broken and you have the budget to repair it, do it. I’ve found that buyers triple and quadruple the “cost” of replacing an item. If you can make the fix for \$1,000, buyers think it will cost \$4,000. This will be reflected in the offers you receive.

☐ **Recarpet**

Your carpets should be fairly new. Carpets with damage, stains, and odors are horrible and need to go. Make sure the carpet is the last upgrade you make so it stays as clean as possible for the new buyer. The new carpet should complement the new paint. They, too, need to be neutral.

☐ **Remove Odors**

Every home has a distinct smell. When selling, your home should have a pleasant one. If you own a pet, it probably smells like pet and needs help. There are other smells to worry about too like mildew musty smells, and the smell of shoes or body odor.

Do whatever you have to (short of giving away your teenager) in order to get rid of the smell, not just mask it.

☐ **Clean off the Counters**

Kitchen counters should be neat and tidy. It should look as if nobody cooks in there. More importantly, the bathroom counters need to be

cleaned. Hide the toothbrush, the makeup, and the other items that routinely get left out.

☐ **Give away, sell, or throw away anything you aren't going to take with you.**

Beyond the clutter is the overall accumulation of things that distract homebuyers. If your home has too many sofas, too many TVs, plants, pictures, etc., buyers get distracted by all your belongings. Have a garage sale or give things away knowing you either need to pack it up and move it, or get rid of it once you sell.

☐ **Clean, Clean, Clean**

Clean houses sell for more money. I've heard it said more than once that if a house is messy on the outside where we can see it, then it must be unkempt where we can't see it. This implies that your plumbing, electrical, and other items that can't be seen are poorly maintained as well. This scares buyers.

☐ **Hide your Valuables**

Yes, thieves will come through your house, so make sure you keep your valuables hidden. I have found that a plain, unmarked, cardboard box is best because it looks uninviting. Hide cash, jewelry, and also medications.

☐ **DON'T remodel UNTIL you have talked with a REALTOR®**

Ask a REALTOR® about whether or not you will get your money back. Most of the time, the answer is no.

☐ **Get the opinion of a Professional Interior Designer**

We are all blind to our own surroundings to one degree or another. It's always a great idea to invite a professional (not a relative) into the home to get their opinion. Like it or not, they are probably going to tell you the truth and you should listen to them.

☐ **DON'T base your expectations on what you see on TV**

Reality TV has set certain false expectations of what it's like to buy and sell property.

Selling is not that easy. Remodeling costs way more in real life, putting in special bathroom tile inserts don't always work, and professional REALTORS® don't scream, yell, throw tirades, and look foolish. They do represent their clients' best interests and will guide them through the process.

☐ **Conduct a Home Inspection**

Most transactions fall out of the sale process when a buyer discovers something wrong with the home at the Home Inspection. Every seller should obtain their own so there are no surprises during escrow and correct any safety issues.

☐ **Hire a Professional REALTOR®**

While it may seem like you can save some money if you don't use a REALTOR®, in the end you end up netting less. Numerous studies have shown that homes sold without the help of a REALTOR sell for 7-8% less than with a REALTOR®. Besides marketing, your REALTOR® should guide you through every step of the way as you implement your selling plan.

A REALTOR® will also help you price your home correctly. Don't simply hire the one that promises you the highest price unless they also agree to buy it from you at the price they are suggesting.