

# Prepare a Home for Listing and the Home Inspection

The motivated Seller and listing Real Estate agent have a vested interest in minimizing any delays during the home selling process. Issues that a Home Inspection may uncover can forestall that process. Preparing and inspecting the home prior to listing will reveal any deficiencies and expedite the sale. This will allow the homeowner time to make any necessary repairs at their cost prior to listing the home. This preparation will also increase the chances of keeping a prospective Buyers interest in a well kept home. In addition a pre inspection may help to ensure asking price or justify an increase in market price. The following are suggested reportable areas that should be evaluated prior to selling a home. They are not inclusive and may not apply to every home.

## Exterior

- Be prepared with any documentation (permits) or repair records for decks, sheds, additions, pools, finished basements, and electrical upgrades.
- All exterior doors should be accessible. All door locks should be operable (keys provided if necessary).
- Caulk and repair windows, doors, and any penetrations in the outer cladding.
- Remove debris from gutters/downspouts and trim shrubs away from the foundation. This includes removing fire wood from garages and the home.
- Provide keys or unlock sheds and out-buildings.
- Screens should be installed or easily identified in the basement, garage or shed.
- Provide information on roof installation date.
- Trim bushes, trees and cut grass.
- Drain pool and unlock entrance gates. (seasonal)
- Role up hoses and remove any trip hazards in the yard.
- Sand (de-ice) and remove snow off the walkways and driveway (winter).

## Interior

- All interior areas should be accessible.
- Crawl space access should be clear of storage.
- Be sure that there is a minimum of one smoke detector/CO2 monitor per floor.
- Remove belongings from storage rooms. Clean up dirty clothes and excess clutter from every room. Vacuum the house.
- Make sure the stairs to the attic can be pulled down without endangering belongings or people.
- Attics should be empty so that the visual inspection includes the entire area.
- Empty garbage cans to remove unwanted smells.
- Remove medicines, high dollar value items, alcohol, collectables, and weapons from the home.
- Remove knick knacks and raise curtains allowing access to windows
- Notify the Inspector of known pest infestation. Example, bees, wasps, mice, squirrels, raccoons, termites, carpenter bees, ect.
- Replace all damaged windows and screens.
- Mark windows that will not open. Tighten all doorknobs and tighten or repair handrails.
- Clear the way to the attic access panel or pull-down, especially in a closet (clothes and breakables).
- Remove all flammable liquids, HAZMAT materials, unused construction materials.

- Entrances to rooms and other guarded locations containing hazardous or safety concerns shall be marked with conspicuous warning signs forbidding persons to enter.
- Include a discloser statement and survey plot map of the home.
- Turn off security alarms before the inspection.
- Clear items out of the stove and dishwasher.
- Change the batteries in the thermostat. If you are not occupying the home during the winter and the batteries die your furnace will not turn on. This may lead to water pipes breaking and other damage.
- Inform agent about child locks and how to open them (avoid damage)

## **Garages**

- Ensure the automatic opener and garage door work properly.
- Ensure the garage doors are unlocked and remove any stored items.
- There needs to be at least three feet of clearance from the walls for inspection.
- Remove heavy items from the rafters.
- Remove rugs or mats on the garage floor.
- Remove lawn mowers and cars from the garage.
- Remove or move sheds that are not in compliance with local codes and within minimum distance of property lines.

## **Electrical**

- The electrical panel and subpanels need to be accessible to the Inspector. For easier access, remove anything blocking the panel. (36 inch clearance)
- Ensure the electrical panel has an inspection sticker if modifications have been done.
- Remove “nonpermanent wiring,” such as extension cords used in attic, interior and exterior. Post circuit markings and labels inside panel box cover. Each disconnect switch or over current device required for a service, feeder, or branch circuit must be clearly labeled to indicate the circuit's function and the label or marking should be located at the point where the circuit originates.
- Make sure all interior and exterior light fixtures and outlets work. Replace burnt out bulbs.
- Install required GFCI outlets near water prone areas in the home.

## **Plumbing**

- To prevent any water damage or gas safety issues, fix or let the Inspector know about any leaks prior to inspection.
- Ensure that the sump pump is in working condition. Clean toys, bottles and debris from the sump crock.
- Remove all the clutter above and under sink to provide visual access.
- Clean bathroom area and ensure the toilet flushes.
- Shut off and cap gas lines if appliances are removed.
- Provide service invoice when septic was last cleaned.
- Ensure the garbage disposal is operable.

## **Heating and Air Conditioning**

- Install a clean filter (mark the date installed in a visible location).
- Consider having the units cleaned and have the HVAC service man post when the unit was last serviced.
- Maintain all repair invoices and the installation manual/warranty.
- Clear the immediate area of clutter and flammable material (36 inch clearance).

## **Fireplace/Chimney**

- Have the fireplace and chimney cleaned by a chimney-sweep before the inspection, especially if it has been a while since it was last cleaned. Remove all logs and ash from the fireplace. Remove the ash from the clean out chute/pit.
- Provide directions for turning on gas fireplaces with remote (replace with new batteries) or manual start.
- Provide service/cleaning invoices if available.

## **Pets**

- It is best that pets be removed from the premises during the inspection. Keep in mind that the Inspector needs access to the entire home, so keeping the pets even in the garage will cause a problem.
- Clean up all pet feces in the yard. Remove cat litter boxes.

## **Utilities**

- All utilities (electricity, gas and water) should be on and all pilot lights lit.
- Replace any burned-out light bulbs.

## **Basement**

- Remove wood, debris or stored items away from the foundation and in floor joists.
- Remove all dirty clothes from the laundry room area.
- Provide proper lighting.
- Remove any water stained rugs, boxes, or others soiled items.

## **Hidden Items:**

Finished basements and clutter may make it difficult to find inspectable items. Ensure that your agent can provide a the locations if necessary for the: Panel Box, Sump Pump, Water shut off and meter, Gas meter and shut off, and GFCIs that control a circuit not marked on the panel box. This will also help minimize the overall inspection time.