

SELLERS GUIDE

Interior Preparation

What should I do to the interior of my property, before I list it for sale?
Every room should look as spacious, bright, and warm as possible.

- Wash walls, ceilings, and trim. Consider painting with light, neutral colours. Repair cracks.
- Tighten loose knobs, towel racks, switch plates, and outlet covers.
- Fix tight doors and windows, squeaky floorboards, and loose stair banisters.
- Clean and repair caulking around tubs and sinks. Fix leaky faucets; remove water stains.
- Clean and organize the basement and attic. (This is a good opportunity to throw out all the bits and pieces you don't want to move.)
- Organize closets. Get rid of the clutter. Limit the number of items stored overhead or on the floor.
- Clean out kitchen cabinets, and remove clutter from countertops.
- Clean drapes, blinds, and curtains. Shampoo carpets, and wax floors.
- Now's a good time to spray for bugs.
- Arrange furniture to make rooms appear as spacious as possible.
- Remove any items you're taking with you, such as chandeliers and mirrors

Curb Appeal

How important is the exterior look of my property?
First impressions really do count. If the impact of your curb appeal is strong, people will want to see what is inside.

- Cut the lawn.
- Cut and trim the shrubs.
- Remove dead tree limbs and other yard debris.
- Brighten up the garden with fresh shrubs and flowers.
- Get rid of the clutter. Put away toys and gardening equipment.
- Touch up peeling paint on doors, siding, and trim.
- Repair and paint the fence.
- Fix damaged roof shingles and flashing.
- Clean windows, replace broken panes, and fix torn screens.
- Clean gutters and downspouts.
- Wash the driveway and sidewalk. Patch cracks or holes.
- Clean up the garage and shed.
- Have the gas grill ready for use.
- Make sure outside lights and doorbells work.

Showing Your Home

How should I prepare for showings and open houses?
Your house should be ready to show at all times. Make sure it is kept clean and clutter-free.
And, those last minute touches before someone comes to look at your home can make all the difference:

- Turn on all the lights, even during the daytime, including outside entrance, closet, basement, and attic lights. Open all the drapes and blinds.
- Turn off the television, stereo, and radio (easy listening music is OK).
- On cold days, light a fire. If not in season, make sure the fireplace is clean.
- Put pets in a fenced yard. Better still, ask friends to look after them. Some people may be allergic, others may be afraid of animals. Clear any pet odours.
- Clean the kitchen and bathrooms. Leave windows and mirrors sparkling.
- Set out fresh flowers, hang decorative hand towels in the bathroom, and place an attractive tablecloth on the dining room table.
- If possible, leave! Some buyers are uncomfortable when the owner is in the house. In their hurry to get away, they may miss important features, or fail to ask important questions. If you must remain, be courteous, but try not to make conversation. The buyer's Realtor knows what the buyer is looking for. He or she can discuss features and answer questions.

Renovations

What renovations will give me the greatest return when selling my property?
The top three renovations that get you the most money* are:

1. Bathrooms (75 to 100% return)
2. Kitchens (75 to 100% return)
3. Interior and exterior painting (50 to 100% return)

*Appraisal Institute of Canada's 2004 Home Renovation Survey

Other renovations and their average rate of return (the value they add compared to what they cost) include:

- Replacing roof shingles (50 to 80%)
- Replacing the furnace and heating system (50 to 80%)
- Renovating the basement (50 to 75%)
- Adding a recreation room (50 to 75%)
- Installing a fire place (50 to 75%)
- Up-grading floors (50 to 75%)
- Building a garage (50 to 75%)
- Replacing windows and doors (50 to 75%)
- Building a deck (50 to 75%)
- Installing central air conditioning (25 to 75%)

Importance of Pricing

Why is listing my property at market value so important?

A realistic competitive price means:

1. Your property will sell faster. People don't bother looking at over-priced homes.
2. Your home doesn't lose its "marketability."
3. Offers are higher when a property is closer to market value.
4. A well-priced property can generate competing offers.
5. Realtors will be more willing to present your property to buyers (and be more enthusiastic when they do so).