

Residential Pre-Shoot Checklist

April 5, 2023

For the best results, your home should appear livable, but not lived-in. This will help potential buyers to imagine the home as theirs. The following tasks should be completed by the time of the photo shoot. We recognize that this can require a lot of hard work, and we greatly appreciate your assistance. Thank you! Your efforts will help us to produce great photos that show your property at its best.

If the property is ready for photography, homes up to 3000 sq ft will typically require only 30-75 minutes, while larger homes and acreage properties will usually require more time. The photographer can get started immediately if the home has been completely prepared before the appointment.

General

- Eliminate clutter where possible.
- Decoration is good, but should not overwhelm the space.
- Vacuum carpets and clean hard floors.
- Clean and dust all decor and fixtures.
- Hide all charging cords, cell phones, tablet computers, tissue boxes, and reading glasses.
- Turn off TVs and computer monitors and hide remote controls.
- Remove air fresheners, essential oil diffusers, and portable fans.
- Hide toys, unless used for staging a child's room or play area.
- Books and magazines should be on shelves or in other appropriate storage, unless used as decoration.
- Clean tile floors and countertops.
- Hide personal photos, particularly those in freestanding frames.
- Clothing should be hidden or neatly stored in closets. This includes bathrobes (in most cases).
- Items that prevent doors from opening all the way, e.g., clothing hanging on walls, should be removed where practical.
- Light gas fireplaces and fire pits at least 10 minutes before the appointment, so that the flame looks its best.
 - **Optional:** If there is an indoor or outdoor wood-burning fireplace, it makes a great photo by burning a small mound of wadded-up newspapers (or wood kindling) just before the photo is taken.

Lighting

- Turn on all lights**, including overhead lights, table and floor lamps, range hood lights, stair lights, shower lights, string lights, and exterior lights.
- Turn on ceiling fan lights, but leave fans turned off.
- Check all light fixtures for burned-out bulbs and replace if needed. This is very important.
- Ensure that all light bulbs or fluorescent tubes in an area are the same color. **Do not mix warm white and “daylight” bulbs in the same area.**
 - **Tip:** For the best photo quality, use “daylight” (5000K) LED lights with 90+ CRI. This may not be the best choice for in-person showings, but produces the most consistent color in interior spaces that are also lit by sunlight from windows and skylights.
- Avoid using low-quality or worn-out fluorescent or LED lights. These have a poor color spectrum and will have a negative effect on the quality of the photos.

Windows

- All horizontal blinds should be lowered with the slats horizontal, with the exception of fabric shades. Those should be raised all the way up.
- Curtains, drapes, and vertical blinds should be opened all the way, where possible, making certain that the sections are arranged symmetrically.
- Windows should be clean and free of excessive dust, smudges, and streaks.

Kitchen and Dining Area

- Remove wastebaskets.
- Remove all throw rugs, hanging towels, paper towels, and knife racks.
- Remove dish cloths, detergents, dish racks, and drain plugs.
- Remove small appliances such as toasters, coffee makers, and mixers, unless used for staging in very low quantities.
- Remove everything from the refrigerator front, sides, and top.
- Remove fingerprints and smudges from stainless steel appliances.
- Remove all dishes, except for (optional) place settings on the dining table.
- Hide any food and food containers, including fruit not used as decoration.
- Fruit used as decoration should be in excellent condition, with labels removed or hidden.
- Keep plants to a minimum. Remove plants that are large, in poor condition, or blocking windows.

Bathroom

- Close toilet lids.
- Ensure that toilet paper rolls are full.
- Arrange towels on holders in a neat and orderly fashion. Do not use towels that are stained or have signs of wear.
- Clean glass and mirrors.
- Hide wastebaskets, toilet brushes, and plungers.

- Remove soap bars, hand soaps, tissue boxes, tooth brushes, razors, tooth brush holders, cosmetics, and most other items, leaving only decor on the counters. Decorative soap dispensers and tastefully-arranged hand towels are acceptable.
- Hide bathrobes (in most cases).
- Remove all items from the shower unless curtain or door is opaque.
- Shower curtains should be completely closed and hanging outside the bathtub—unless bathtub or shower enclosure is in great condition and has unusual features to be photographed, such as tile.

Bedroom

- Make beds.
- Hide any personal-use items.
- Bedding should hide the mattress. In small bedrooms, the primary photo is usually taken from the doorway, so arrange bedding with that in mind, if it cannot hide the mattress on both sides simultaneously.

Pets

Evidence of pets in photos can suggest that the house is dirty or has odors, even if that is not the case.

- Hide pet-related items: toys, food and water bowls, bedding, food bags...
- Pets must not be roaming the home, but contained in a comfortable area that will not be photographed. If possible, please relocate them before the photographer arrives.
- Aquariums are acceptable if clean and in use.

Exterior

- Remove flags, signs, and other items showing support for causes, individuals, or institutions. U.S. flags are acceptable.
- Remove vehicles from driveway and the front of the property.
- Remove bicycles.
- Move trash, recycling, and yard debris containers to a location that will not be visible in the front shot of the house, such as in the garage or along the side of the house.
- Mow the lawn, trim hedges and shrubs, and weed the garden.
- Clean leaves and other debris from lawns, driveways, sidewalks, decks, and patios.
- Clean and arrange outdoor furniture to highlight the outdoor living area. Install cushions as appropriate.
- Raise umbrellas and shades (weather permitting).
- Hide garden hoses when possible.
- Clean pools and hot tubs. Remove pool toys and cleaning equipment. Be prepared to turn jets on at the time of photography.

Thanks again for all your help!