

Checklist for Sellers Leaving Town Before It's Sold

If you have to leave your home before it is sold, you need to make sure it is cared for until the new owners can move in. Sellers that want to continue to keep their homes on the market need to make certain the showings will continue. A house needs care even if nobody is living there.



Absentee sellers tend to want to scale back on expenses, cut off the utilities and use lawn cutting services only when the grass is knee high. Don't give into this temptation. Keep it looking like a home that is loved and cared for by the owner. You don't want your home to look neglected or abandoned. This checklist can help you keep your home looking good until closing day.

1) **Forward your mail-** If you still get the newspaper delivery, discontinue it. If you get frequent deliveries via FedEx or UPS notify them that you have relocated. Packages at the door and newspapers in the driveway attract thieves.

2) **Curb appeal gets buyers in the front door--** Neatly trimmed landscape and lawn makes the home looked well maintained. Failure to cut the grass makes it look like the seller doesn't care and devalues the property.

3) **Keep the thermostat at a moderately comfortable level-** In summer set your control at 78. This will still be comfortable for showings. In the winter 62 degrees will feel warm when coming in from freezing temperatures. Don't make the buyer question whether the heating and cooling unit is working. A comfortable house will keep the buyers looking longer.

4) **Buyers like light-** I suggest leaving a light or two on and have you check-in person rotate them throughout the house. Cloudy day or evening hour showings go better with a little light along the way.

5) **No utilities on makes a buyer think you are in financial trouble-** Keeping your utilities on will make the house feel like a home. You will be ready for an offer and all the inspections. Turning utilities off can strain the systems when they are restarted.

6) **Plumbing lines and fixtures--** I suggest turning the circuit off to the water heater. This will keep your water heating bill in check. The home inspector can easily reset it to check that it is working properly when you have a contract.

7) **Turn blinds to let some light in-** Closing shades and blinds all the way makes for dark unpleasant showings. The goal is to attract buyers not turn a buyers off with a dark house they can't see.

8) **Ask a friend to keep a watchful eye-** A neighbor is the best choice to do a routine check on the property inside and out. You never know when a leak or storm damage may happen.

9) **Notify your insurance and mortgage company you are leaving-** This may result in a different kind of insurance coverage but you need to make sure you are covered.

10) **Light housekeeping-** Have routine touch ups done to remove the wear and tear of foot traffic dirt and to keep cobwebs and dead bugs swept up. Flush and swish out the toilets and sinks. Put air fresheners or bowls of vinegar around to keep it smelling fresh.

Assure that your house is buyer ready and looks like the home owner cares.

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