

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

STAGING AND SHOWING CHECKLIST

Getting your Southwest Florida home ready to sell is worth the investment. You want to stand out from the competition and create a welcoming environment -- one that the buyers can see themselves living in for many years to come.

Most of the basics of staging are just packing up some of the home's things early and doing some cleaning and maintenance.

BEFORE A SHOWING

- ☐ Look for the WOW factor when the buyer steps into the home. Have the blinds/curtains and sliders open to the pool and view.
- ☐ Turn all lights and under-cabinet lights on. In Southwest Florida, buyers expect a home to be light and bright throughout.
- ☐ Room temperature should be between 73 and 78 degrees.
- ☐ Remove any clutter and check every room (for example, in the laundry room, move any clothing that is air-drying to a closet).
- ☐ It's a good idea to leave the home approximately 15 minutes before the scheduled appointment. Sometimes agents and their clients are running early.
- ☐ If your pool has a water feature or spa, it's always a good idea to have it running for the showing.
- ☐ If your home has an alarm, it's a good idea to dis-arm it for a showing appointment. If you are not in town, we will dis-arm before the showing for you whenever possible (and reactivate it after the showing).



Going the Extra Mile

To completely uncover everything that needs attention in the home, consider having a professional, pre-sale inspection. This detailed report will highlight everything that needs repair or possibly replacement. Your listing agent can inform other agents and prospective buyers that an inspection has been done and items addressed. This is peace of mind for the buyers and sellers: when the buyers conduct their own inspection all parties know that it's likely to be a clean report.

Consider also purchasing a Home Warranty that will transfer to the buyer upon closing. This coverage of appliances, plumbing, and similar is additional comfort to the buyers that there is a resource for things that need repair or replacement after the purchase.

Items that Convey

In Southwest Florida, the local custom is that the following items convey with the sale of the real estate. If you want to keep any of these items, it's best to remove them (and replace if appropriate) before listing the home.

- ☐ Window coverings, blinds, drapes, drapery rods, valances
- ☐ Ceiling fans and light fixtures
- ☐ Refrigerator, dishwasher, stove/oven, disposal, built-in wine coolers
- ☐ Built-in grills
- ☐ Built-in wall furniture (such as bookshelves, desks, entertainment consoles, murphy beds)
- ☐ Storm shutters or panels
- ☐ Lifts and dock boxes
- ☐ Pool cleaning equipment



Additionally, if you have “yard art” that looks like it is a permanent fixture of the home (dolphin sculptures by the pool, for example) and you want to keep the item(s), it's a good idea to remove it or store covered in the garage.

PREPARATION OVERVIEW

- ☐ Be sensitive to odors because buyers are. Be especially mindful of cooking odors that linger (for example, bacon and spicy foods such as Asian and Indian dishes). If you have an electric skillet, bring it outside to the lanai to cook the bacon there. If someone in the family is a smoker, you may need to go through an intense de-smoke cleaning. Discontinue smoking inside.
- ☐ Good odors are recommended – the proverbial chocolate chip cookies in the oven or cinnamon bun smell. Candles or incense are okay too, but make sure they are not too strong. Some buyers have odor sensitivities – you don't want them to remember just the odors about your home. We've been with buyers that have left a home because the scented candles gave them a headache.
- ☐ Check all light fixtures and make sure they are working properly. Replace all burned out light bulbs. Look for dark hallways and corners and consider installing wall or ceiling fixtures to brighten the area.
- ☐ Make sure there are lamps with adequate bulbs in dark corners and turned on for showings.
- ☐ If you don't have under-cabinet lights in the kitchen, consider installing them. They add a soft glow to the kitchen and make it look brighter and cleaner.
- ☐ Repair and paint cracks on all walls and ceilings.
- ☐ Reduce or eliminate family photos on walls, shelves, and tables.
- ☐ Repair or replace broken light switches and switch plates. Clean any dirty areas around them.
- ☐ Keep all curtains and blinds open during the day to let in all light and views.
- ☐ Take a hard look at house plants. In most cases they need to be pruned and/or the number of plants reduced to create more space. If plants don't look healthy and are barely clinging to life give them away.

- ☐ Pack up all collections (you need to pack them sooner or later anyway). They distract buyers from the desired focal point...your home. (We have shown homes after which the buyers talk mostly about “that baseball collection” or “the model car collection.”)
- ☐ Reduce the number of books on bookshelves (a packing to-do).
- ☐ Wash all windows inside and out and make sure they operate freely.
- ☐ Repair items that are broken. This will show that your home is well taken care of. In most cases, buyers will ask for them to be repaired anyway, so do it now.
- ☐ Rearrange furnishings or move furnishings from room to room (or to storage) as needed to create more space.
- ☐ In general, pack up the little things. Little things create clutter and they need to be packed up anyway, so pack them up now.

INSIDE

Living Room, Family Room, Den

- ☐ Clear off all coffee tables and end tables. Keep decorative objects on the furniture restricted to groups of 1, 3, or 5 items.
- ☐ Remove ashtrays.

Dining and Kitchen

- ☐ Clear off dining table except for one centerpiece or set a place setting with place mats, napkins with napkin rings, and wine glasses.
- ☐ Remove extra leaves from the table to make the room look bigger.
- ☐ Remove extra chairs if they crowd the table or fill up corners of the room. Four or six chairs are enough.
- ☐ Empty the garbage daily to reduce odors.
- ☐ Clear all unnecessary objects from the kitchen countertops leaving only a very few items you use on a daily basis.
- ☐ Clear refrigerators of magnets, pictures, messages, etc.
- ☐ Clean tile grout with bleach if needed.
- ☐ Repair broken tile or loose corners on Formica counters.
- ☐ Clean the stovetop and oven. Replace burner pans if they are badly stained. Clean all exhaust fans, filters and hoods.
- ☐ Keep the kitchen sink clean and empty on a daily basis.
- ☐ Keep all soaps, sponges and cleaning supplies out of sight under the sink.
- ☐ Move cat and dog dishes so they don’t interfere with the buyer’s walk around the room.



Bedrooms

- ☐ Make beds daily so you are ready for short notice showing appointments.
- ☐ Clear off bedside tables, dressers, etc. except for a very few necessary items.
- ☐ Store extra books and magazines underneath the bed or in the side table.
- ☐ Keep closet doors closed. If you have a walk-in closet keep the floor clean and free of laundry and clutter.
- ☐ Remove all posters tacked on walls and repair holes in walls.

Laundry Rooms

- ☐ Put soaps and supplies in cupboards.
- ☐ Keep counters and sink clean and empty.
- ☐ Make sure that light bulbs are working and have adequate wattage. Most laundry rooms are too dark.

Bathrooms

- ☐ Clear off all surfaces. Put toiletries in drawers or cabinets and only keep a few necessary items out in baskets or a tray.
- ☐ Make sure you have a bottle of hand soap or a clean bar of soap.
- ☐ Coordinate towels in one or two colors. Fold in thirds on towel racks daily. Purchase new towels if you need to.
- ☐ Clear all items out of shower stalls and tubs except for necessities.
- ☐ Clean or replace the shower curtain.
- ☐ Repair any cracking or peeling areas and clean any moldy areas. Paint if necessary.
- ☐ Many tubs and showers need a fresh new bead of silicone caulking around the edges to make them look neat and clean.
- ☐ Take all cloth toilet lid covers off and keep toilet lids closed.
- ☐ Hide garbage can and cleaning supplies out of sight.

OUTSIDE

The first impression when a buyer drives up to your home is critical. Walk across the street and look at it through a buyer's eyes. Be tough on yourself. What do you see? Does the home have curb appeal?

Go around the perimeter of the house and move garbage cans, discarded wood scraps, extra building materials, etc., to the garage or, if applicable, to the dump. Remove all plastic storage containers, pool or kid toys etc.



Trim and House Paint

- ☐ Take a hard look at the front door and trim. Give special attention to this because this is where buyers will get their first opportunity to make a close inspection of your home. Does it need repainting? Repainting the doors and trim to help make the house look crisp and in good condition is one of the least expensive things you can do to dress up a home.

Lanai, Walkways and Dock

- ☐ Power-wash the driveway, walkways, and lanai and then sweep or hose down regularly to prevent mildew or moss appearing.
- ☐ Power wash screen enclosure.
- ☐ Docks should be pressure-washed, stained or painted if needed.
- ☐ Clear lanai spaces of small items such as little plants, flower pots, charcoal, barbeques, toys, etc.
- ☐ If you have outdoor furniture create one simple room setting of clean furniture so buyers see how they can use the space.

Pool and Spa

- ☐ Be sure the pool and spa are regularly cleaned and chemically balanced. If the pool surface has staining, consider an acid wash to get it sparkling again.
- ☐ Before a showing, turn on water features - pool fountains, spa jets. If the showing is at night, turn on pool and spa lights.
- ☐ Move pool toys and floats to storage.

Roof

- ☐ Consider having the roof power-washed if there is soot buildup. Most homes in Southwest Florida need roof cleaning about every 3-5 years.
- ☐ Repair broken tiles or loose shingles.
- ☐ Clean soffits.

Fences

- ☐ Repair broken fences and gates and paint if necessary.

Landscaping

- ☐ Look at all plants. Prune bushes and trees.
- ☐ Keep plants from blocking windows.
- ☐ Remove any dead plants, weed all planting areas and put down fresh mulching material. Keep your lawn freshly cut, edged and fertilized during the growing season.

Garages

- ☐ Storage space is a premium in Southwest Florida. Make your garage look as big as possible by de-cluttering. Sweep out or hose-down and organize. Consider installing ceiling and wall organizers to help de-clutter. Or, consider renting a storage locker.