

## Preparing Your Home for a Real Estate Photo Shoot

### WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU:

- ✓ Thoroughly clean the entire house (vacuum carpet, mop hard floors, clean countertops, clean windows and blinds, wipe down baseboards, clean and buff wooden floors, clean tile grout, clean lampshades).
- ✓ Consider having a professional cleaning service do the entire house, to include carpet cleaners as necessary.
- ✓ Consider having a chimney cleaning service clean the hearth and fireplace (if any).
- ✓ Consider having your windows cleaned inside and outside professionally just prior to the photo shoot.
- ✓ Turn all lights and lamps ON and replace all burned out light bulbs.
- ✓ Be sure that all light bulbs are of the same color temperature, if possible (ALL incandescent or ALL compact fluorescent, or ALL LED).
- ✓ Turn all ceiling fans OFF.
- ✓ Turn all TVs and computer screens OFF.
- ✓ Open the blinds and/or window coverings to let in natural, outside light.
- ✓ Make sure all shades are parallel and blinds angled identically.
- ✓ Remove personal photographs and declutter every room.
- ✓ Remove area rugs to reveal actual flooring.
- ✓ Place all shoes and items of clothing neatly in closets; close closet doors.
- ✓ Remove worn and/or mismatched furniture.
- ✓ Consider contracting with a staging company to rearrange existing furniture, declutter, or put in furniture that will enhance the perceived value of the home.
- ✓ Consider moving out temporarily, taking any pets along (if there are any) while the house is being cleaned and prepped for the photo shoot.
- ✓ Remember, potential buyers want to see themselves potentially living in the house you're trying to sell, not see themselves as living in a house that reflects the current owner's tastes and lifestyle.
- ✓ If there are items in the home that you prefer to not be included in the photographs, please move them to a secure location prior to the shoot.
- ✓ Please advise the photographer if there are special features in the home that you wish to be featured.

**FRONT EXTERIOR:**

- ✓ Close garage doors.
- ✓ Remove any vehicles from driveway and front of home.
- ✓ Clean up landscaping (mow, trim shrubs, clear leaves, edge planting beds, put down fresh mulch).
- ✓ Remove empty planters and replace dead plants.
- ✓ Clear cobwebs from eaves, window and door frames.
- ✓ Remove visible water hoses.
- ✓ Remove clutter - toys, sports equipment, yard implements, furniture, etc.
- ✓ Have the siding, visible foundation, deck (if there is one) and driveway pressure-washed, if needed.
- ✓ Consider having an asphalt driveway seal-coated one to two weeks before the planned photo shoot.
- ✓ Be sure that all exterior lights are in working order.

**YARD / DECK / PATIO:**

- ✓ Clean porch and/or deck, tidy up outdoor tables/chairs/cushions.
- ✓ Remove kid's toys, balls, frisbees, basketball nets, soccer goals, etc.
- ✓ Clean pools, hot tubs. etc.
- ✓ Turn on pool fountains and/or water features.
- ✓ Remove visible water hoses.
- ✓ Remove trash cans.
- ✓ Clean up the garden (if there is one).
- ✓ Fill bird feeders (if any).
- ✓ Clean up pet waste (if any).
- ✓ Repair fencing as needed.

**LIVING / FAMILY ROOM:**

- ✓ Put away remote controls.
- ✓ Remove stacks of magazines, papers, mail, etc.
- ✓ Declutter fireplace mantel/hearth (no more than 5 items, including art).
- ✓ Clean the interior of the fireplace and repaint the mantel, as needed.
- ✓ Fluff and arrange furniture pillows.
- ✓ Remove kids' toys.

**KITCHEN:**

- ✓ Clear and clean countertops completely; no empty glasses, baking supplies, mail, etc.
- ✓ Leave out no more than two small appliances (ex. coffee maker, toaster).
- ✓ Clear the outside of the refrigerator of magnets, papers, photos, stickers, etc.
- ✓ Clean all black and stainless steel appliances to remove fingerprints, smears, streaks, tape residue, etc.
- ✓ Hide trash cans in a pantry or closet.
- ✓ Remove dishes from the sink, place in dishwasher, remove countertop dish racks.
- ✓ Remove visible dish towels and area rugs.
- ✓ Hide dish towels and any towel racks that hang outside cabinet doors.
- ✓ Clear table, dust and polish the table top.
- ✓ Use decorative place settings, if available.
- ✓ Feature no more than one centerpiece such as a bouquet of flowers.
- ✓ Straighten all chairs and space them evenly.
- ✓ Remove child seats/booster chairs.

**CLOSETS:**

- ✓ Declutter; reduce the amount of clothing on the racks, spacing hanging items evenly on the rod.
- ✓ Fold and stack items neatly.
- ✓ Line up shoes.

**BEDROOMS:**

**MASTER BEDROOM:**

- ✓ Make the bed, including decorative pillows/shams if available.
- ✓ Clear nightstands of all personal items.
- ✓ Put away phone/tablet chargers and charging cables.
- ✓ Remove all clutter from top of dressers.
- ✓ Remove family photos from walls (for security reasons).
- ✓ Clean under the bed, removing personal items that may show in the photos.
- ✓ Close closet doors.

**CHILD OR GUEST BEDROOM:**

- ✓ Make the bed(s).
- ✓ Remove personalized names and photos from walls so that they will not be visible on the Internet.
- ✓ Remove wall stickers, posters and/or artwork that a potential buyer might find to be of questionable taste.
- ✓ Remove diaper pails and cleaning supplies.
- ✓ Clean under bed, removing any personal items that may show.
- ✓ Put toys in a toy chest to reduce clutter and clear the floor.

**BATHROOMS:**

- ✓ Clear and clean countertops completely.
- ✓ Put away all toiletries; soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, razors, medications, deodorant, etc.
- ✓ Put toilet seats and lids down.
- ✓ Be sure that you have a full roll of toilet paper with no more than one sheet hanging down.
- ✓ Close closet doors.
- ✓ Remove shampoo, soap, loofahs, etc., from showers and tubs.
- ✓ Remove bathrobes and used towels - leave out only fresh, unused towels.
- ✓ Remove floor mats.
- ✓ Clean shower doors/frames, shower curtains.
- ✓ Clean mirrors to remove spots, spatters, etc.
- ✓ Replace old, moldy caulking with fresh caulking.
- ✓ Clean all grout.
- ✓ Replace all cracked and/or chipped tile.
- ✓ Clean floors and all visible plumbing. Pay special attention to areas near toilets and under cabinets.

**PETS:**

- ✓ Place food and water bowls, and litter boxes out of sight.
- ✓ Place pet beds/toys out of sight.
- ✓ Use lint roller on furniture to remove pet hair.
- ✓ Contain pets in hidden crates or outside.
- ✓ Clear yard of pet waste/toys.

**HINTS FOR CLEANING BLACK AND/OR STAINLESS STEEL APPLIANCES:**

- ✓ Expensive and ineffective pressurized spray products are not necessary.
- ✓ Use *Simple Green* (environmentally friendly, available at most home centers) in a spray bottle to remove hand and fingerprints, and most greasy or sticky residues. Stubborn sticky residues are easily removed by environmentally friendly citrus-based cleaners such as *Goo Gone* and *De-Solv-It* followed by the use of *Simple Green*.
- ✓ Use a 50/50 mix of filtered water and denatured alcohol in a spray bottle as a final cleaning solution. Spray lightly, then wipe down immediately using microfiber cloths (not paper towels), wiping in the direction of the “grain” of the stainless steel.

**HINTS FOR CLEANING TILE GROUT:**

- ✓ Use a toothbrush to scrub the grout using hydrogen peroxide (available at most pharmacies). Pour a small quantity of hydrogen peroxide on the grout in a small area of tile. Let it sit for a few moments, then scrub with the toothbrush. When the grout has been fully cleaned, wash and rinse the tile carefully.