

SELLING YOUR HOME

12 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU LEAVE YOUR HOUSE

Your house is listed for sale. You have 'staged' the house and yard and now your house is open for business. When you leave for the day (or at minimum leave for a showing) and you want your house to be ready, here are things for you to do.

1. **Make the beds.** This will make the rooms bigger and more presentable.
2. **Empty the garbage.** Don't leave piles of refuse in your waste baskets or in the kitchen.
3. **Change the cat litter.** Oh boy, this is such a big one. Every realtor and every house shopper has experienced the unbelievable stench of cat litter left unattended; don't let that be at your house.
4. **Control your pets.** Make sure that your listing indicates you have pets and any special measures that people showing your house have to take when entering or leaving your home. If you have a mean dog or cat, you might want to leave it with friends or relatives during the day.
5. **Set your thermostat.** Keep your house reasonably warm in winter and cool in summer. It might cost a bit more to heat or cool the empty house, but it will make a difference to people who you would like to stay and seriously consider buying your home.
6. **Leave the house book and feature sheets on a table.** The house book will answer a lot of questions about your house. We want the buyer to take a feature sheet so that they can remember the house and increase the chances of return visits.
7. **Open all the doors.** Leave the interior doors to all the rooms open. This gives the appearance of airiness and enlarges the visual space.
8. **Buy fresh flowers,** a plant or a bowl of real fruit such as apples or lemons to put on the kitchen counter, bathroom counter and/or dining room table. If they are wilting, replace them.
9. **Tone down the air freshener,** scented candles or smelly perfumes. It makes people suspicious of what this is disguising. **Open the windows for a bit before leaving.** Let fresh air in.
10. **Open your drapes and pull up your blinds** to let in the light and turn on all the lights.
11. **Neatly stack your newspapers** and magazines.
12. **Put away any valuables** – do not leave your valuable jewellery or medications out. There has been little or no stealing in Ottawa but why do you want to chance it?

Finally, whether for the day or the duration of the sale:

- 1. Get out of the house** and take the pets and children with you whenever there is a showing. We want the buyers to feel comfortable looking at the house and spending time envisioning themselves living in your house. If you are there, most buyers do not want to inconvenience you so they will try to get in and out of your home quickly. We want them to stay.
- 2. Give me all the business cards left by the visiting realtors.** I want to call them and get feedback on the showing. Those cards are important. They will help us determine who is visiting and if there are any return visitors. Make sure that there are feature sheets available. Call me if we need to put more in the feature sheet stand.
- 3. Don't give up.** Maybe you will keep your house ready for presentation for a few days and then things begin to slide. It is more work and takes more time to leave your house in the morning. You never know when the next person to see you house could be the next owner. If the average days on the market for a properly priced home in your area is 26 days, think that you will be keeping your house ready to show for around 26 days – maybe less and maybe more but it does give you an indication of how long you will be keeping your house at the ready.

