

FREE SELLER GUIDE · SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY

The Home Readiness Checklist

A room by room plan for getting your home market ready. What to fix, what to skip, and the small things buyers notice in the first 30 seconds.

Prepared by Brandon Menchaca · Coldwell Banker Global Luxury

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. Walk it like a buyer

Start at the curb with this checklist in hand. Look at your home the way a stranger would on their first visit.

2. Check what applies

Not every item fits every home. Check off what needs doing and cross out what doesn't.

3. Follow the calendar

The 30 day plan on page 4 spaces the work out so the week before photos isn't a scramble.

The golden rule: fix what scares buyers, refresh what photographs badly, and skip the big remodel. Most buyers will want to make it their own anyway.

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Curb appeal and first impressions

This is your listing's cover photo and the first thing buyers see when they pull up. Small spends here punch way above their weight.

Front door and entry

UNDER \$200

- ☐ Paint the front door (deep navy, black or a rich green photograph well)
- ☐ Polish or replace the door hardware
- ☐ New, easy to read house numbers
- ☐ Fresh doormat and two matching potted plants
- ☐ Clean or replace the porch light fixture
- ☐ Wash the front windows inside and out

Yard and driveway

\$100 TO \$500

- ☐ Fresh mulch or bark in every planter bed
- ☐ Mow, edge and pull every weed
- ☐ Trim shrubs below window height
- ☐ Power wash driveway, walkways and patio
- ☐ Check that irrigation works and isn't spraying the house
- ☐ Hide trash bins, hoses and yard tools

Exterior

VARIES

- ☐ Touch up peeling paint on trim, fascia and eaves
- ☐ Clean gutters and make sure downspouts drain away
- ☐ Repair loose fence boards and gate latches
- ☐ Clean the garage door and repaint if faded

Backyard and patio

UNDER \$300

- ☐ Set up a simple seating area to show how the space lives
- ☐ Clean outdoor furniture or store it if it's worn
- ☐ Clean the pool or spa and remove covers for photos
- ☐ Add string lights if you'll have evening showings

Room by room staging

The goal isn't decorating. It's helping buyers picture their own life here, which means less of yours on display.

Living and family rooms

- ☐ Remove about a third of the furniture so rooms feel bigger
- ☐ Arrange seating around a focal point (fireplace or view)
- ☐ Put away personal photos, collections and kids' art
- ☐ Neutral pillows and a throw add warmth without clutter
- ☐ Open blinds and add a lamp to any dark corner

Kitchen

- ☐ Clear counters almost completely (keep 2 or 3 items)
- ☐ Clean inside the oven, microwave and fridge
- ☐ Organize the pantry and under sink cabinets. Buyers open them
- ☐ Replace worn cabinet pulls
- ☐ Fix dripping faucets and slow drains

Bathrooms

- ☐ Recaulk tubs, showers and sinks
- ☐ RegROUT or deep clean any stained grout
- ☐ New white towels and a simple bath mat
- ☐ Store every personal product out of sight
- ☐ Replace a dated shower curtain or mirror if it's the eyesore

Bedrooms

- ☐ Crisp, neutral bedding (white or light gray photographs best)
- ☐ Clear nightstands down to a lamp and a book
- ☐ Pack away half of what's in each closet
- ☐ Turn spare rooms into a clear purpose: office, guest room or gym

Garage and storage

- ☐ Donate, sell or store what you won't take with you
- ☐ Sweep the floor and organize shelves
- ☐ Make sure at least one car fits, if the garage normally holds one

Whole house

- ☐ Same bulb color temperature in every room (warm white)
- ☐ Touch up scuffs and repaint bold rooms a soft neutral
- ☐ Clean carpets or replace if heavily stained
- ☐ Neutral, fresh smell. Skip strong candles and plug ins
- ☐ Pet beds, bowls and litter boxes out of sight for showings

Is your home vacant? Empty rooms look smaller in photos. Staging the living room, primary bedroom and dining area usually pays for itself.

Repairs that tend to show up on inspection reports

Buyers in South OC almost always order a home inspection. Getting ahead of these items keeps them from turning into repair requests or price cuts during escrow.

Safety

- ☐ Working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every level
- ☐ Water heater strapped (California requires double strapping)
- ☐ GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlets in kitchen, baths, garage and outdoors
- ☐ Missing outlet covers and loose switches

Water

- ☐ Active leaks under sinks, around toilets and at the water heater
- ☐ Stains on ceilings (fix the source, then paint)
- ☐ Running toilets and slow drains
- ☐ Irrigation leaks or water pooling near the foundation

Roof and exterior

- ☐ Cracked, missing or slipped roof tiles or shingles
- ☐ Wood rot at fascia, eaves and window trim
- ☐ Signs of termites (a termite inspection is common in Orange County sales)

Systems

- ☐ Service the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) and replace filters
- ☐ Doors and windows that stick, won't latch or have broken seals
- ☐ Garage door auto reverse safety feature working

Paperwork

- ☐ Gather permits for any remodels or additions
- ☐ Receipts and warranties for roof, HVAC, water heater and appliances
- ☐ HOA (homeowners association) contact info, CC&Rs (covenants, conditions and restrictions) and recent statements

Consider a pre listing inspection. For older homes especially, knowing what an inspector will find before you list lets you fix it, price for it, or disclose it on your terms instead of the buyer's.

Your 30 day prep calendar

Spread the work out. Here's a realistic plan from the day we meet to the day photos are taken.

WEEK 1

Plan and purge

- ☐ Walk the home together
- ☐ Make the repair list
- ☐ Book contractors
- ☐ Start donating and packing

WEEK 2

Fix

- ☐ Handyman items
- ☐ Safety items
- ☐ Paint touch ups
- ☐ Gather paperwork

WEEK 3

Refresh

- ☐ Landscaping and mulch
- ☐ Front door
- ☐ Carpet cleaning
- ☐ Stage furniture

WEEK 4

Polish

- ☐ Deep clean
- ☐ Windows inside and out
- ☐ Final walkthrough
- ☐ Photo day

Before every showing

Ten minutes that make a real difference. Tape this one inside a kitchen cabinet.

- ☐ Open all blinds and curtains
- ☐ Turn on every light, including lamps
- ☐ Set the thermostat to a comfortable temperature
- ☐ Wipe counters and empty the sink
- ☐ Empty trash cans

- ☐ Make beds and fluff pillows
- ☐ Put away pet items and take pets with you
- ☐ Lower toilet seats and hang fresh towels
- ☐ Lock away valuables and medications
- ☐ Leave for the showing. Buyers relax when you're not there

Want a second set of eyes?

I'll walk your home with you, tell you exactly which items are worth doing and which ones to skip, and connect you with vendors I trust. No cost and no obligation.

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