



Preparing Your Home for Sale in Summit County and Fairplay, Colorado

2025 Edition

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BuySummitCounty.com



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Counties Since 1998**

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Setting the Stage

Feelings Matter

Those viewing your property usually form an opinion within seconds of walking up to it and entering the front door.

Their opinion will accumulate as they walk through the property, filtering and evaluating what they observe and feel.

This guide summarizes the critical elements for ensuring your property provides a warm and welcoming experience and shows at its best; simple staging practices can substantially increase your property's value while decreasing its time on the market.

This guide begins with the walk-up, continues throughout the property, and completes the journey with the exterior. We'll also discuss pointers contributing to the overall feel of the home.

Time spent preparing the property before listing always creates value, and we'll begin with the walk-up.

Walking up the Home and the Entryway

A clean and crisp atmosphere walking up to and entering the home is important for its first impression, and we want to ensure every aspect of the first impression is orderly, clean, and welcoming.

During the Winter, having the driveway plowed and the sidewalks and decks free of snow is essential. It's not a great experience for many to wade through a snow-covered

driveway and waddle along slippery sidewalks. Adding ice dams hanging from the roof can make the home feel neglected.

As we approach the front door, the condition of the door matters. A tired door is setting the tone for the rest of the home.

- The front door should be clean and scratch-free with fresh paint or stain.
- The door handle and locks are new-looking, not scratched or worn, and easy to unlock and lock.
- The door should open and close smoothly while latching well.

However, it is not only about the front door. The area around the door should also be clean, wear-free, and organized as much as possible.

Upon entering the home, those viewing it will visualize it as theirs, and clutter and personal items will distract from their first impressions. We want to ensure no clothes, shoes, or personal items are visible when walking into the home. The first glance should encompass the space as a whole, not the individual items within the space.

We also want the home to be as light and bright as possible. White walls or walls with neutral, lighter tones contribute to the bright, light feel of the home.

Other contributors to the bright feel of the home are curtains and blinds being open, while dark areas of the home can be brightened with floor or table lamps.

Living Room / Entertaining Space

Many of the homes in Summit County are used for short-term rentals or as second homes, and most homes are sold either fully or partially furnished.

We want to see a natural and open furniture arrangement for entertaining in the living room space.

Declutter the space as much as possible by removing unnecessary, oversized, or worn furniture. Bins or shelves of old magazines, books, games, or knick-knacks should be out of sight or removed from the home.

Personal items such as family pictures are at a minimum or eliminated.

The fireplace should be in good working order, whether gas or wood-burning.

For gas fireplaces, the jets should provide a good flame after warming up, and the fireplace's glass is clean.

With wood-burning fireplaces, the hearth is clean, the damper is working, and the chimney has a good draw.

The Kitchen

We spend a lot of time in our kitchens, which are often integrated into the home's entertaining space.

The kitchen is the heart of the home and can frequently make or break a buyer's decision about the home.

For a clean, organized, and decluttered kitchen, below is our initial checklist:

- **Counters** – Remove as many items and appliances as possible from the counters.
- **Cabinets** – Remove unused items from the cabinets and thoroughly clean the doors and interiors. If there are liners on the cabinet shelves and they've become dirty and worn, it's time to replace them.
- **Stovetop** – cleaned as well as possible. With older stovetops, replace worn inserts or coils.
- **Oven** – The racks, walls, floor, and door are clean.
- **Microwave** – cleaned.
- **Refrigerator** - clean, inside and out. Remove the myriad of pictures, notes, and stray items placed on the fridge doors – these can be distracting.
- **Garbage Disposal** – If it's making any unusual sounds, fix the disposal or replace it. It will show up in an inspection report anyhow, and it's best to have it in good working order.

Any leaks, drips, or slow-moving drains in the kitchen (or throughout the home) should be addressed.

Beyond our initial checklist, if the kitchen is older, it can be brought up to date without redoing the entire kitchen.

Below are items to consider for a relatively quick and affordable updating of the kitchen:

- Painting or staining the cabinets
- Updating the cabinet's hardware
- Updating the backsplash and adding under-cabinet lights
- Replacing the countertops
- Replacing aged appliances

At a minimum, cleaning and decluttering the kitchen is a priority. The additional upgrades we just listed are on a case-by-case basis, and it's a good idea to put the kitchen update in context with the rest of the home. We recommend consulting with a designer and/or the Realtors at Colorado Homes Real Estate to determine if it's worth the time and money.

Bedrooms

Bright, light, organized, and clutter-free bedrooms show best.

The best paint color for a bedroom is a light, neutral color, preferably white.

New bedding and pillows will help freshen the feel of the room.

A minimum of items on the dressers and nightstands will create an airier feeling.

Spacious closets are important to buyers. Eliminate unneeded items and organize the closets. The fewer items in the closet, the better, and the uniformity of the remaining items will help showcase the closet space.

Bathrooms

Thoroughly clean the bathroom cabinets and drawers, and eliminate as many personal toiletry items as possible.

Fixtures and mirrors are bright and shiny to the best of their appearance.

The shower, bathtub, and toilet are also cleaned as best as possible. Replace old shower curtains.

When the grouting of the shower or bathtub is in good shape, it's hardly noticed. However, if the grouting is dirty or in poor condition, all eyes will go straight to it. Clean and uniform grouting is important for maintaining the feel of the home's presentation.

Noisy bathroom fans take away from the bathroom and are relatively inexpensive to replace. Like the noisy garbage disposal in the kitchen, old fans will also detract from the bathrooms' feel.

Any leaks, drips, or slow-moving drains are repaired, and the toilet is in good working order.

If there are multiple bulbs in the vanity lights, they should all have identical bulbs.

Coordinating the bathroom with towels, soaps, and accessories helps create a nice feel.

Utility Rooms

A disorganized or dirty utility room can create concern for potential buyers.

The utility room will often contain the furnace, water heater, and sometimes the water well's equipment, as well as the washer and dryer. If this utility room isn't organized and sparkling, it makes the home feel like it wasn't maintained, even if it was.

Garage

The more open, organized, and clean the garage is, the better response you'll have.

The cleaning and organizing also include the garage's closets and cabinets, which have accumulated items and junk over the years.

Many potential buyers looking at the garage are examining it for more than just the parking area for their vehicle(s). They're also reviewing it to determine if it will provide the space and storage needed for their toys, gear, and whatever else they may need it for.

Eliminate, organize, and make the garage and storage closets fresh and orderly so others can imagine their items in your spaces.

Garages tend to become a little beat up with normal wear and tear. An organized, freshly cleaned, and painted garage will help establish the entire property's overall feel and solidity.

Many of the garages in Summit County have exposed drywall with no paint. The exposed drywall can begin to look worn with time, and a fresh coat of paint will help the garage look fresh and maintained.

Wintertime is rough on garages in Summit and Park County. The accumulated ice and snow from our vehicles will make the garage appear unkempt in short order. Try your best to keep the garage floor clear of the water, snow, and dirt that our vehicles bring in.

One last garage element – sometimes, when ATVs, dirt bikes, or snow machines are stored in the garage, one may reek of gas. The smell permeates the garage and can be off-putting to potential buyers.

Fireplaces

We discussed fireplaces in the living area section, but they're important, and this information is worth repeating.

The fireplaces in the home should be in good working order, whether they're gas or wood-burning.

The jets should provide a good flame for gas fireplaces after warming up, and the glass is clean.

With wood-burning fireplaces, the hearth is clean, the damper is working, and the chimney has a good draw.

Carpeting and Flooring

Typically, the home's carpeting is professionally cleaned before it's listed, even if it looks "OK" before being listed. Clean carpet makes a difference; if in doubt, have it cleaned.

Uncarpeted flooring areas, such as tile or hardwood, show best when they're as clean and glossy as possible.

Paint

Having the paint in good condition and uniform throughout the home is important, with neutral colors being a good choice.

If there are dark or off-color walls, paint them a lighter tone, preferably white.

Doors

Keeping the doors and doorknobs clean and in good working condition is a good practice. They should be tight and work smoothly, with doors that crisply close.

Having the doors and hardware in good shape is especially important for the entrance that the Realtors and their clients will use to enter the home. A dirty door and worn doorknobs set a poor tone for the home before it's even entered.

Windows, Casings, and Sills

No one notices clean windows, but we all notice dirty ones.

The sills and casings of the windows and doors are important too. A good cleaning and applying orange oil if they're wood can often help restore their luster. Tired, dull casings and sills can make the home feel like it wasn't well-maintained, even if it was.

Light Fixtures

Light fixtures gradually attract dirt and grime, which we may overlook while living in the home. Be sure the light fixtures are clean and dust-free.

Replace any burnt-out bulbs, and if a fixture has multiple bulbs, the bulbs are all identical in type and wattage.

Keep it Light

Dark homes don't show well; be sure to have the curtains and shades open for any showings of the home.

In addition to the curtains and shades being open for the showing, keeping lights on throughout the home can brighten it up, even if the home is naturally bright.

For dark areas in a home, additional floor or table lamps, along with plants, can brighten an area.

Furniture

If the house feels even potentially overstuffed with furniture and décor items, eliminate some to create a more open and spacious feel.

If possible, remove worn furniture.

Closets

Closets and storage spaces are a premium, and decluttered and organized closets help present the home's feel and functionality.

Personal Items

Does your home contain personal pictures? We recommend removing them. The prospective buyer wants to feel and think about the space in relation to their world, and the personal pictures can be a distraction.

It's also a good idea to remove any religious or political items. While the home is being sold, maintain a neutral space.

If the home is lived in full-time, it's easy to accumulate many items that have found magical places to be stored in. Most of these items aren't used or needed. A home jammed up with these personal items will come across as confining and lacking storage space.

Removing the mass of items from your home will make it sell faster and for more money. If it means finding a storage unit or another alternate place to store the items, go for it!

Exterior

If possible, the exterior paint or stain of the siding and deck is in good shape.

Wintertime in Summit and Park Counties can make it difficult, if not impossible, to rectify the paint or stain until probably May or June. If the home is listed for sale between October and April, it will likely have to be sold using the present exterior condition.

Yards are a premium. Be sure yours is organized and clear of clutter and miscellaneous items.

We mentioned this in the opening of our guide, but it's important to have the driveway, sidewalks, and decks free of snow during the wintertime. It's no fun for the Realtor or the buyers to trudge through the snow, and the home can feel neglected with the snow piled up.

Typical Inspection Objection Items

The items below frequently show up in home inspection reports because they're "Health and Safety" items.

The sales transaction and inspection process are smoother if these are taken care of before the home is inspected:

- Install GFCI devices in the kitchen and bathrooms by a licensed electrician.
- Carbon Monoxide Alarms – must be placed within 15 feet of every bedroom entrance or any other room or area used for sleeping.
- Smoke Detector – Typically, they're in every bedroom, on every home level, and in the laundry room and kitchen.

Bring On the Handyperson

Hiring a handyperson to repair minor items around the home before it's listed helps confirm the home was well taken care of to those viewing it.

Those viewing your home are creating at least a mental checklist of pros and cons, which ultimately leads to how fast your home goes under contract and how much buyers are willing to pay for it.

Having even 5 or 6 minor items repaired before the home goes on the market will typically lead to a much better buyer experience and is worth the money spent with the handyperson.

Not sure where to begin with your property?

Please contact us for a complimentary consultation to ensure your home is staged and organized for a smooth, efficient, and successful sale.

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