

Preparing Your Home to Photo and Show

The photos in the MLS listing are the first thing most home buyers will see of your home for sale. Your home is competing for attention among many others, so everyone benefits if yours is photo-ready for the appointment. Here are some ways you can help the photo session show your home to its best:

- De-clutter – Our daily-use items seem to vanish from awareness because of familiarity. This can be pet dishes on the floor, grooming items in the bathroom (and that toilet brush/plunger), aprons hanging in the kitchen, and so many others. It's hard to see your own essential daily items that can appear to be clutter to a stranger, so try to look around with new eyes. If that shelf might look neater without something, try to hide it before the photographer arrives. It's inconvenient, but it makes a difference. Most closets, storerooms, and garages won't be photographed, so they're fair game for stashing stuff. But if your garage or closet is something special, we'll want to photo it too. Be sure to let us know.
- Lights – Lights in a home help make it more appealing. Please turn on every light in the home before the session begins, and especially make sure that all light bulbs are working. Ceiling lights, table lamps, chandeliers, vanity lights, under cabinet lights, stove lights – everything -- ON. This includes ceiling fan lights, but the fan itself needs to be OFF so the blades aren't turning. If all lights in a grouping can't be working, that set should be turned OFF.
- Windows – Window blinds/shades all need to be set the same in each room. It's generally better to have them open to allow the outside view to show through, but the most important is to have them all set the same way.
- Kitchen – The kitchen will get extra attention from the photographer and from prospective buyers, so take extra time making the kitchen sparkle. If it looks like it's in use, it probably needs more items removed.
- Outside – You don't want vehicles in the drive or on the curb showing up in your MLS photos. This is the beginning of creating curb appeal, so as much yard grooming as you can arrange will show favorably in the photos and create more interest in your home. No trash bins on the curb or large movable items in the yard (sports equipment, children's toys, yard equipment, etc).
- General – People and pets in the photos make it hard for a prospective buyer to visualize themselves living in the home. So..... the fewer people at home during the photo session, the better the results. Pets need to be confined during the session, or best yet, offsite. Painters, landscapers, house cleaners, repair contractors, neighbors, etc. should not be present during the photo shoot.

This is a lot of work, and it can't be done at the last minute. The photographer might do some minor staging before taking a photo (arranging pillows on a sofa, or turning a chair for example), but she won't do this all-important stuff above.

Thank you for helping make your photographs show off your house to its best potential. If you have any questions regarding your photography appointment, please call your realtor.