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Winter 2025

What should I Look for at an Open House or Showing?



It's easy for prospective homebuyers visiting open houses to become enamored with homes touting recent cosmetic updates, such as new appliances or a fresh coat of paint. However, serious buyers should do a more thorough inspection of homes during showings so they can get the most accurate view of a home's condition. Here's what to look for during a home showing or open house.

Look for red flags

When you're touring a house, you can sometimes spot red flags by paying attention to the condition of kitchen and bathroom sinks or by looking for signs of water damage. Take note of concerns during the more casual observations you do at open houses and save your more thorough inspection for a home showing with your realtor.

During a showing, don't forget to examine the plumbing fixtures, basement and attic, gutters and foundation. Issues with any of these parts of the home should raise red flags. Even if you're happy with what you find, it's a good idea to have a home inspector do a more thorough examination later.

Open houses vs. showings: what's the difference?

Open House

Generally, during an open house, the agent representing the home for sale holds it "open" for public tours. This provides an opportunity for visitors to check out the property and ask questions about it without making an appointment. Many potential buyers use open houses as an entry point into real estate, where they can see what's on the market and get a sense of what they're looking for in a home or neighborhood.

Home Showing

At a home showing, an agent representing the buyer makes an appointment to provide a private showing of the property. This is a time when potential buyers take a closer, more serious look at a home and ask their realtor questions about the property. A serious buyer may visit the home several times before making an offer on the property.

Turn on lights and faucets

If you've ever stayed at a rental and decried the shower for its lack of water pressure, you'll want to ensure faucets and plumbing are up to your standards. You can test electrical switches and plumbing by flipping on light switches and turning on faucets while visiting homes for sale.

Pay attention to odors

The nose knows, so be sure to pay attention to how the home smells. Some sellers try to mask bad smells with essential oils or candles during an open house, but any foul odors that permeate a home for sale — for instance, pet activity, smoke or water damage — could indicate a larger issue with the residence. If you're suspicious about any odors, ask your realtor to inquire about specific concerns, and plan another visit to see if the odor persists.

Ask for access

If sellers have a room or area closed off to open-house guests and you find yourself interested in the home, you'll want to ensure you gain access to the areas in a subsequent showing. This might include an attic, basement space or even a locked closet or garden shed. You might also want to look under rugs or furniture. Sellers should always make all areas of their property accessible to potential buyers by securing valuables elsewhere.

Consider the time of day

You'll likely be visiting an open house during daylight hours, so it's important to consider what the natural lighting and activity are like at different times of day. If you're serious about a home, don't be afraid to schedule subsequent showings in the evening hours

to get a sense of how busy the streets are when commuters return and people are more likely to be out and about.

Investigate the area

Don't forget to scope out the neighborhood. The local school system, attractions, restaurants and businesses should all play a role in helping you decide whether to make an offer on a home. Ask the listing agent or your realtor about area amenities, including parks, trails and other areas of interest.

Work with a professional

Your realtor can guide you on what to look for and how to spot a house with "good bones" or one that's just "good on paper." ■

Source: Edina Realty

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Your 2025 Spring Cleaning Checklist



After your home has been closed up for the winter, it's time to deep clean and make the home fresh in time for spring—the time of the year for renewal and rebirth. Deep cleaning is a great way to embrace the lighter mood of spring, give you a sense of accomplishment, and improve your health with exercise and a cleaner environment.

Spring cleaning is about washing/cleaning the areas you don't do every week:

- Windows and sills
- Window treatments
- Carpets
- Light fixtures
- Baseboards
- Fireplaces



Spring cleaning also includes:

- Moving furniture to clean underneath and to use special vacuum attachments to clean upholstered furniture and drapes.
- Decluttering, including purging closets of unwanted clothing, shoes and accessories.
- Power-washing the exterior of the home.
- Polishing floors, touching up nicks in wood cabinets with stain fillers.
- Getting your AC professionally checked.
- Testing fire and carbon monoxide detectors and replacing batteries where needed.
- Flipping mattresses, cleaning or replacing mattress pads and cleaning bedding and pillows.
- Cleaning gutters of debris to prepare for spring showers. ■

Source: Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices



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4 Weekend Home Improvement Projects to Try this Summer

Supporting your family doesn't always leave a lot of time for home improvement. Fortunately, a few weekend projects go a long way toward upgrading your living space.

Play with Paint or Wallpaper

Want to spruce up your walls or trim? Try a fresh coat of paint in the same color as what you have now, or go with a brand new shade. For a quick and easy weekend project, transform a space by painting the ceiling, or paint an accent wall in an exciting new color. When deciding on an accent wall, try a solid wall behind a sofa or bed or a symmetrical windowed wall. For an explosion of color and pattern, try using self-adhesive wallpaper for your accent wall.

Color Your Front Entrance

Offer visitors an extra-warm welcome, and give your home more curb appeal with a vibrant front entrance. Start by painting the door in a bold, bright color, and change out the hardware for an updated look. To put even more of your personality on display, add a fun welcome mat, a few potted



flowering plants, and a garden flag. Homes with big front porches also benefit from painted rockers or Adirondack chairs and colorful shutters. Solar garden lights make a good option for evening illumination of front sidewalks and pathways.

Revamp Your Kitchen

Transforming the look of your kitchen may seem overwhelming, but you can achieve a whole new vibe in one quick weekend with a few easy projects. Instead of changing out your kitchen sink, just replace your faucet with one in a trendy style. Revamp drawers and cabinets with new handles or pulls, taking care to measure properly.

Trade an outdated light fixture for a new one. Add a pop of color in the kitchen with new curtains or valances in bold florals, stripes, plaids, or other fun prints.

Spruce Up Your Outdoor Space

Just like the interior of your home, your outdoor space is an extension of your personality. This summer, spruce it up with a little landscaping. Plant a flower garden; install a rock pathway; or create a whole patio from flagstone. Add potted plants and outdoor seating for a cozy backyard retreat. If you're short on time, simply mow, weed, and trim overgrown bushes for an attractive, well-tended exterior. ■

Source: CORT Furniture Rental

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