

Potential During Winter

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Some say winter is the worst time to sell a home. Given the cold and stormy weather we have been experiencing, there are definitely challenges, but don't be discouraged. First impressions and lasting impressions are key to progress potential buyers into active buyers. Be very wary as the slightest discomfort or issue can sour this experience and turn a buyer away from your home, but by addressing a few key areas, any winter woes can be easily avoided.

Here are five simple tips to maximize the showing potential of your home during the winter months.

1. Don't Let Winter be an Obstacle

It's storming or just post-storm, but you have showings booked for your home. (You must have motivated buyers to go out in that weather!) Don't make it even more of a chore for them, be sure to shovel your drive or walkway so that the first impression is a clean and accessible entry. Buyers have been known to turn away, rather than hike to the doorway in knee deep snow and risk snow in their shoes, wet pants, and wet socks.

2. Consider Your Home's Temperature

Remember, buyers are usually viewing more than one home at a time, and thus traveling around and running in and out of cars or up and down elevators in condos. Typically they will be dressed for the great outdoors, so although having the heat way up is great for lounging on the couch, it can be oppressive for visiting buyers. Be sure to monitor the temperature of the entire house and set it appropriately.

3. Get Buyers Out of the Dark and Into the Light

The winter months also mean shorter days and less natural light. Be sure to have adequate lighting in every room. Dark rooms are depressing when coming in from the cold. Keep it bright in the winter. Some may object for energy saving reasons, but it is best to leave all the lights on before showings or use timers. This allows you to set the mood lighting, and saves the buyers fumbling for light switches. Remember first impressions. Is your home a sanctuary or an oasis from the cold?

4. Preparation is Key

Be sure to prepare for those wet and snowy shoes and boots. No one likes having snow and dirt tracked around their home by shoes or wet socks, just as no one enjoys having wet socks and dodging puddles in the doorway. Be sure to have a "Shoes Off" sign. Place an absorbent mat protecting your stone or wood flooring. Be sure to have a shoe tray or appropriate storage area for shoes, not only to avoid the puddles but to show off the organization of your home. Apply this also to winter jackets, hats and scarves. Show functioning and organization by thoughtfully arranged set ups, don't just have outerwear exploding out of closets or haphazardly hanging on hooks or coat racks.

5. Pet-Friendly—and Groomed!

If you do own pets, be sure to have the appearance of *clean* pets...especially dogs. We love our furry friends, but it's best not to leave those dirty slush-soaked towels and doggy outfits laying around. The last thing you want is the smell of wet dog greeting your buyers at the front door.