

Fourteen Repairs to Make Before Selling



Nothing turns off a potential buyer faster than peeling paint, a broken window, or a splintered front step. It's wise to make necessary repairs before you put your house on the market. A house in good condition demonstrates pride of ownership—one of your best sales tools. Start by covering these areas:

Inside the House

1. Fix or replace damaged flooring, such as torn linoleum or cracked tiles. If you can't afford to replace damaged or worn floors, consider offering the buyer an allowance for renovation.
2. Fix any drains, faucets, or plumbing fixtures that aren't operating. Fixes can range from replacing a faucet washer to buying a new toilet.
3. Paint the interior. Fill and paint any cracks or holes in the walls. (You may need to repaint entire walls to mask such repairs.)
4. Replace burned-out bulbs and broken electrical sockets. Most agents will want you to turn on all the lights before a showing.
5. Replace or fix broken stairs. Fix any creaks as well.
6. Replace old locks and doorknobs.
7. Make it easy for a buyer to walk in. Fix any doors that don't open easily, including the garage door. If your garage door opener doesn't work, repair or replace it.

Outside the House

1. Replace cracked windows and torn screens.
2. Don't let your house be shown with the equivalent of a black eye. Fix cracks in the driveway and entry walkway, and clean up stains. If the driveway requires major repair, it may be preferable to offer the buyer an allowance for the work.
3. Paint the exterior. Touch up peeling paint, window frames, porches, and shutters. Repaint the entire exterior if it is drab or peeling.
4. Replace broken gutters or missing downspouts. Good drainage is key to passing a home inspection.
5. Replace or fix broken stairs. It's a matter of both safety and aesthetics.
6. Reseal the deck and repair broken boards. A new coat of sealer can spruce up a fading deck.
7. Repair the roof. Replace shingles and tack down loose flashing. If the roof is old, you may want to replace it and adjust your sales price accordingly.