

7 STEPS TO PREPARING FOR AN OPEN HOUSE

1. **Hire a cleaning service.** A spotlessly clean home is essential; dirt will turn off a prospect faster than anything.
2. **Lawn Maintenance.** Mow your lawn, and be sure toys and yard equipment are put away.
3. **Refreshments.** Serve cookies, coffee, and/or soft drinks. It creates a welcoming touch. But be sure the kitchen has been cleaned up; use disposable cups so the sink doesn't fill up.
4. **Lock up your valuables, jewelry, and money.** Although the real estate salesperson will be on site during the open house, it's impossible to watch everyone all the time.
5. **Turn on all the lights.** Even in the daytime, incandescent lights add sparkle.
6. **Send your pets to a neighbor or take them outside.** If that's not possible, crate them or confine them to one room (a basement or bath), and let the salesperson know where to find them.
7. **Leave.** It's awkward for prospective buyers to look in your closets and express their opinions of your home with you there.