

Property Photo Preparation Guide

A practical timeline for a clean, camera-ready listing.

Great listing photos start before the photographer arrives.

Use this guide to spread the work across several days so landscaping, cleaning, decluttering, and final styling are complete before the appointment. Not every property will require every item.

5-7 DAYS BEFORE

Plan the work

Schedule cleaning, repairs, landscaping, and decide what needs to be removed.

2-3 DAYS BEFORE

Complete the heavy prep

Mow, deep clean, wash windows, handle the pool, and reduce visible clutter.

DAY BEFORE

Style and reset

Finish room-by-room preparation. All vendor work should be complete.

SHOOT DAY

Final check only

Move vehicles, secure pets, vacate the property, and preserve the presentation.

IMPORTANT

The property should be fully photo-ready when the photographer arrives. Harber Media photographs the home substantially as presented and does not provide cleaning, staging, or heavy furniture-moving services.

Plan and Complete the Heavy Work

Take care of repairs, cleaning, landscaping, and major decluttering early enough that shoot day is reserved for quick final checks.

1. SCHEDULE AND REPAIR

5-7 DAYS BEFORE

- ☐ Schedule any needed house cleaning, window cleaning, landscaping, pool service, or handyman work.
- ☐ Complete minor repairs such as burned-out bulbs, loose hardware, damaged screens, obvious wall marks, and broken blinds.
- ☐ Decide what should be removed from each room. Pack excess decor, personal collections, paperwork, and unused furniture.
- ☐ Confirm whether garages, workshops, bonus rooms, or storage areas will be photographed and prepare them accordingly.
- ☐ Confirm access instructions, gate codes, parking restrictions, alarm details, and any community rules that could affect the appointment.

2. EXTERIOR AND LANDSCAPING

2-3 DAYS BEFORE

- ☐ Mow and edge the lawn two to three days before the shoot - not the morning of the appointment. Remove clippings and leaves.
- ☐ Trim obvious overgrowth, remove dead plants, pull weeds, and straighten planters or outdoor furniture.
- ☐ If adding fresh flowers, plant them several days before photography so disturbed soil, mulch, and hardscape can be cleaned and settle naturally.
- ☐ Hide trash bins, hoses, garden tools, toys, pool equipment, and loose maintenance supplies.
- ☐ Clean the pool or spa, sweep patios and walkways, wipe outdoor furniture, and remove worn or excessive cushions.

3. INTERIOR DEEP CLEAN

2-3 DAYS BEFORE

- ☐ Deep clean floors, windows, mirrors, countertops, stainless steel, glass doors, and other reflective surfaces.
- ☐ Dust ceiling fans, vents, baseboards, shelves, light fixtures, and visible corners or cobwebs.
- ☐ Replace burned-out bulbs and use matching bulb color where practical. Confirm exterior lights and feature lighting work.
- ☐ Reduce visible clutter on counters, desks, shelves, nightstands, bathroom vanities, and entertainment centers.
- ☐ Remove items from the home that cannot be hidden neatly before the shoot.

HARBER MEDIA NOTE

Do not leave mowing, pressure washing, deep cleaning, repairs, or major decluttering for shoot morning. These tasks create delays and often leave the property looking unfinished in photographs.

Style and Reset the Home

The day before is for room-by-room presentation - not construction, deep cleaning, or last-minute vendor work.

4. WHOLE-HOME PREPARATION

DAY BEFORE

- ☐ Finish all cleaning, repair, staging, and vendor work before the evening prior to photography.
- ☐ Remove personal photographs, calendars, magnets, paperwork, visible medications, valuables, and identifying information.
- ☐ Hide cords, chargers, remotes, tissue boxes, pet bowls, pet beds, litter boxes, trash cans, and cleaning supplies.
- ☐ Open blinds and shades to check that they operate and sit evenly. Clean any remaining fingerprints from glass and mirrors.
- ☐ Turn off ceiling fans, remove seasonal or temporary decor, and simplify crowded shelves or display areas.

5. KITCHEN AND DINING

DAY BEFORE

- ☐ Clear countertops of everyday appliances and supplies whenever practical. Leave only a few intentional styling pieces.
- ☐ Remove dish soap, sponges, drying racks, paper towels, food packaging, and items stored on top of the refrigerator.
- ☐ Clean stainless steel, sinks, faucets, backsplashes, cabinet fronts, and appliance doors.
- ☐ Clear the refrigerator exterior of notes, magnets, schedules, and children's artwork.
- ☐ Straighten dining chairs and keep the table clean or lightly styled. Avoid oversized centerpieces that block sightlines.

6. LIVING SPACES, BEDROOMS, AND BATHS

DAY BEFORE

- ☐ Fluff pillows, straighten cushions, smooth bedding, and remove visible wrinkles where practical.
- ☐ Make beds fully and clear nightstands, dressers, desks, consoles, and coffee tables of everyday clutter.
- ☐ Remove excess toys, laundry, shoes, workout equipment, hampers, and temporary office supplies.
- ☐ Store toiletries, toothbrushes, razors, bath toys, scales, and cleaning products. Close toilet lids and use clean towels.
- ☐ Simplify small rooms. Removing one unnecessary chair, table, or decorative item can make the space photograph more clearly.

HARBER MEDIA NOTE

By the end of the day before photography, the home should be complete enough that only a quick final walkthrough remains.

Preserve the Presentation

Shoot day is for a final walkthrough - not for cleaning, staging, moving furniture, or completing unfinished work.

7. FINAL WALKTHROUGH

SHOOT DAY

- ☐ Walk the entire property 30-60 minutes before arrival and remove any last-minute cups, dishes, towels, mail, shoes, toys, or cleaning supplies.
- ☐ Open blinds and shades evenly where appropriate. Turn off ceiling fans, televisions, computer screens, and unnecessary monitors.
- ☐ Confirm every light works and leave switches accessible. The photographer will determine which lights are used for each composition.
- ☐ Move vehicles away from the driveway and front of the home. Hide trash bins, packages, newspapers, hoses, and visible maintenance equipment.
- ☐ Unlock required doors and gates and provide any access, alarm, or parking information before the appointment.

RECOMMENDED: THE PROPERTY SHOULD BE VACANT

Homeowners, children, guests, cleaners, contractors, and pets should be off-site before the photographer arrives. A clear property allows the photographer to work efficiently, protects privacy, reduces distractions, and helps the appointment stay on schedule.

8. PETS, EXTERIOR, AND OPTIONAL TWILIGHT

SHOOT DAY

- ☐ Secure pets off-site whenever possible. Do not rely on moving pets from room to room during photography.
- ☐ Sweep any new leaves or debris, straighten patio furniture, remove pool-cleaning equipment, and keep irrigation off before exterior photography.
- ☐ If twilight photography is booked, confirm all exterior lights, pool lights, fountains, fire features, and landscape lighting are working before the appointment.
- ☐ Avoid watering immediately before the shoot. Wet driveways, patios, and planting beds should be intentional rather than accidental.

HOW HARBER MEDIA WORKS

Harber Media photographs the property substantially as presented. Minor, safe adjustments may be made for composition, but our photographers do not clean, declutter, stage rooms, move heavy furniture, perform maintenance, or wait for unfinished preparation to be completed.

Prepared listings photograph better - and launch with greater confidence.

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