

TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

PICTURE PERFECT

Whether you are preparing your home for sale or simply want to spruce up your house for the summer, the experts at the Paint Quality Institute (www.paintquality.com) suggest following several simple rules to make the exterior of your home look its best.

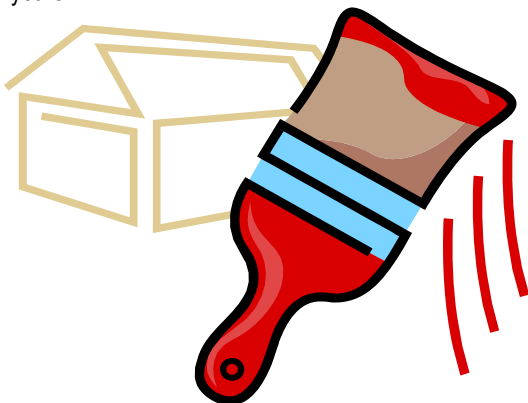
First, prepare the surface properly. Use a long-handled brush and soap and water to scrub the surface, then use a scraper or wire brush to remove any loose, flaky or peeling paint. Sand down any rough edges and brush off any remaining dust and particles left behind.

Use top quality paint for your project. For most wood and other exterior surfaces, 100 percent acrylic latex works best because it provides a thicker, more durable film and easily conceals old paint color. And since acrylic latex lasts up to 10 years or longer, you won't have to repaint unless you decide to change the color scheme.

Using quality brushes and equipment for the project will make the job easier and produce a more even coat and color. When working with latex paints, use brushes with synthetic bristles, ideally polyester. Brushes should be springy and well-balanced, with multiple lengths of split bristles packed tightly in a three-quarter to one-inch thickness on a standard four-inch brush.

You should also take care to paint in the right weather conditions. Choose a day with mild temperatures, ideally above 50 degrees Fahrenheit, and when the winds are light. If you must paint on a warm day, work on the shady side of the house.

With a little common sense and self-discipline, you'll reward yourself with a beautiful, professional-looking paint job that will last for years.



FINAL WALK-THROUGH

Several weeks or months can pass between the day you put an offer on a house and the day you take possession of it. In between a lot can happen that can affect the condition of the property, such as a leaky roof, a dripping faucet or stains on the carpet. Inspection experts at YourChicagoHomeInspector.com suggest doing a final walkthrough to assess the condition of the home before you take possession of it and make sure it is in the condition you agreed on when you signed the contract.



As you walk through the home with your agent, use a checklist as a guide to make sure everything is working properly, and note any questions you might have. Below are a few items in a typical checklist, but it also covers the roof, gutters, doors and windows, floors, basement and attic.

Plumbing — Flush all toilets and check for leaks. Do they keep running after they flush? Run the sink and shower faucets and check for proper drainage. Also check for hot water and water pressure.

Electrical — Make sure the utilities are on, especially if the home has been vacant for some time. Operate all lights, switches and ceiling fans. Also test the smoke alarms, and run the kitchen appliances. When you run the washer and dryer, check for leaks from the washer and make sure the dryer gets hot enough.

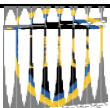
Heating and air conditioning — Use the thermostat to operate the heating and cooling system. Check for heat and cool air at all registers.

General — Open and close windows so they operate properly, and check for broken glass. Look for stains on the ceiling that might indicate a leaky roof.

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There are seven species of cicadas — four with 13-year life cycles and three with 17-year cycles.

Source: www.Magicicada.org





AMERICANS POWER DOWN

While more Americans are taking steps to reduce their energy consumption and save money, they may not see any real savings in their energy bills for a long time, according to a recent survey by The Shelton Group, an advertising and research agency. Nine out of 10 people surveyed say they changed their behavior to save more energy in 2010 up from 61 percent in 2009. Those who unplug chargers and other electronics when not in use increased from 33 percent in 2009 to 56 percent in 2010.

The most popular changes include replacing incandescent bulbs with CFLs (more energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamp bulbs), adding sealing, caulking or weather-stripping, purchasing Energy Star appliances and adding insulation. Nearly one in four say the most difficult change they made was the purchase of Energy Star appliances.

Despite efforts to cut back on energy consumption and save costs, about 30 percent of those surveyed say their energy bills have risen. The higher bills can be attributed to three factors: rising utility rates, an increase in popularity of various energy-hungry electronic devices, such as iPods, smart phones, flat-screen TVs and computers, and consumers believing they can use more energy because they made energy-efficient improvements. However, 44 percent believe they need to make more improvements to begin seeing any savings.

"This isn't an easy process," says Suzanne Shelton, president of the Shelton Group. "Doing one or even two things isn't going to get consumers the savings they expect. Making homes energy efficient is a multi-step process."

Work With a CRS Agent

Buying a home is one of the biggest and most emotional decisions you will ever make. So it's important to work with someone who can provide sound advice and a steady, guiding hand when you need it. That's why a CRS agent is the best person for the job.

A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) is among the top 4 percent of all agents in the country. CRS agents have achieved a high volume of transactions and advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing and technology. They must also maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and abide by its Code of Ethics. Why work with anyone else when you can work with a CRS agent?



DID YOU KNOW?



To make your own scouring cleanser, combine one-quarter cup of baking soda with one tablespoon of liquid detergent, then add enough white distilled vinegar to create a thick and creamy texture.

Source: www.VinegarTips.com



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? **Please mention my name.**
This newsletter is for informational purposes only and should not be substituted for legal or financial advice.
If you are currently working with another real estate agent or broker, it is not a solicitation for business.

