



SPOTLIGHT MEDIA

# Listing Prep Package

A Realtor's Guide to Preparing a Photo-Ready Home



# Before You Read:

## Realtors

- If you have your own info pack, have a look at ours and feel free to steal stuff from it.

## Home Owners

- The last three pages are the most important for you. Feel free to skip everything else.



# B. Is it worth it to wait for a sunny day?

Waiting for a sunny day used to make a big difference in real estate photography. Today, with sky replacements and AI editing, it matters a lot less. But, it's not completely irrelevant.

## Pros of Waiting for a Sunny Day:

- Natural light is stronger and more directional, giving cleaner window views and brighter interiors.
- Outdoor spaces (yards, pools, patios) often look more inviting in real sunlight.
- Neighbourhood shots and lifestyle elements (parks, mountains, streetscapes) can feel more vibrant and emotional.
- Less editing time required to create a "bright" look.

## Cons of Waiting:

- Delays can slow down listing timelines and marketing momentum.
- Overcast days actually provide softer, more even lighting – which can reduce harsh shadows and blown highlights.
- With professional sky replacement and AI enhancement, grey skies can be convincingly transformed into bright, blue-sky marketing images.
- In many markets (especially during fall/winter), waiting for perfect weather can mean unnecessary scheduling headaches.



## Bottom Line:

In most cases, speed to market outweighs weather perfection. If timing is critical, there's rarely a strong reason to postpone. With modern editing tools, the visual difference is negligible for most listings. However, for high-end homes, luxury outdoor spaces, or properties where the view is a major selling feature, a naturally sunny day can still provide a subtle edge in authenticity and overall feel.



# C. When are Drone Photos Worth It for Real Estate Listings?

Does it really help sell homes? Or when is it especially important?

## What the data says:

- Properties featuring drone photography can sell up to **68% faster** than comparable listings lacking aerial visuals.
- Listings with aerial media receive **more views and inquiries** than those without
- Drone imagery has become more common: usage in listings increased 75% from 2019 to 2022, and a majority of agents now include **at least one aerial shot** in their marketing.

[takeflightdsp.com](https://takeflightdsp.com)

## When Drone Photography Is Most Valuable:

Drone photography isn't necessary for every listing—but it shines in certain cases:

1. Properties with Large Lots or Unique Outdoor Features
2. Strong Location or Neighborhood Context
3. Luxury or High-End Listings
4. New Developments & Remote Buyers

[Sold in a Snap](#) [Retouching Labs](#) [Zip Do](#)

## When You Might Skip Drone Media

Drone photography adds cost and logistics. For small urban properties with little outdoor space or homes where the exterior doesn't add strategic value, aerial shots may offer limited benefit. Another scenario when you might want to skip drone is when you are on a budget and you need to really maximize your marketing dollars. In such scenarios, investing more in high-quality interior photography and staging typically is more cost-efficient.

[buzzmasters.ca](https://buzzmasters.ca)

## Conclusion: A Tool, Not a Panacea

Drone photography is a highly effective marketing tool when used with intention. However, it should complement (not replace) strong traditional photography and other visual content. It is a good add on in competitive markets.

[takeflightdsp.com](https://takeflightdsp.com)



## D. How Many Listing Photos Are “Optimal” for Selling Your Home?

Listing photos are arguably the most important marketing tool sellers have. A majority of buyers begin their home search online, and photos are often the first thing they judge – with 87% of buyers saying photos are the most useful feature when browsing listings. [WifiTalents](#)

### **So how many photos should you post on the MLS to get the best engagement and fastest sale?**

Listings with too few photos tend to underperform. For example, homes with fewer than nine photos are about **20% less likely to sell within 60 days** compared to similar homes with a more robust photo set. [MLS RESO API Import Solutions](#) Buyers may interpret sparse photo galleries as incomplete listings or something to hide, hurting click-throughs and interest.

### **The “Sweet Spot” is 22–27 Photos (and see below for the exact amount)**

Data from industry analyses show that **22–27 high-quality photos** often hit the sweet spot for engagement and sales performance. Listings in this range tend to generate more clicks and sell faster than those with fewer images – without overwhelming buyers. [MLS RESO API Import Solutions](#)

Here’s why:

- Too few photos leave buyers with unanswered questions about the home.
- Too many photos (above roughly ~30–35) can dilute attention and even slightly increase time on market, possibly because they include repetitive or unnecessary shots. [Gare Real Estate Photographer](#)
- A well-curated gallery of ~22–27 images gives buyers a comprehensive yet digestible view of key spaces.

### **One important note: Quality Still Comes First**

It’s not just quantity – quality matters more. Listings with professional photos receive up to 61% more views than those without, and these listings are more likely to sell faster and attract stronger offers. [MLS RESO API Import Solutions](#)

First 6–8 photos according to resa must include the kitchen and living room

### **Practical Guidelines by Home Size:**

While 22–27 photos work well for many standard homes, the ideal count can vary:

- **Smaller homes (studios, 1–2 beds):** 10–15 photos may suffice. [Focus Photo](#)
- **Typical suburban home/townhouse (2–3 beds):** 20–25 photos is often ideal. [PhotoAndVideoEdits.com](#)
- **Larger or luxury homes:** More shots (30+) can be justified to showcase extra features. [Focus Photo](#)

### **Bottom line**

While our local MLS system allows up to 40 photos, focus on getting approximately 30+ well done images for a full sized home. Being thorough without being repetitive is a good principle to follow.

# E. Not able to access the home regularly?

## Tenants not cooperating? Media focused tips that can help

You the Realtor (hopefully) know the BC Tenancy Agreement better than we do. So we will skip all that and focus on some tips where media can make your life easier. Consider these 3 tools below to help you save time on unnecessary showings:

- Matterport/3D Tours. These have fallen out of popularity as Covid faded, but they still have their place! **In cases where you can't get showing times, share the matterport tour with interested buyers.** If they still want to view the house in person after walking through it virtually, *you have an improved chance that this is a serious inquiry.* So much wasted time can be avoided thanks to this tool!
- Adjusted 3D Tours. If you don't want to "bare all" with a 3D Tour, you can control what the viewer sees with a couple of techy tools. First, you can "Defurnish" the 3D Tour and remove all furniture, objects, and clutter from the space. This option has no extra cost when you order a 3D tour. Second, you can try an Interactive Floor Plan Tour. This is a lower cost option where photos are placed on a floor plan from the point that they were taken from. Viewers can click through the floor plan and get a better sense of the space compared to just viewing photos by themselves.
- Virtually Staged Photos. For a few extra dollars, you can show the potential of a cluttered, messy space. Manage expectations by pairing these photos with the original ones. With really messy homes, these are a great way to show potential.

We also can't resist adding this one:

**Incentives Work Better Than Pressure.** Because enforcement is limited, cooperation often comes down to motivation.

Consider:

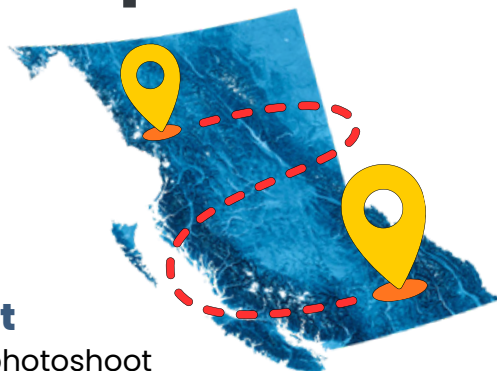
- Paid professional cleaning
- Gift cards or rent incentives
- Flexible timing requests or Create pre-agreed showing windows

When potential buyers tour a home, tension from tenants is felt as soon as they enter. As photographers entering the home, we've experienced this many times! A cooperative tenant can easily add tens of thousands in perceived value to the sale.



## F. What do I need to move for the photoshoot?

To help your home look its best on camera, we've created this "Must Move It" list. These are common items that can be visually distracting in photos and videos. Taking a few minutes to move or store them will help ensure your photos and videos look clean, spacious, and show-ready.



### I like to "Move it Move it" List

A checklist of 11 things to move for your home's photoshoot

- ✓ Vehicles off the driveway
- ✓ Hide trash cans (interior and exterior)
- ✓ Everything Pets: Pet Food and Water, Toys, Cages
- ✓ Limit bathroom items: Tooth Brushes, Hair brushes
- ✓ Non-decorative Soap and tissue boxes
- ✓ Shampoo, Conditioner from Shower + old bath robes
- ✓ "Tired" Towels on racks (keep decorative or luxury towels)
- ✓ Toilets with seat up (always put toilet seat down)
- ✓ Running Fans (always turn fans off)
- ✓ Grill Covers on BBQs (unless the grill looks like it is near death)
- ✓ And most important: General Clutter (dishes, papers, shoes)

### A note or two about cleaning:

- Dusting isn't a high priority (for photos and video), unless you can physically see the dust from across the room. Most importantly, have major blemishes fixed as best as possible. For example: dark stains on carpet, missing electrical covers, scratched paint, or broken chairs.
- We usually don't shoot the interior of the garage, so this is a great place to put anything you can't fit into closets and storage. #fillthegarage



# G. A Low-Effort Guide to Self-Staging Your Home

You don't need to fully redecorate or buy new furniture to stage your home well. Most great staging comes down to decluttering, and cleaning. The goal is to help buyers focus on the home itself—not your stuff.

## 1. Declutter Like You're Moving Soon (Because You Are)

This is the single most important step. Here's a general rule: Clear off surfaces and remove anything you don't use daily.

- Kitchen counters: leave only 1–2 simple items
- Bathroom counters: remove everything except hand soap
- Coffee tables & nightstands: one item max
- Floors: no baskets, boxes, or loose items

Buyers aren't judging your taste—they're trying to imagine themselves living there. Fewer items make rooms feel:

- Bigger
- Brighter
- Easier to understand

If you're unsure about an item, it's usually better to move it out.

## 2. Use the 80/20 principle when cleaning/decluttering

20% effort in the right areas will result in an 80% improvement. And that 80% is usually going to be enough for Photos and video pick up the more noticeable things, so prioritize cleaning spills and stains over dusting the baseboards. If you do these few things below, it should take care of making a good first impression.

- Removing any noticeable stains
- Replacing burnt out light bulbs, or mismatching ones
- Getting rid of any unpleasant smells
- Cleaning streaky windows
- Clean Bathroom and kitchen fixtures

## 3. Create Clear Walking Paths

Open space = calm space on camera. Rooms should be easy to move through.

- Pull furniture slightly away from walls
- Remove extra chairs or side tables
- Make sure doors fully open without hitting anything

## 4. Let the Light In

Light makes everything look better.

- Open all blinds and curtains
- Replace burnt-out bulbs
- Use matching, warm bulbs where possible
- Turn on all lights before the shoot

If a room feels dark, it won't show as well in photos.

## 5. Neutralize Personal Items

Buyers want to imagine their life there—not yours.

Please remove:

- Family photos
- Kids' artwork
- Awards, certificates, name signs
- Very bold or themed décor

A few neutral decorative items are fine. Personal items should go.

## 6. Advice for specific rooms

### Bedrooms: Calm and Simple

Bedrooms should feel relaxing, not busy.

- Make beds neatly (simple bedding works best)
- Remove extra pillows, throws, and clutter
- Clear nightstands
- Hide laundry baskets and hampers

Think "hotel room," not "daily life."

### Bathrooms:

- Remove toothbrushes, razors, hair tools
- Put away shampoo bottles (yes, even in the shower)
- Plain, neutral coloured towels (or remove them)
- Close toilet lids

Clean, simple bathrooms photograph far better.

Curb Appeal Pointers

### The first photo is often the front exterior.

- Move vehicles from the driveway
- Put away garbage bins
- Clear hoses, tools, toys, and planters that look tired
- Leaves and debris removed from walkways and entry areas

## 7. When in Doubt, Put It Away

A good rule to remember:

Buyers won't notice what you remove, but they will notice what you leave.

Closets, garages, and storage rooms don't need to be empty—but they should look organized and spacious.

## Final Thought

You don't need to make your home perfect. You just need to make it clear and clean. These small steps help photos and videos do their job—attracting more buyers and stronger interest from day one.

# H. 3 things buyers notice: smell, clutter, light

When buyers walk into a home, their first impressions are formed instantly—and often subconsciously. Three things they notice right away are: smell, clutter, and light.

1. Unpleasant or lingering **odors** can quickly turn buyers off, even if the home looks great. Ask your realtor if you have gone “nose blind” to anything in your home.
2. Excess **clutter** makes spaces feel smaller and distracts buyers. Your goal doesn't have to be a Magnolia showroom. Instead, we want to go for clean and simple. The goal is for the buyer's to imagine themselves living in that space; an air fryer on the island doesn't help that goal.
3. And finally, **light** matters more than most sellers realize—bright, well-lit rooms feel welcoming, spacious, and cared for. To help with this: make sure you have replaced all burnt out lightbulbs, and that they are all the same colour. Make sure blinds are easy to open. One of the first things a buyer's realtor will do is go through the house and open the blinds. If you have one that is stuck in a down position, it will be a less-than-ideal first impression if they manage to pull it off the wall or break it further. Let's get that replaced or removed.

