



6 Things Pet Owners Can't Afford to Ignore When Selling Their Home

For many people, pets are part of their family. But when selling a home, the best advice regarding pets is, "out of sight, out of mind." Evidence that the owners have pets can be an instant turn-off to potential buyers, even if they have pets themselves. So to make sure pets don't sabotage the sale, here are 6 specific things pet owners can't afford to ignore when selling their home:

1. Stains and Odors

When you live with pets, you become desensitized to their scent, so have someone come over and tell you honestly if they can tell you have pets when they walk in the front door.

- Have your carpet and upholstery professionally cleaned (if stains or odors are deep-set, consider removing the carpet or upholstered item), and keep windows open as much as possible to keep fresh air flowing.
- Address accidents immediately by using enzyme-based odor eliminators like Nature's Miracle to neutralize odors and stains at the source. Keep in mind it may take a couple of days for the smell to disappear completely.
- Clean litter boxes, kennels, habitats, and cages often so odors don't get a chance to build up, and there are no stains or waste visible before showings.



2. Supplies

Like kids, pets tend to have lots of stuff. Store as much of it as possible during showings, and only bring out the essentials when needed.

- Stash all toys and supplies that are normally kept in the house (portable kennels, bowls, beds, leashes, food containers, litter boxes, scratching posts, etc.) during showings.
- Make sure any outdoor pet areas are neat, and store loose backyard pet toys and supplies in a plastic tote or deck box.



3. Damage

Even the best-behaved pets can scratch, tear, and otherwise cause minor damage to a home. Check for damage to doors, woodwork, screens, walls, and furnishings, and address it.

- For minor to moderate scratches, bite marks or gouges, fill them in with wood putty or spackle, sand, and repaint or refinish the area. If the damage is extensive, replace the damaged item.
- It's always best to replace, rather than repair, damaged door or window screens.
- Also remember to fix any outdoor pet damage (holes, fence gaps, scratches, etc.).

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4. Pet Doors

Pet doors are a particularly tricky problem when selling a home. The ideal solution would be to replace the human door or restore the wall where the pet door is, but if pets are accustomed to using the door as part of their housebreaking routine, more problems can be created than solved if the pet no longer has free access to the outdoors when needed.

If the pet door has to stay, here's a workable option: make sure the pet door and the area surrounding it are clean, in good repair, and the installation looks professional. Potential buyers will probably notice the pet door, but if it's seamlessly integrated and they have a pet, they may see it as a plus; however, they may expect the human door to be replaced as a condition of sale if they won't have a need for the pet door.

5. Pet Presence

No matter how friendly your free-roaming pets are, they should not be at the house during showings, period.

- Take them to the park, board them for the day, schedule them for a grooming or vet appointment, or take them to a friend's or family member's house while potential buyers are at your home.
- For birds and exotic pets that can't be easily moved for surprise showings, consider asking a friend or family member to keep them while your house is on the market.
- Make sure aquariums are sparkling clean at all times, and make sure all of its inhabitants are alive and swimming before showings.

6. Allergens

Many people are allergic to pet hair and dander, so do everything you can to keep airborne allergens to a minimum. Having an intense allergy attack as soon as they step in the door will definitely deter a buyer!

- Have your carpet and upholstery professionally cleaned, and vacuum thoroughly 2-3 times per week with a machine that has a HEPA filter.
- Change the bags frequently or empty the cup after each vacuuming.
- Use cleaning spray or pre-moistened wipes when dusting.
- Change the air filters on forced-air HVAC units at least once a month, and open windows to let fresh air into the house.



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