

Presenting a vacant inventory property to prospective buyers and their agents can be a challenge for the listing agent. Without the furniture and personal belongings that make a house a home, it is difficult for buyers to picture their family living in the property. Rather than see the house and all the good features it has, a buyer will focus on the flaws.

With so much competition on the market, especially from new construction, a buyer will look for excuses to move on to the next property that shows better. It is extremely important for our vacant properties to show their best so that we do not lose any potential buyers.

Presentation begins with property maintenance. The rule of thumb is for the vacant property to be clean in every respect, and to **exhibit the same pride of ownership that is found amongst the neighboring properties.** Our clients expect inventory properties to be properly maintained, and permission from them is not needed for the most basic items. Routine maintenance would include:

Clean the interior –

Include bathrooms, sinks, toilets, vinyl and tile flooring, window sills, countertops, and walls with marks or spots that can be easily removed with basic cleaner. **Regular cleaning should be scheduled to keep the house looking fresh.**

Appliances should be cleaned out (*remember to turn off water supply to ice makers*)

Carpets should be shampooed. Difficult stains that do not come out with conventional methods, or permanent damage should be reported to the Real Estate Specialist and replacement bids should be solicited if condition is poor.

Debris should be removed from garages, basements, closets and outdoor storage sheds. **Alert the CIS if any personal property has been left behind.** Tell the CIS if the debris is excessive, or if there is paint or other hazardous materials that are more expensive to remove.

The yard should be mowed on a regular basis.

Flower beds should be weeded and leaves and other debris removed.

Gutters need to be cleaned to avoid water seeping into the house and causing damage.

Missing or burned out light bulbs should be replaced.

All of the above items are expected to be done within the first week of inventory. You do not need to await approval from the CIS; however, washing windows and mulching the flower beds are items that may also be warranted to enhance property condition. Since these jobs can be expensive, permission from the CIS is needed. **Remember, property maintenance is a reflection on your firm and Cartus.** A property that shows well and is kept clean is positive PR for us all.