LOCKBOX INSIGHTS

Seller's Pre-Listing Inspection Guide

The inspection is happening either way. The only question is whether you see the results first.

Why Sellers Who Inspect First Win

When a buyer's inspector walks through your home, the findings go into a report. That report goes directly to someone looking for reasons to renegotiate your price.

A pre-listing inspection changes that. You see the same findings first, on your own timeline, before anyone is counting days on the contingency clock.

You decide what to fix, what to price in, and what to disclose. You control the narrative instead of reacting to someone else's.

Sellers who inspect before listing close faster and with fewer surprises — not because their homes are in better condition, but because they aren't blindsided in escrow.

Prepare Access Before the Inspection

The inspection is only as complete as the access provided. Anything the inspector can't reach becomes a notation in the report — and a question mark in the buyer's mind.

- Unlock or provide access to the attic hatch — inspector must enter the attic. A blocked attic is a red flag to buyers regardless of why.
- Clear 3 feet around the electrical panel — required clearance for safe inspection.
- Ensure water heater, furnace, and AC are accessible — move stored items away from mechanical equipment.
- Unlock any outbuildings, garages, or gates on the property.
- Leave all utility services on — gas, electric, and water.
- Confirm pilot lights are lit on all gas appliances — inspectors do not re-light pilots.
- Leave all remote controls and keys on-site — garage doors, ceiling fans, fireplace.

Common Pre-Listing Repairs Worth Doing

These are the items buyers' inspectors flag most consistently in Southern California. Each one is a potential negotiation lever in the buyer's hands. Addressing them before listing removes those levers.

Roof & Gutters

Clean gutters, secure loose flashings, replace missing shingles. Roof deficiencies are among the top repair request items in SoCal — and among the most expensive to price-negotiate around.

Water Heater Strapping

California law requires seismic strapping and a working T&P relief valve. Cited on nearly every inspection in the region. Costs under $150 to correct — far less than giving a buyer a documented code violation to negotiate with.

GFCI Outlets

Install GFCI protection in bathrooms, kitchen, garage, and exterior locations. Buyers notice electrical deficiencies even when they don't fully understand them.

Smoke & CO Detectors

California requires working detectors on every level and in every bedroom. Non-compliance is both a report item and a legal disclosure requirement.

Caulk & Weatherstripping

Recaulk tubs, showers, and sinks. Replace failed weatherstripping on exterior doors. High visual impact, low cost. This signals maintenance to buyers beyond its actual value.

Window Seals

Fogged double-pane windows have failed seals. Buyers notice. Inspectors document. Decide before the buyer's inspector makes the decision for you.

Attic Ventilation

Blocked soffit vents are common in SoCal. Improper ventilation accelerates roof deck deterioration and is flagged immediately by experienced inspectors.

Documentation to Gather

Documentation tells your home's story before the inspection report does. Buyers respond to evidence of care.

- Permits for any work done since original construction — unpermitted work is a significant disclosure issue.
- Receipts or records for roof work, HVAC service, or major repairs — demonstrates maintenance history.
- Appliance manuals and warranty documents — signals a well-maintained, organized home.
- Age of HVAC, water heater, and roof if known — providing actual dates is more accurate than an inspector's estimate.
- HOA documents if applicable — rules, CC&Rs;, and recent meeting minutes.
- Prior inspection reports if available — shows history and demonstrates repairs already completed.

After Your Pre-Listing Inspection

Review the report with your agent before deciding what to repair

Your agent knows your market and your buyers. Some repairs are obvious; others are negotiating tools.

Get contractor estimates for any items over $500

You can't decide repair vs. price reduction vs. disclose-and-credit without knowing actual costs.

Update your seller disclosure with findings you are not repairing

In California, known defects must be disclosed. The inspection creates a documented record. Disclosing proactively removes the buyer's leverage to demand credit later.

Provide the report to the buyer's agent as part of your disclosure package

Voluntary disclosure demonstrates confidence in the property and reduces renegotiation risk.

Retain copies of receipts for completed repairs

Documentation protects you post-close. Receipts are your evidence if a buyer claims a defect was undisclosed.

Ready to take the next step?

A buyer's inspector is going to walk through your home one way or another. The only difference is whether you read the findings first — or for the first time across a negotiating table. Lockbox Insights provides pre-listing inspections to the same standard your buyer's inspector will use. Full written report. Same scope. No surprises in escrow.

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