



Staging Your Home Through All Four Seasons

Staging advice written for a national audience assumes it is always 70° and sunny outside. Up here it is not. A house shown in March needs different preparation than the same house shown in July, and buyers notice when a seller has not accounted for it.

Year Round Basics

- ☐ Every light bulb working, matching color temperature where you can
- ☐ Counters and surfaces clear
- ☐ Personal photos packed away
- ☐ Closets thinned so they look roomy
- ☐ Neutral smells, no strong air fresheners
- ☐ Address numbers visible from the road

Winter

Snow is not a problem to hide. A well cleared property tells a buyer the place is cared for.

- ☐ Driveway and walkways cleared and sanded before every showing
- ☐ Boot tray and a mat inside the entry, buyers will be tracking snow in
- ☐ Path cleared to the garage, shed, and lakeshore if there is one
- ☐ Interior lights on, it is dark by late afternoon
- ☐ Heat set comfortably, a cold house feels like a problem house
- ☐ Roof and gutters cleared of ice dams

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- ☐ If the property has a view, clear enough snow that buyers can see what they are looking at

List summer photos alongside the winter ones. A lakeshore property shown in January is a hard sell without something showing what it looks like in July. We handle this as part of your listing.

Spring and Mud Season

The stretch between snowmelt and green grass is the toughest window to show a house in this part of the country. Plan for it.

- ☐ Mats at every entrance, inside and out
- ☐ Boot tray by the door and a place for wet coats
- ☐ Salt stains cleaned off entry floors and walkways
- ☐ Winter debris picked up, branches, sand, whatever the plow pushed around
- ☐ Gravel driveways graded if they got soft
- ☐ Siding power washed
- ☐ Lawn raked and any bare spots seeded
- ☐ Gutters cleaned and downspouts pointed away from the foundation

Buyers touring in mud season are often the serious ones. Nobody looks at houses in April for fun.

Summer

- ☐ Lawn mowed and trimmed, including around outbuildings
- ☐ Dock in and shoreline tidy
- ☐ Lake toys, kayaks, and lawn furniture stored or arranged deliberately, not scattered
- ☐ Window screens cleaned or removed for photos

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- ☐ Deck or dock stained if it needs it
- ☐ Bug control on porches and patios before showings
- ☐ Grill cleaned, or put away
- ☐ Flowers or pots at the entry, kept alive

Fall

- ☐ Leaves raked, and raked again before each showing
- ☐ Gutters cleaned
- ☐ Heating system serviced, keep the receipt visible
- ☐ Firewood stacked neatly, not piled
- ☐ Garden beds cut back and cleaned up
- ☐ Outdoor lighting checked, days are getting short again

Fall color makes for good listing photos. If you are listing in late September or October, we will try to get photos before the leaves drop.

If You Have Lakeshore

- ☐ Path to the water clear and safe to walk
- ☐ Dock and lift in good repair, or clearly noted as needing work
- ☐ Shoreline tidy, no stacked debris or old equipment
- ☐ Water access and frontage measurements ready to share

A word of caution before you clear anything. Minnesota has shoreland rules covering vegetation removal near the water, and cutting back more than you are allowed to can create a real problem at closing. Check with your county before you clear a view.



What Actually Matters Most

If you only do a few things, do these. Clean the windows, clear the counters, get every light working, and deal with any smell you have stopped noticing. Those four *consistently move buyers more than furniture arrangement does.*

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