EXECUTIVE
REALTY GROUP

VACANT ESTATE HOME PREPARATION GUIDE
A Simple Roadmap for Preparing the Property for Sale

Settling an estate is rarely simple, and selling a family home can feel overwhelming. This guide is not intended to create more work or pressure. It is simply a roadmap to help you stay organized and understand the process ahead. Every estate is different, and we will work together to prioritize only the items that make sense for your situation.

MANAGING THE ESTATE FROM OUT OF STATE?

Many of the families I work with live outside Illinois. Whenever possible, I can help coordinate local vendors, monitor property conditions, provide photo and video updates, and act as your eyes and ears on the ground.

1. FIRST STEPS
- ☐ Confirm authority to act on the estate's behalf.
- ☐ Confirm with your attorney whether any probate documents or court approvals are required before the property can be sold.
- ☐ Notify the homeowner's insurance company of the death and the property's vacancy.
- ☐ Arrange mail forwarding or a mail hold.
- ☐ Locate important property documents.
- ☐ Meet with Randy to discuss goals, timing, and overall strategy.

2. PROPERTY SECURITY & MAINTENANCE
- ☐ Locate all keys, garage remotes, and alarm information.
- ☐ Confirm who currently has access to the property.
- ☐ Change locks if necessary.
- ☐ Secure all windows and doors.
- ☐ Keep utilities on during preparation and marketing.
- ☐ Set thermostats appropriately.
- ☐ Arrange lawn care and exterior maintenance.
- ☐ Periodically monitor the property for maintenance issues, water intrusion, or signs of damage.
- ☐ Consider winterization and freeze protection when appropriate.
- ☐ Notify a trusted neighbor that the property will be vacant.

3. PERSONAL PROPERTY & DOCUMENTATION
- ☐ Remove medications and properly secure any firearms or valuables.
- ☐ Identify items family members wish to keep.
- ☐ Locate important documents, safe deposit box information, and any hidden valuables.
- ☐ Photograph and keep records of significant items that are removed, donated, sold, or distributed.
- ☐ Determine which items will be donated, sold, discarded, or remain with the property.
- ☐ Coordinate family pickup dates if multiple heirs are involved.

4. PREPARING THE HOME
- ☐ Remove unwanted furniture and household items.
- ☐ Remove trash and debris.
- ☐ Empty closets, storage areas, attic, basement, garage, and sheds.
- ☐ Schedule donation pickups, junk removal, or estate sale services if needed.
- ☐ Perform a general deep cleaning.
- ☐ Clean kitchens and bathrooms.
- ☐ Vacuum and clean the flooring.
- ☐ Dust surfaces and light fixtures.
- ☐ Clean windows as needed.
- ☐ Eliminate odors.

5. PROPERTY CONDITION

- [ ] Make a list of known issues or defects.
- [ ] Discuss any known property concerns with Randy so we can determine appropriate disclosures and documentation.
- [ ] Replace burned-out light bulbs.
- [ ] Replace HVAC filters if necessary.
- [ ] Address minor safety concerns.
- [ ] Verify smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are operational.
- [ ] Check that plumbing fixtures and major systems appear functional.

6. PREPARING FOR MARKETING

- [ ] Discuss whether any items should remain for staging purposes.
- [ ] Prepare the home for photography.
- [ ] Determine showing instructions.
- [ ] Establish communication preferences for updates and feedback.
- [ ] Review pricing and marketing strategy.
- [ ] If you are unable to visit the property in person, arrange for a video walkthrough before photography and showings begin.

7. SERVICES WE CAN HELP COORDINATE

- [ ] • Estate sale companies
- [ ] • Donation pickups
- [ ] • Junk removal and cleanout services
- [ ] • Lawn care and snow removal
- [ ] • Handyman Repairs to Full Renovation
- [ ] • Cleaning services
- [ ] • Locksmiths
- [ ] • Moving companies

Remember: The goal is not perfection. Most estate homes require some degree of preparation. We will focus on the improvements that make sense and avoid unnecessary expenses whenever possible.

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