



Buy a Home Checklist



Examine Your Budget

Complete our [Budget Worksheet](#). Consider your monthly net pay (what you bring home) and compare your actual income to your actual monthly expenses. Determine the maximum monthly mortgage payment you can afford before you look at homes.



Location

Narrow your home search to established and well-maintained neighborhoods, close to employment centers and shopping. Choose low traffic areas. Seek a home located close to parks or other desirable amenities. These factors are important when you sell your home in the future.



Don't Get Caught Up in the Excitement

Don't let the excitement of "finding that dream home" become a temptation to buy beyond your budget. Think clearly and rationally: Distinguish between what you need and what you want.



First-time Buyer

Bring a parent or an experienced buyer along. It's always a good idea to get a second opinion from a trusted advisor.



Consider the Costs

Ask about all the costs associated with a particular home. For example, ask for a copy of the most recent real estate tax bill, insurance bill, or home utility bills. Ask if there are association fees or special assessments.



Check the Traffic

Drive to the home at rush-hour. Check out the traffic patterns and travel times that you would face on a normal workday or school day.



Is it a Safe Neighborhood?

Research the crime activity in the neighborhood you're considering: There are law enforcement websites that list information on crime rates, or even sexual predators that could be living nearby.

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Are Improvements Required

If the home requires some renovation, be sure to budget for the repairs before you buy. A reputable Home Inspector may be a strong ally.



Don't Let Anyone Pressure You to Make a Decision

Take the necessary time to make a good decision. If you miss "a deal" then just keep looking. More people have made mistakes buying in haste than any other error in the home-buying process.



Select the Right Realtor®

Your Realtor® should be a full-time agent with many years of experience. Seek Realtors® with extensive education, with credentials such as a CRS or GRI designation. Identify a friendly and responsive Realtor® – and someone who listens and is not overbearing.