

Open House Paint Prep Checklist

A fast decision sheet for Portland Realtors, sellers and listing teams.

Use this when the open house is coming fast

- Prioritize paint work buyers will see in the first 60 seconds.
- Fix photo-facing scuffs, entry damage and buyer-confidence red flags first.
- Avoid risky last-minute touch-ups that flash under natural light.
- Separate must-do paint projects from nice-to-do seller panic.

Best use: listing walkthroughs, 7-day prep windows, 48-hour punch lists and open house mornings.

Open House Paint Project Priority Matrix

Paint Project	Open House Value	Decision
Front door + entry trim	Sets the first impression before the buyer walks in.	Do first
Main living wall scuffs	Shows in photos and during walkthroughs.	Do first
Trim, doors + baseboards	Makes the home feel cleaner and better maintained.	Do if visible
Peeling exterior paint	Can trigger maintenance and inspection concern.	Review fast
Cabinet finish wear	Can date the kitchen quickly.	Maybe
Closets + garage touch-ups	Usually low buyer impact.	Skip unless terrible

The 7-Day Open House Paint Plan

What to handle before weekend traffic starts.

7 days before the open house

- Walk the exterior from the curb and mark entry-facing paint issues.
- Check living room, kitchen, hallways, bathrooms and primary bedroom for photo-facing wear.
- Decide whether scuffed walls need touch-up or full wall repaint.
- Review cabinet condition only if the kitchen feels dated in photos.
- Request a painter review if exterior paint is peeling, bubbling or exposing wood.

3-4 days before the open house

- Complete full-wall repaints, trim touch-ups and entry refreshes.
- Avoid experimenting with new colors this late unless the current color is hurting the listing.
- Check repaired walls in daylight and evening light.
- Clear paint cans, drop cloths and tools before staging or photos.

48 hours before the open house

- Only perform low-risk touch-ups that have already been tested.
- Clean marks before painting. Some scuffs do not need paint.
- Do not start cabinet painting, ceiling stain repair or exterior peeling fixes this late.
- Recheck entry trim, hallway corners, door frames and baseboards.

Must-Do / Maybe / Skip

A simple open house paint filter for sellers.

Must-do before the open house

- Front entry paint that looks chipped, dirty or tired.
- Scuffed main living walls that appear in photos or buyer walkthroughs.
- Bathroom peeling, staining or rough trim that suggests moisture or neglect.
- Exterior peeling, exposed wood or failed caulk that buyers may question.
- Trim and doors that make clean rooms feel dirty.

Maybe, if time and budget allow

- Cabinet repainting when the kitchen feels dated but the boxes are solid.
- Primary bedroom repaint if the color is dark, loud or distracting.
- One-wall repaint where touch-ups are flashing.
- Front door repaint if color or wear weakens curb appeal.

Usually skip this close to the open house

- Closets, utility rooms and low-photo areas.
- Garage walls unless the garage is a major selling feature.
- Risky dark-wall touch-ups that will probably flash.
- Cabinet touch-ups that make the finish look patchy.
- Any paint project that cannot dry, cure or clean up before buyers arrive.

Seller Scripts + Next Step

What Realtors can say without sounding pushy.

Seller scripts

- Instead of: "This needs paint." Say: "This is one of the areas buyers will notice during the open house."
- Instead of: "The exterior looks rough." Say: "This may raise maintenance questions if buyers see it before we explain it."
- Instead of: "Let's repaint everything." Say: "Let's focus on the paint issues that affect photos, first impressions and buyer confidence."
- Instead of: "Just touch it up." Say: "Let's test it first. If it flashes, a full wall repaint may look cleaner."

When to call Lightmen Painting

- The open house is within 7-10 days and sellers need a fast paint scope.
- Exterior paint failure may affect buyer confidence or inspection conversations.
- Interior wall touch-ups are flashing or making the listing look patchy.
- Cabinet color is dating the kitchen and sellers need a realistic option.
- The agent needs a painter who understands listing timelines, photos and seller budgets.

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