

## FSBO TOOL

# OPEN HOUSE SAFETY & SUCCESS CHECKLIST

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Protect Yourself, Your Property, and Make a Great Impression

### Why This Matters

Open houses are one of your best tools for attracting buyers – but they also come with risks. Strangers will be walking through your home, looking in closets, opening drawers. Without an agent present, you're responsible for both your safety and your property security. This checklist covers everything you need to run a safe, effective open house that converts visitors into buyers.

### What's Inside

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- Follow-Up Checklist
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## Planning & Preparation (2+ Weeks Before)

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- Tour other open houses in your area to see how agents present properties
- Note what buyers respond to positively and what questions they ask
- Decide on your open house date(s) – traditionally Sunday 1–4pm
- Check when neighboring homes have open houses to take advantage of foot traffic
- Order professional “For Sale” sign with flyer holder
- Order directional signs (plan for 20–30 signs)
- Schedule professional photography if not already done
- Create property information sheets/brochures (print 50+)
- Recruit a friend/family member to help host (NEVER host alone)**

## Marketing (1–2 Weeks Before)

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- Advertise on Zillow, Realtor.com, Facebook, Craigslist, local community groups
- Post on MLS if using flat-fee service
- Create Facebook event and share in local groups
- Email/text your neighbors inviting them to the open house
- Distribute flyers to 100+ surrounding homes
- Post flyers on community bulletin boards
- Send email to friends/family asking them to spread the word
- Complete any remaining repairs or touch-ups
- Hire professional cleaning service for deep clean

# Secure Your Home (Before Every Open House)

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**CRITICAL: Do this before EVERY open house, not just the first one.**

## Secure Valuables

- Cash, checkbooks, credit cards
- Jewelry - ALL of it (not just expensive pieces)
- Electronics: laptops, tablets, smartphones, gaming systems
- Designer items: handbags, watches, sunglasses
- Expensive bottles of wine or liquor
- Collectibles, artwork, antiques, heirlooms
- Small portable items that could fit in a purse or jacket

## Secure Medications

- ALL prescription medications (major target for theft)
- Lock them in a safe or remove from property entirely
- Check medicine cabinets in ALL bathrooms
- Don't forget bedside tables and kitchen cabinets

## Secure Personal & Financial Documents

- Mail, bills, bank statements, credit card statements
- Checkbooks, deposit slips, unused checks
- Tax documents, financial statements, investment papers
- Passports, birth certificates, Social Security cards
- Legal documents, contracts, property deeds
- Medical records or insurance cards
- Family calendars showing when you'll be away
- WiFi password written on routers/modems/computers
- Password lists or sticky notes with logins

## Secure Keys & Access

- Spare house keys, garage door openers, gate remotes
- Car keys and key fobs (easily grabbed)
- Alarm codes or smart home control panels
- Remove keys from hooks near doors

## Secure Personal Information

- Family photos (prevents people learning your routine/family info)
- Children's photos, artwork with names on them
- School schedules, sports team schedules
- Work badges or company information
- Anything showing where kids go to school or daycare

## Secure Digital Devices

- Password-protect all desktop computers that can't be moved
- Hide or remove hard drives with sensitive data
- Log out of all accounts on computers
- Clear browser history and saved passwords
- Cover or disconnect webcams
- Lock away USB drives, external hard drives

## Prepare the Property

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### Depersonalize & Declutter

- Remove ALL personal photos from view
- Declutter counters, tables, shelves – surfaces should be 80% clear
- Remove political or religious items that could alienate buyers
- Hide pet items (bowls, toys, litter boxes)
- Remove excess furniture to make rooms look spacious

### Deep Clean

- Clean windows inside and out
- Vacuum, mop, dust every room
- Clean kitchen appliances until they shine
- Scrub bathrooms spotless
- Make beds with fresh linens
- Empty all trash cans and replace liners

## Curb Appeal

- Mow lawn, edge, weed flower beds
- Add fresh mulch if needed
- Place potted flowers near entrance
- Clean exterior windows and front door
- Pressure wash driveway/walkway if needed

## Day-Of: Morning Prep

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- Do final walkthrough – check every room one more time
- Turn on ALL lights in every room (even during the day)
- Open all curtains and blinds (unless privacy concern)
- Set thermostat to comfortable temperature (68–72°F)
- Ensure all beds are made and bathrooms are spotless
- Start coffee maker or bake cookies for pleasant smell
- Play soft background music at low volume
- Secure pets off-site (friends/family/kennel)

## Day-Of: Safety & Logistics Setup

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- Confirm your helper is still available and on schedule
- Print sign-in sheets (include: name, phone, email, agent info)
- Organize property info sheets/brochures at entry
- Set up feedback cards with pens
- Lock all doors except main entrance
- Plan your escape routes and identify them to your helper**
- Charge your cell phone fully – keep it in your pocket**
- Share your location with a friend/family member**
- Park your car in easy-to-access spot (not blocked in)

## Day-Of: Signs & Final Setup

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- Place directional signs at key intersections (20–30 signs total)
- Put out “Open House” sign in yard
- Set up sign-in table near entrance with materials
- Do final security check – closets locked, valuables hidden
- Check that all windows/doors are locked except main entrance
- Brief your helper on their role and safety protocols
- Decide who will greet visitors and who will monitor the house
- Review questions you anticipate and prepare answers

## During the Open House: Safety Rules

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- **REQUIRE SIGN-IN – NO EXCEPTIONS**

Every visitor must sign in with full name, phone, email, and agent info if they have one. No sign-in = no entry.

- **NEVER HOST ALONE**

Always have at least one other adult present. Two sets of eyes means better security and personal safety.

- **STAY AWARE AT ALL TIMES**

One person greets at door, other person circulates through house watching visitors. Alternate positions.

- **FOLLOW, DON'T LEAD**

When giving tours, direct visitors but walk behind them. Say “The kitchen is through there” rather than leading them.

- **GIVE SPACE BUT STAY VISIBLE**

Let buyers explore freely, but always remain visible and in earshot. Never let anyone be alone in a room.

- **WATCH FOR RED FLAGS**

Someone opening drawers, taking photos of non-house items, requesting to be left alone, acting nervous, making multiple trips to car.

- **TRUST YOUR GUT**

If someone makes you uncomfortable, you have every right to ask them to leave. Better to be rude than unsafe.

- **KEEP PHONE ACCESSIBLE**

Cell phone in pocket at all times. Have 911 ready to dial if needed. Consider keeping phone unlocked during the event.

- **MONITOR ENTRY/EXIT**

Keep track of who's in the house. Count people in, count people out. Do headcount periodically.

- **CHECK EMPTY ROOMS**

Periodically check rooms that should be empty. Make sure no one is hiding or waiting.

## Greeting Script & Question Guide

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### GREETING SCRIPT:

*"Welcome! Thanks so much for coming. Before you head in, I just need you to sign in here – it's for everyone's security. We have property information sheets right here that have all the details about the home. Please feel free to explore every room – everything is open except the rooms marked 'Private.' I'm here if you have any questions. Take your time and enjoy!"*

### QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ANSWER:

- ✓ Property details (beds, baths, sq ft, year built)
- ✓ Recent upgrades or improvements you've made
- ✓ Property taxes, HOA fees if applicable
- ✓ Neighborhood amenities, schools, shopping
- ✓ What you love about living here
- ✓ Utility costs (if you're comfortable sharing)

### QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD NOT ANSWER:

- ✗ Why you're selling (especially if urgent)
- ✗ Your lowest acceptable price
- ✗ When you're moving or where you're going
- ✗ Problems with the house or neighbors
- ✗ Previous offers you've received
- ✗ Your personal/family situation
- ✗ How desperate you are to sell

### IF ASKED UNCOMFORTABLE QUESTIONS:

*"I'd prefer to focus on the house itself. If you're seriously interested, we can discuss those details through our attorneys." OR "That's something better discussed in writing once we have an offer on the table."*

# Visitor Sign-In Sheet

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Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Open House Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

#	Name	Phone	Email	Agent	Agent Co.	Time
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						

**IMPORTANT:** Every visitor must sign in before entering. No exceptions. This protects you and helps with follow-up. If someone refuses to sign in, politely decline to show them the property.

## Visitor Feedback Card

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Print multiple copies of this feedback card and leave them with pens throughout the house (kitchen counter, master bedroom). Make it easy for buyers to leave honest feedback – this is valuable data for improving your presentation.

### We'd Love Your Honest Feedback!

Your input helps us present our home better – thank you!

**1. What was your FIRST IMPRESSION when you walked in?**

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**2. What did you LIKE MOST about the property?**

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**3. What CONCERNS or issues did you notice?**

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**4. How does this property compare to others you've seen?**

Better than most                       About the same                       Not as good

**5. Is the ASKING PRICE in line with the value?**

Yes, fair price                       Too high                       Good value

**6. Would you like to schedule a private showing?**

Yes, very interested                       Maybe                       No, not interested

**7. Any additional comments or suggestions?**

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**OPTIONAL – If you'd like us to follow up:**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_                      Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts!*

## After the Open House: Security Check

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### DO THIS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE LAST VISITOR LEAVES

- Do complete walkthrough of entire property
- Check every room – including closets, bathrooms, basement, attic
- Verify all windows are locked (even ones not accessed during event)
- Check all doors are locked (thieves sometimes unlock doors to return later)
- Count valuable items to ensure nothing is missing
- Look for anything that seems out of place or moved
- Check that closets marked “Private” are still locked
- Review security camera footage if you have it

### Cleanup

- Remove ALL directional signs within 1 hour of closing
- Collect all sign-in sheets and feedback cards
- Count remaining property info sheets (know how many people took them)
- Text/call your location-sharing friend that you're safe

### Follow-Up (Within 24–48 Hours)

- Review sign-in sheets – categorize visitors by interest level
- Read all feedback cards – look for patterns in comments
- Text/email highly interested visitors thanking them
- Ask if they'd like to schedule a private showing
- Follow up with any agents who brought clients
- Make note of common concerns or questions for next open house
- Address any issues that came up repeatedly
- Update online listings if needed based on feedback
- Post photos from open house on social media
- Thank neighbors who attended or helped spread the word
- Schedule next open house if this one was successful

## Pro Tips

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### **Install Security Cameras**

Doorbell camera and/or indoor cameras can deter theft and provide evidence if needed. Make them visible.

### **Hire Professional Stager**

If budget allows, a professional can make your home show 10x better. Worth the investment.

### **Provide Refreshments**

Light snacks and bottled water can create a welcoming atmosphere. Keep it simple – nothing messy.

### **Create Virtual Tour**

Link to virtual tour on property sheets helps buyers remember your home later.

### **Offer Raffle Prize**

Small raffle prize for sign-ins can increase traffic. Local restaurant gift card works well.

### **Printed Property Packets**

Professional folders with property details, disclosures, neighborhood info look impressive.

### **Hire Security**

For high-value properties, consider hiring an off-duty police officer for added security and presence.

### **Create Video Walkthrough**

Post on YouTube and share the link. Helps those who can't attend in person.

## Final Reminders

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- An open house is when your home is MOST vulnerable – take security seriously
  - Better to over-prepare than under-prepare – err on the side of caution
  - If you feel unsafe at ANY point, end the open house early. Your safety > a sale
  - Most people are honest, but it only takes one bad actor to create a problem
  - Document everything: take photos before/after, keep detailed sign-in sheets
  - Consider homeowner's insurance that covers theft during showings
  - Report any suspicious activity or theft to police immediately
  - Share this checklist with your helper so you're both on the same page
  - If something goes missing, check your security footage and contact everyone who signed in
  - Learn from each open house and improve your security for the next one

### **Need Help With Your Open House?**

Call or text Matt Warbet for a free, no-pressure consultation.

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