

Your REALTOR:



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Real Estate

Update™

## What Sellers Should Know About Pets and Showings

Buyers and their agents need to feel welcome to look at the property at their leisure without danger or distractions. So while you adore your sweet-tempered pit bull rescue, he could turn territorial, barking and growling at potential homebuyers. And it could cost you the opportunity to sell your home.

Think of buyers as guests and work to make them feel comfortable as they consider your home for purchase. If you have a protective dog or one that isn't well-trained, drop her off at doggie day care when you know your home is going to be shown. Or call a pet sitter on call who can take your pet for a long walk while your home is being shown.

If you must leave the dog at home, don't expect real estate professionals to handle your dog. They are not dog trainers and should not be expected to risk a dog bite to show your home to buyers. This is where crate-training can be a huge advantage. At least your dog is secured and more inclined to relax while your home is being shown.

What you should not do is leave your dog loose in the backyard. Not only does the buyer not have access to part of the property, but your dog could bark so much that the din drives the buyer out of the house. Also, don't leave your dog at the neighbor's. It's just as bad if the buyer believes a noisy dog lives next door.

Housecats can also repel buyers. Most homes aren't designed with a convenient place for the litter box, so cat owners do the best they can. Owners get used to the smells of catboxes and fishy foods, which could be offensive to buyers who don't have cats.

While buyers aren't afraid of being cat-attacked, cats can still be startling -- they appear silently without warning and they jump on furniture and counters. And if you've taught your cat to jump on your shoulders, you can imagine what could happen to an unsuspecting buyer.

Exotic pets can be showing-stoppers, too. Birds are gorgeous, but a puffed-up screeching cockatoo can be intimidating and dangerous. Imagine a buyer bringing small children who can't resist sticking their fingers in the cage and quickly get rewarded with a nasty bite from a very strong beak.

When you're selling a home, keep in mind that the first two weeks on the market are crucial. That's the time you want your home to be pristine and move-in ready. You don't want any noise, smells or stains that could put buyers off.

Sell your home faster and for more money by making your home as inviting and accessible as possible, so that buyers have no barriers to overcome. Accessibility to your home is just as important as price, condition and location.

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