

HOME BUYERS CHECKLIST

agency **HQ**



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Buying a new house is one of the most (if not the biggest) investment that a person can make in their life. This can be extremely stressful. We've compiled this checklist for you so that you can be in control every step of the way and feel confident in the process.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION: STEP 1 - Find a real estate agent

Interview a few agents and see if their personality matches your needs/wants. You want to “click”!

Qualifications your real estate agent should have:

- Local market knowledge.
- Good reviews or testimonials.
- Financial Knowledge - they can walk you through the numbers!
- An agent who works full time in the industry and has a track record is ideal.

Great time management and communication skills:

- Did they show up on time & prepared?
- Do they communicate with you in a way that you understand and feel comfortable.

Network connections:

- Effective real estate agents rely on their relationships. Do they work with other agents regularly?
- Share your Housing Goals.

STEP 2 - Know your financials

- Maintain great credit.
- Pay off as much debt as you can before proceeding.
- Your lender will be pulling your credit in the future as a part of the pre-approval process.
- Compile and save any important financial documents.
- At least 2 months worth of pay slips & bank statements.
- At least 2 years of tax returns if self employed.

STEP 3 - Find a lender or a mortgage broker

- Compare different lenders to understand the benefits and advantages of working with each. Something as simple as a lower rate or term can save you thousands of dollars over the life of the loan.
- Make sure to tell **each lender** not to pull your credit until you're fully committed to working with one.
- If your credit isn't where you want it to be, work on creating a plan with your chosen lender.
- Your agent may also be able to help you find a mortgage broker that they have worked with before.

THE FINANCIALS: STEP 4 - Establish a budget

- Saving up 20% of a home's purchase price as a deposit is suggested, but often hard to do in high-priced markets.
- If saving up 20% isn't feasible, work with your lender or broker to create the best plan for your needs.
- Remember that just because you're approved for a certain amount doesn't mean that you have to spend that amount. Work with your lender or broker and agent to establish a price point and monthly payment that you will be comfortable with.

STEP 5 - Get pre-approved for a mortgage

- Ask the lender or broker if you qualify for any special loans.
- **Get Pre-Approved;** this gives you, your agent, and the lender an estimate of how much you can afford based off of your credit score and past financial documents and puts you in a stronger buying position.
- Work with your lender and real estate agent to determine if your file should be underwritten before submitting any offers. This will help to avoid any potential disappointments or delays during the transaction.

FINDING YOUR NEW HOME: STEP 6 - The fun part

- Meet with your chosen real estate agent to discuss your home buying wish list.
- Make sure to include: **Must haves:** bed/bath number, garage, etc. **Nice to haves:** pool, air-con, smart home capabilities, etc. **Things to avoid:** pools, busy streets, etc.
- Bring along your pre-approval and lender contact information so you can discuss budget and show your agent you are in a strong purchasing position.
- Determine different neighborhoods you might want to live in.

STEP 7 - Find the home

- Keep your “Must Haves” Checklist in mind.
- Keep a journal or guide of the different houses you’re interested in.
- Take plenty of pictures to look back at.
- Stay within your price range!
- Provide your agent with ANY feedback regarding the properties that you view.
- Both positive and negative feedback can be very helpful for an agent to find exactly what you want.

STEP 8 - Make an offer

- Work with your agent to establish a strategy to get the most from your offer and have the best chance of it getting accepted.
- Sign the offer and any additional documents!

INSURING YOUR HOME: STEP 9 - Do your due diligence

- Find a reputable and thorough building and pest inspector, if you need suggestions ask your agent.
- A good home inspector will help to ensure that you don’t end up in a “money pit,” for example, a property with termite, structural or moisture issues.
- An inspector will report any defects found with the home that you can ask the seller to rectify during negotiations.
- If defect work is needed to be done on the property, strategize with your agent to submit a request for repairs or reduction of the price.
- Review disclosures and paperwork with your agent.
- If you will be making any additions or construction to the property, such as adding a pool or a granny flat, check with the local council to ensure zoning allows for those upgrades.
- Review title report with the agent to ensure that there are no unknown easements or covenants on the property.

STEP 10 - Arrange for homeowner's insurance

- Search for a homeowner’s insurance policy with great coverage at a reasonable cost. Ask your lender for suggestions if necessary. This needs to be taken out within 24 hours of the Contract date.
- Some lenders require a year’s worth of homeowner’s insurance up front before approving a mortgage.

THE HOME STRETCH: STEP 11 - Finalizing financing with your lender

- The lender will order an appraisal on the home to verify that the market value supports the purchase price.
- Double check that your interest rates and mortgage payments are what you agreed upon. Sign the mortgage offer documents.

STEP 12 - Pre-settlement inspection

- Go through the house with your agent to double check everything you agreed upon in your offer is present. Ensure that any repairs that were agreed upon in the transaction were completed.
- If repairs are difficult to visually inspect, call back your home inspector or your solicitor to ensure the repairs were completed correctly.
- Turn on all lights and appliances to make sure that they still are in good working order.

STEP 13 - Closing the deal

Bring everything you might need:

- Form of identification.
- Any additional payments you may need that your solicitor has informed you of.

STEP 14 - Move in!

- After settlement, collect your keys and remotes from the selling agent.
- **Celebrate!** You now own your new home!



Have any questions? Let's chat!

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