

Erin Home Preparation Guide

A practical, evergreen checklist for preparing an Erin village, rural, acreage, or country home before photos, showings, buyer due diligence, and offer negotiations.

Repairs

Staging

Curb Appeal

Documents

Rural Systems

Use this before spending money.

The purpose of preparation is not to make every home perfect. The purpose is to remove avoidable buyer objections, make photography stronger, explain property systems clearly, and decide which tasks protect value for your specific Erin property.

What is inside

- A spend-or-skip filter for repairs and updates.
- Interior, curb appeal, document, rural system, photo-day, and showing checklists.
- Extra guidance for Erin village, Hillsburgh, acreage, septic-and-well, and estate-style homes.
- A 30-day preparation planner that can be compressed or expanded around your launch date.

Best used with a property-specific review

Every Erin home has a different buyer pool. A tidy village home, a country property with outbuildings, a downsizing bungalow, and a septic-and-well acreage should not be prepared in exactly the same way.

Kevin Flaherty, Realtor since 1988 | Flaherty.ca

Book a preparation review: flaherty.ca/homeeval | flaherty.ca/kevinscalendar | flaherty.ca/kevinscalendar-zoom

How to use this guide

Start with the strategy page, then move room by room. Put a check beside tasks that apply to your home and circle anything that needs Kevin to review before you spend money. This guide is evergreen and intentionally avoids dated market statistics. When your launch timing is being planned, pair this checklist with a current home evaluation and current Erin market context.

Core rule

Do not prepare for a generic buyer. Prepare for the likely buyer pool for your specific Erin property: village, Hillsburgh, rural road, acreage, hobby farm, estate, downsizing property, or septic-and-well home.

Preparation priorities at a glance

1. Safety and function

Fix issues that make the home feel risky: leaks, trip hazards, unsafe steps, missing handrails, non-working fixtures, and visible mechanical concerns.

2. Buyer confidence

Gather records, warranties, service history, surveys where available, permits, septic and well information, utility notes, and clear inclusions.

3. Photography impact

Declutter, clean windows, replace bulbs, make beds, simplify furniture, clear counters, define room use, and improve curb appeal.

4. Showing experience

Plan pets, odours, lights, access, snow or mud, driveway parking, keys, alarm notes, and quick-reset routines.

5. Rural clarity

For country properties, make land, systems, outbuildings, laneways, water, septic, heating, fuel, drainage, and maintenance easy to understand.

The spend-or-skip filter

- Does this task remove a real buyer objection?
- Will it improve the first photo or first showing impression?
- Will buyers expect this feature to work safely?
- Will the task help explain a rural system, outbuilding, or land feature?
- Can the task be completed before launch without delaying better timing?
- Would buyers prefer to choose the finish themselves?
- Can the issue be disclosed, priced, or explained instead of repaired?

Erin property-type preparation matrix

Village or subdivision home

Make rooms feel open, clean, bright, and easy to compare against nearby options. Prioritize curb appeal, storage, kitchen and bath cleanliness, and quick showing access.

Rural or acreage home

Explain land, lane, drainage, services, heating, internet, outbuildings, water, septic, parking, seasonal access, and maintenance so buyers do not feel they are guessing.

Hillsburgh, Orton, or hamlet property

Clarify lifestyle benefits, commute routes, service access, and any rural-residential details that affect buyer confidence.

Estate or downsizing sale

Separate sentimental contents from sale presentation, define what stays, gather documents, and use a calm plan that reduces family stress.

Hobby farm or outbuilding property

Treat barns, shops, paddocks, gates, fencing, water access, and equipment areas as part of the presentation, not as background clutter.

Interior preparation checklist

Main living areas

- Remove excess furniture so buyers can walk easily through each room.
- Open window coverings and clean interior glass to improve light.
- Patch visible nail holes, scuffs, and minor wall damage where practical.
- Use neutral decor so architectural features, not belongings, stand out.
- Hide cords, remotes, toys, personal paperwork, and everyday clutter.
- Create a clear purpose for flexible rooms, dens, lofts, and basement areas.
- Dust baseboards, trim, ceiling fans, vents, ledges, and light fixtures.
- Remove personal photos and highly specific collections before photos.

Kitchen and dining

- Clear counters except a few simple display items.
- Clean appliance fronts, sink, faucet, backsplash, range hood, and cabinet faces.
- Organize cupboards and pantry so storage looks adequate.
- Remove magnets, papers, photos, and calendars from the fridge.
- Repair loose handles, sticky drawers, dripping faucets, and burned-out bulbs.
- Set the dining area simply so the room feels usable, not like storage.
- Remove extra small appliances before photography.
- Empty garbage, recycling, and compost before every showing.

Private-room and utility checklist

Bedrooms, bathrooms, closets

- Use clean bedding, simple pillows, and neutral linens.
- Remove oversized furniture that makes bedrooms look smaller.
- Reduce closet contents so storage does not look cramped.
- Clear bathroom counters of daily products and medications.
- Replace tired towels, bath mats, shower curtains, and worn toilet seats if needed.
- Clean grout, mirrors, glass, exhaust fans, tubs, and shower tracks.
- Check that all bathroom fixtures work and drain properly.
- Close toilet lids and remove personal items before photos and showings.

Basement, mechanicals, storage

- Clear pathways to furnace, electrical panel, water heater, sump, and shutoffs.
- Improve lighting in storage and mechanical spaces.
- Organize boxes neatly and remove items that suggest poor storage capacity.
- Clean basement floors, stairs, laundry areas, and utility sinks.
- Label rented equipment and gather rental agreements.
- Document furnace, air conditioning, water heater, and major service history.
- Remove moisture-damaged materials and investigate active concerns before listing.
- Make laundry and storage areas feel orderly, not overloaded.

Exterior and curb appeal checklist

Front approach and village appeal

- Clean or paint the front door where needed.
- Make house numbers visible from the street.
- Sweep porches, steps, walkways, and garage entries.
- Repair unsafe steps, loose railings, and obvious trip hazards.
- Trim shrubs away from windows, siding, and walkways.
- Tidy gardens, seasonal planters, lawn edges, and driveway borders.
- Remove garbage bins, tools, toys, and seasonal clutter from photo areas.
- Turn on exterior lights for late-day showings.

Backyard, garage, and outdoor living

- Stage patios, decks, firepit areas, and porches as usable spaces.
- Clean patio furniture, barbecue areas, railings, and deck surfaces.
- Sweep garages and show either parking, storage, or workshop function clearly.
- Repair gates, loose boards, peeling paint, and visible exterior defects where practical.
- Clear pet waste, yard debris, and unused materials before photos.
- Organize sheds and exterior storage so they feel like assets.
- Check downspouts, grading, and drainage areas for obvious concerns.
- Clarify parking and turning space for buyer visits.

Rural and acreage preparation

Rural Erin properties often need a second layer of preparation. Buyers are not only evaluating the house; they are evaluating access, services, land use, maintenance, and the confidence they need to complete due diligence.

- Confirm laneway access is safe, clear, and easy to describe.
- Sweep and brighten barns, shops, garages, sheds, and utility buildings.
- Separate useful equipment storage from clutter that distracts buyers.
- Gather septic pump-out records, permits or drawings where available, and service notes.
- Gather well record information, water-treatment notes, water test details, and filter schedules.
- Organize propane, oil, generator, electrical, internet, and heating-service information.
- Prepare notes on fencing, paddocks, gardens, trails, gates, drainage, and seasonal access.
- Make sure exterior lighting helps buyers understand key areas safely.

Document file checklist

Documents reduce uncertainty. You do not need every item below, but the more organized your file is, the less pressure you will feel when buyers, inspectors, lenders, insurers, or lawyers ask questions.

Ownership, improvements, and services

Core property file

- Deed or ownership information.
- Survey, site plan, or sketch if available.
- Recent property tax bill.
- Renovation contracts, permit records, and warranties.
- Appliance manuals and transferable warranties.
- Invoices for roof, windows, major systems, or structural work.
- Rental-equipment contracts and buyout information.
- Inclusions and exclusions list for chattels, fixtures, equipment, and outdoor items.

Rural, well, septic, and utility file

- Septic pump-out invoices and system location notes.
- Well record, water-treatment notes, and test information where available.
- Propane, oil, wood, generator, or heating-service notes.
- Hydro, internet, alarm, water-softener, and equipment-rental details.
- Outbuilding notes, barn/shop service details, and door-opener information.
- Driveway, lane, shared access, or private-road notes where applicable.
- Any inspection reports already completed.
- Utility averages or service contacts if available and appropriate.

Photography day reset

- Open blinds and curtains.
- Turn on all lights and replace mismatched or burned-out bulbs.
- Clear counters, bedside tables, desks, and bathroom surfaces.
- Make beds and smooth linens.
- Hide garbage bins, laundry, pet bowls, litter boxes, cords, and daily clutter.
- Move vehicles from the driveway and garage-photo areas.
- Close toilet lids and shower doors.
- Remove fridge magnets and personal notes.
- Sweep porch, deck, walkways, garage, and patio.
- Check every room from the doorway before the photographer starts.

Showing-ready routine

Once the listing is active, the goal is a repeatable routine that keeps the home clean without exhausting the household. Good media and a Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showing can help buyers understand the property before they ask to walk through it, but the in-person visit still needs to feel calm and cared for.

Daily and pre-showing checklist

Inside reset

- Make beds.
- Clear kitchen and bathroom counters.
- Empty visible garbage.
- Open blinds and turn on lights.
- Secure valuables, medication, documents, and personal information.
- Remove pets where practical and clean pet areas.
- Wipe sinks, mirrors, and appliance fronts.
- Control odours with cleaning, ventilation, and neutral air rather than heavy scents.

Access and exterior reset

- Unlock or prepare approved access points.
- Sweep entry areas if needed.
- Tidy outdoor furniture and pathways.
- Confirm driveway and parking access.
- Leave mechanical rooms and outbuildings accessible when they are part of the showing.
- Keep the home at a comfortable temperature.
- Follow any rural-property access notes for mud, snow, gates, or animals.
- Use showing feedback to adjust presentation, access, price, or information.

What Kevin reviews before launch

- Which preparation tasks are essential and which are optional.
- Whether repairs, disclosure, pricing, or buyer education is the better strategy.
- How the property should be positioned against likely Erin buyer expectations.
- What the dedicated marketing team needs for photos, captions, and Online Showing explanation.
- Which documents should be available before offers begin.
- How to reduce disruption while still allowing qualified buyers to evaluate the home.

30-day preparation planner

Use this timeline as a flexible framework. Some homes need less time; estate, downsizing, acreage, hobby farm, septic-and-well, and heavily lived-in homes may need more. The important part is sequencing: strategy first, then repairs and documentation, then staging and media.

Days 1-5	Book the preparation review, walk the property, create the repair list, gather documents, order supplies, and decide what to donate, store, or remove.
Days 6-10	Declutter kitchen, bathrooms, bedrooms, closets, storage, basement, garage, and visible outdoor areas. Separate move preparation from sale preparation.
Days 11-15	Complete essential repairs, paint touch-ups, lighting improvements, door and hardware fixes, safety items, and maintenance tasks that support buyer confidence.
Days 16-20	Deep clean, manage windows and floors, freshen bathrooms, organize utility spaces, prepare rural-service records, and tidy outbuildings or acreage features.
Days 21-25	Stage priority rooms, define flexible spaces, finalize curb appeal, prepare pets and access routines, and review the property from the buyer viewpoint.
Days 26-30	Complete photo-day reset, confirm documents, prepare showing instructions, review marketing details, and launch only when the home can support the price story.

Next step

Before you spend heavily on preparation, ask for a property-specific plan. Kevin Flaherty and the Flaherty.ca Home Selling System Team can help decide what to fix, what to clean, what to stage, what to document, and what to explain through the listing and Online Showing.

Start Your Home Evaluation: flaherty.ca/homeeval

Book a Call: flaherty.ca/kevinscalendar | Book a Zoom: flaherty.ca/kevinscalendar-zoom