

What Scares Buyers Away in Mount Forest

The #1 thing that scares buyers away is deferred maintenance - followed closely by poor photography, limited online exposure, and restrictive showing access. Buyers are cautious: when they see one neglected detail, they assume there are many hidden, expensive problems. This guide walks you through every red flag that makes buyers mentally check out, and exactly how to remove it before you list.

How to use this guide: Work through each section and check off every box. Call Kevin Flaherty at 226-270-6433 with any questions, or book a free home evaluation at flaherty.ca/homeeval.

1. Exterior Red Flags (Curb Appeal)

Buyers decide how they feel about your home before they ever step inside. If the outside looks neglected, they assume the inside is too.

- ☐ Mow, trim, and edge the lawn; remove weeds from beds and walkways
- ☐ Repair or repaint a chipped, faded, or peeling front door
- ☐ Clean or replace sagging eavestroughs and downspouts
- ☐ Power-wash siding, walkways, and the driveway
- ☐ Fix missing or curling roof shingles before listing
- ☐ Clear the driveway and front of personal clutter and bins
- ☐ Add fresh mulch and a few seasonal plants for colour
- ☐ Ensure house numbers are visible and the porch light works
- ☐ Tidy outbuildings, sheds, decks, and fencing (rural buyers look closely)
- ☐ Check grading so water drains away from the foundation

2. Interior Red Flags (Deferred Maintenance)

A collection of small, neglected items adds up to a big red flag. Buyers fear hidden, expensive problems behind every visible one.

- ☐ Patch and paint wall cracks, nail holes, and scuffs
- ☐ Repair chipped baseboards, trim, and door frames
- ☐ Replace missing or mismatched light switch and outlet covers
- ☐ Fix sticking doors, broken drawers, and loose handles
- ☐ Repair or replace cracked or rotting bathroom tile and grout
- ☐ Address any water stains on ceilings (and fix the source)
- ☐ Replace burnt-out lightbulbs; match colour temperature
- ☐ Touch up or redo sloppy DIY paint and renovation work
- ☐ Ensure all faucets, toilets, and fixtures work without leaks
- ☐ Confirm HVAC, plumbing, and electrical are in good order

3. Odor & Cleanliness Red Flags

Smell is emotional. A bad odor can make a buyer rush out the door, and heavy air fresheners only make them suspicious of what you are hiding.

- ☐ Eliminate (do not mask) cigarette and smoke odors
- ☐ Professionally clean or replace carpets with pet odors
- ☐ Treat and remove any musty or damp basement smells
- ☐ Deep-clean kitchens: appliances, sinks, backsplash, and floors
- ☐ Deep-clean bathrooms: tubs, tile, grout, and exhaust fans
- ☐ Wash windows inside and out to maximize natural light
- ☐ Avoid strong air fresheners, incense, and plug-ins
- ☐ Empty and clean litter boxes; relocate pet items during showings
- ☐ Take out garbage and recycling before every showing
- ☐ Dust, vacuum, and wipe all surfaces until they shine

4. Photography & Marketing Mistakes

Your online listing is your real first showing. Poor photos send buyers scrolling past and invite lower offers.

- ☐ Insist on professional photography (never cell-phone photos)
- ☐ Avoid dark, blurry, crooked, or cluttered images
- ☐ Stage and declutter each room before photos are taken
- ☐ Provide accurate floor plans with room measurements
- ☐ Avoid misleading wide-angle shots that oversell room size
- ☐ Confirm your listing has plenty of high-quality photos
- ☐ Use a Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showing for full transparency
- ☐ Confirm wide syndication beyond the local MLS
- ☐ Write a complete, accurate, benefit-focused listing description
- ☐ Remove personal photos and items before any media is shot

5. Showing Access Issues

The more restrictions you place on showings, the fewer buyers you get. If a buyer cannot get in easily, they simply move on.

- ☐ Offer wide, flexible showing windows (including evenings/weekends)
- ☐ Avoid requiring long advance notice for showings
- ☐ Use a lockbox to make access easy for buyer agents
- ☐ Leave the home during showings so buyers feel comfortable
- ☐ Keep the home show-ready so last-minute requests can be accepted
- ☐ Secure pets or remove them during showings
- ☐ Ensure all lights are on and blinds open before buyers arrive
- ☐ Do not limit buyers to open-house-only viewings
- ☐ Respond quickly to showing requests and offers
- ☐ Keep valuables and medications secured and out of sight

6. Quick-Fix Checklist (Final 48 Hours)

A final pass before each showing keeps your home presenting at its very best.

- ☐ Open every blind and turn on every light
- ☐ Set a comfortable, neutral temperature
- ☐ Clear all countertops and flat surfaces
- ☐ Make all beds and tidy every room
- ☐ Empty trash and run a quick vacuum
- ☐ Wipe down kitchen and bathroom surfaces
- ☐ Hide cords, chargers, and small clutter
- ☐ Do a quick odor check at the front door
- ☐ Lock away valuables and personal documents
- ☐ Confirm the lockbox and entry are working

Ready to Sell Without the Red Flags?

Kevin Flaherty brings 38 years of experience and over \$500M in real estate sold across south-central Ontario. Get a clear, no-pressure plan to present your Mount Forest home flawlessly.

Call Kevin: 226-270-6433 | flaherty.ca/homeeval