



Sell your
home with us.

ZOOCASA

Intelligent Real Estate

1-844-683-4663

zoocasa.com

Making the decision to sell your home may feel a bit daunting at first, but at Zoocasa, we understand the complexities and emotions that come with putting a property up for sale.

- **What to price your home at?**
- **How to attract the right buyers?**
- **How to prepare the property for the listing?**

These questions and much more are addressed within this seller's guide to assist you along your journey – and at any time, the team at Zoocasa is here to support you!

Zoocasa Realty Inc.

Contact: 1-844-683-4663

www.zoocasa.com

Find your home with us.

ZOOCASA

SELLERS GUIDE



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Selling With Zoocasa: Intelligent Real Estate

At Zoocasa, our agents are trusted advisors who use technology to set a new standard for full-service real estate. From beginning to end, we're here to empower our clients to find their ideal home, on their terms, and to make their move with confidence.

As a team, we give your home the attention it deserves, streamlining the selling process to ensure your home sells quickly for the best price possible. It all starts here. This Seller's Guide is your in-depth look at the entire process.

In the past five years we have helped **over 3,500 families** and clients buy or sell their home, moving **more than \$1.4 billion** in property value. Let our team of experts help make your home sale a success.

LET US SELL YOUR HOME FASTER FOR A BETTER PRICE

We sell homes six days faster on average, for more money, based on marketing innovation and our owned digital channels to reach more qualified buyers. more qualified buyers.

ZOOCASA	SOLD IN: 7* Days	SOLD FOR: 19%* ↑ Over Ask
Industry	SOLD IN: 13 Days	SOLD FOR: 6% ↑ Over Ask

* Total Zoocasa brokerage status versus TRREB as of May 2021 rolling average

SELLING WITH A ZOOCASA AGENT

At Zoocasa, our agents are trusted advisors who use technology to set a new standard for full-service real estate. From beginning to end, we're here to empower our clients to sell their home, on their terms, and to make their move with confidence.

FLEXIBLE PROCESS

You call the shots! Your Zoocasa agent will communicate with you using the method and frequency you prefer. From preparing to listing to closing, you'll know the status every step of the way to your successful sale.

OUR OWN DIGITAL AUDIENCE

Zoocasa.com is #1 ranked on Google for buyers searching for "Toronto Houses for Sale", "Sold House Prices", "Ontario Real Estate", and more. Every month, we get more than 1 million visits to zoocasa.com from buyers and sellers planning their next real estate move – plus more than 120,000+ subscribe to our weekly real estate newsletter. Get your home in front of the right buyer as one of our featured properties by listing with Zoocasa.

SUPPORT FROM CLOSING AND BEYOND

Your Zoocasa agent and the HQ team will handle all the details, negotiate in your best interest, and will serve as your agent both now and into the future. If you ever need help, want insight on the market, or simply need advice, we're here.

WE GET RESULTS

Our agents live and work in your community. Backed by technology, data and a nationally recognized support team; Zoocasa will make the difference in selling your home easier, faster and with more confidence. We'll match you with a local agent who specializes in homes just like yours. This agent will develop your personalized sales strategy based on market research and your own unique property.

Your Ideal Selling Timeline

Here, we have outlined what the home selling process looks like from start to finish.

We'll go through each step in detail and how your Zoocasa agent will work with you along your journey so you know exactly what to expect.

WORKING WITH AN AGENT

Find a reputable market expert you can trust



GETTING YOUR HOME MARKET READY

Determine your sales strategy and get your home looking its best



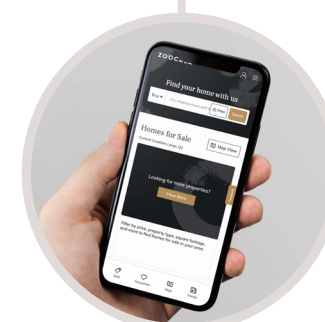
PREPARING FOR CLOSING

Work with your legal team and lenders to set you up for success



DECIDING YOUR NEXT MOVE

Determine when to sell your next home and what mortgage option will be best for you



LISTING YOUR HOME

Prepare for showings and review your offers



CLOSING DAY!

Finalize the sale, funds, and title transfer



YOUR TIMELINE FOR SELLING

- Selecting Your Agent
- Deciding Your Next Move
- Getting Your Home Market Ready
- Listing Your Home
- Preparing For Closing



STEP ONE

Selecting Your Agent

How Do You Find the Right Agent?

Every city is filled with thousands of agents, but not all are equal. We believe it is important to choose an agent that you feel confident with.

Before you commit to working with an agent, make sure you have a good understanding of the knowledge and experience they offer. Here are some questions we'd recommend asking them.

QUESTIONS TO ASK A PROSPECTIVE AGENT

1

How well do you know this area?

Real estate is a local business, so work with someone who knows the trends, schools, parks, and zoning of that neighbourhood.

2

How much of your business comes from referrals?

Satisfied homebuyers often recommend their agent, so this is a measure of service quality.

3

Are you a full-time agent in the business?

A full-time agent will have better knowledge of market trends and more negotiation experience.

4

How many homes have you helped sell or purchase in the past year?

A track record of success is good news for your future purchase.

Why Work With Us?

Zoocasa agents are experienced, full-time professionals, and our results show it.

Our agents are up-to-date on market trends and data from local real estate boards. Zoocasa is regularly cited and featured in major Canadian news and industry media for our market expertise; you'll find us in The Globe and Mail, BNN Bloomberg, and the Toronto Star to name a few!

We'll provide you with home search tools, knowledge on market activity, plus insights, trends, and forecasts to help you make the right sales decisions.

When you work with Zoocasa, we'll make sure you have answers to your most pressing questions, like:

- How much is my home worth?
- What can I do to increase the value of my home?
- What sales strategy will get me the best results in this market?
- How can I get the best offer given my unique circumstances?

Your agent will work with you through every step of the process from listing to negotiating offers for a successful closing.

We'll bring the market expertise and collaborate with you from first click to closing day. You'll always be a step ahead when you choose to sell your home with us.



YOUR TIMELINE FOR SELLING

- Selecting Your Agent
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STEP TWO

Deciding Your Next Move

Should You Buy Or Sell First?

If you've decided it's time to move, the first questions our clients usually have when it comes to selling their home is whether or not they should buy their new home or sell first.

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to this – it truly depends on your unique situation. To help get you thinking about the right option for you, here are some instances where it might be best to buy or sell first:

REASONS TO BUY FIRST

1

Your Current Home Will Sell Quickly

If you live in a house you know will sell easily—and there's nothing that may scare away potential buyers, or you're selling in a hot sellers' market—it may be best to buy first. Once you find the home you want, you should be able to list and sell quickly, and might even be able to encourage a closing date on the home you are selling that matches up exactly with your preferred move to your new home.

2

You Can Afford To Carry Two Properties

If you can use other savings or the equity in your current home as a deposit or down payment for your new home, you are more flexible to potentially buy first. This will also give you the time to find the exact new home you want.

3

You're Looking For A Unique Property

If you have your heart set on something very specific or want unique features in your new home, you should buy that home when you find it. That said, if you're worried about selling your home, you could consider selling first and purchasing a home that you can renovate to match your requirements.

REASONS TO SELL FIRST

1

Your On A Tight Budget

It's normal to need the equity from your current home to fund the purchase of your next home. If you require the sale proceeds as a down payment, selling should come first.

2

You're unsure how much money you have to buy your next home

If the market is volatile and you don't know within a reasonable margin how much your current home will sell for, you should sell first. That way, you know your maximum price for your next home and can work with your buying agent accordingly.

3

You're selling in a buyers' market, and buying in a sellers' market

This one is more location-specific, but if you're selling in a market that isn't attracting buyers, you should sell first. Whichever is going to be more difficult in the current market—selling or buying—should be the priority. Looking at comparable sold properties in your area will help determine the right approach here for you.

4

You Own A Unique Property

If there's something extremely unique about your home, it's best to sell it first. Unloading an unusual property can be difficult and can take longer than expected. Sell it before you buy so you aren't left carrying two properties, or in a position where you are forced to reduce the price drastically in order to sell quickly and meet your closing date.

Remember: The right answer to this question comes down to your unique situation. We always recommend that you speak with your real estate agent to understand which option would work best for your needs before moving forward with listing your home.



Understanding Mortgage Options When Selling

Once you've determined your next move - whether you will be buying a new home after you sell your current home, or will be finding other living accommodations - you'll want to understand your financing options before listing your home for sale.

When selling your home before your term is complete, you may have three options for refinancing: break your mortgage, port your mortgage, or have your mortgage assumed. You also may need to explore bridge financing should you have a gap between the closing date of the home you're buying and home you're selling.

If your home has a closed-term mortgage, it's not unusual that you will be selling your home before your mortgage term is up. Personal circumstances like a new job or having your first child can require you to make a change. In this instance, you will need to refinance.

	Break	Port	Assume
What Is It?	Canceling your mortgage agreement	Taking your mortgage* with you—with the same rates and terms—to a new property	When someone buys your current home, transferring your mortgage agreement to them
When Should You Do It?	You're not buying another home, OR you can't time the buy and sell in order to port, OR today's rates are significantly lower than your current mortgage rate \$18,000.00	You're buying a new home and selling your current home simultaneously and your existing mortgage is favourable	Rates today are higher than your existing rate, you're not buying a new home and the new buyer has agreed to assume your mortgage
What's The Downside?	You'll likely have to pay a significant prepayment penalty AND/OR if today's rates are higher than your current rate, you lose out on monthly savings.	You have to time your buy and sell to occur in conjunction with one another AND some variable rate mortgages can't be ported	New homebuyers lose out on mortgage flexibility and may need to be convinced

* If you'd like to port your existing mortgage to another property because of its favourable rate, but need a larger mortgage to cover your new purchase, you may have the opportunity to blend and extend with your lender. This will allow you to borrow the outstanding amount at a blended rate between what's on your original mortgage and the rates currently available.



Bridge Financing

When selling your home and buying another, there are situations when your purchase closing date is before your selling closing date, meaning you may not have available equity for your down payment. During this period of time, you'll have two mortgages—your outgoing mortgage and your new mortgage—which will require bridge financing.

Also called a bridge loan, bridge financing is to help people who need to borrow to pay their down payment, and make it through the interim double mortgage period between two homes. The large financial institutions—TD, Scotiabank, RBC, BMO, and CIBC—all offer bridge financing, whereas smaller lenders may not have the resources. Ask your mortgage broker to best understand your options.

HOW MUCH BRIDGE FINANCING CAN I BORROW?

Depending on your equity and personal needs, lenders are typically comfortable with lending up to \$200,000 for 30 days, although some lenders will lend for up to four months. You can speak with your lender if you need more or have special requests and they'll evaluate your situation.

HOW DO LENDERS CALCULATE BRIDGE FINANCING?

Bridge financing is largely dependent on the equity in the house you're selling. If you have \$150,000 of equity in your current home, lenders will use that number as a starting point to calculate your eligible amount.

In determining the maximum bridge loan you can qualify for, they will typically deduct up to 7% from your home equity amount: 5% for your real estate agent commissions on your home purchase and home sale, and up to 2% for other expenses.

ARE THERE ANY FEES?

Bridge loans are subject to interest, like any type of credit. The interest rate will be higher than your mortgage rate—typically up to Prime + 3%. The loan is for a short period of time, until you can repay the loan using equity from your previous home. There are also administration fees, typically around \$500.

HOW MUCH BRIDGE FINANCING DO I NEED?

Because bridge financing is used to pay your down payment, an easy way to determine the amount of bridge financing you need is to subtract your deposit from your down payment. If you need a down payment of \$120,000 and you've put a deposit down of \$20,000, you need \$100,000. There may be other costs you need to cover beyond your down payment, so speaking to your lender is your best course of action.



YOUR TIMELINE FOR SELLING

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STEP THREE

Getting Your Home Market Ready

Staging Your Home

Staging is the de-cluttering and de-personalization of your home, with the goal of making the space look as magazine-ready as possible. Staged homes generally sell faster and for more money, as it is easier for buyers to imagine themselves living in the home instead of viewing it as someone else's. This can make it a worthwhile investment when selling your home.

Staging can have different levels, and your listing agent would be best able to advise you what would garner the largest return on investment in your market. Staging can include:

- A deep clean and a de-clutter
- Completing minor repair work, like repainting or landscaping
- Moving around furniture to showcase the home best in showings
- Bringing in new furniture and accessories designed to make your home more appealing to buyers



CAN I STAGE MY HOME MYSELF?

Depending on the level of staging desired, it is generally an activity in the home selling process that's best left to the professionals. Not only do they have the experience to stage your home in the way to get the best results, but it's much easier having the stress of moving in new furniture and coordinating decor changes handled by someone else.

However, your Zoocasa agent might advise you that it's possible for you to do it yourself based on what will be required to make your home look its best – your unique property will require a unique strategy!

CAN I LIVE IN MY HOME WHILE IT IS STAGED?

If you have the flexibility to stay elsewhere, that will be best. This will help keep your home in the best condition possible, and remove the stress of constantly needing to clean up. Showings can be requested with as little as 30 minutes notice, and you'll want to accommodate these requests as much as possible – sometimes, if buyers aren't able to view the home when they want to, they'll pass on making another appointment.

If you're not able to find somewhere else to stay, at a minimum, it's a good idea to find alternative arrangements for your pets during the time that your home is listed – whether that's staying with family or professionally boarded. This will make viewings much more welcoming to buyers who don't like animals or may have allergies, and reduce the risk of any smells lingering.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO STAGE A PROPERTY?

This depends on the property. Factors like whether the stager will be able to use some of your existing furniture, or if the property is vacant will play a part. A lot of preparation goes into pre-staging (like deep cleaning and decluttering) but the actual staging can be done in one or two

HOW PAYS FOR THE STAGING OF MY PROPERTY?

This will depend on the agreement you've come to with your agent. In some cases, the seller will cover the costs of staging. But typically, if you are working with a full-service agent (like those on Zoocasa's team) hiring a professional stager is usually included as part of the commission earned



Investing In Your Home To Prepare For Sale

Before you list your home, you'll probably be thinking about what features you can upgrade to get the best return. After all, when buyers walk through a home, they're not only looking at individual elements, but inherently thinking, "how does this home make me feel?" The cleaner and more polished you can make a home look, the better, however, the details on how much you should plan on upgrading depend on the market.

INFORMING YOUR STRATEGY BASED ON THE MARKET

The type of market you're selling in will play a large part in understanding the return on investment you'll get from any investments to get your home ready for sale. For instance:

In a Buyers' Market

If the supply of homes outstrips demand, buyers will gravitate towards homes in the best working order. In this situation, sellers need to make their homes stand apart from the others for sale in their neighbourhood.

Large expenses are more common in a buyers' market, such as:

- New roof
- New furnace/air conditioner
- New windows
- Remodelled kitchens and bathrooms
- Finished basement

In a Sellers' Market

In a competitive market, sellers should stay away from large renovations, as it's unlikely they'll yield any differential significant return. For example, if all the homes for sale in your area are getting several offers and you decide to replace your windows, the value of those windows may not increase the amount of your offers enough to cover the total cost of the replacement.

Think more about simple cosmetic changes that provide you the largest impact per dollar, such as:

- Instead of a full kitchen remodel, consider replacing the backsplash or painting the cupboards
- Steam-clean all carpeting
- Put up neutral artwork
- Replace any broken tiles and re-tile problem areas
- Install new countertops in kitchens and bathrooms
- Install modern light fixtures
- Replace kitchen and bathroom hardware

Your Zoocasa agent will be able to best advise you on which changes will have the biggest impact in your market, based on the condition your home is currently in. When interviewing potential listing agents, ask them what they would recommend based on their local expertise.

Getting A Pre-List Home Inspection

Completing a Pre-list home inspection is a strategy that's gained traction amongst sellers in recent years. Sellers will pay for an inspection to be done before listing their home, and make the results available to all interested buyers – reducing the need, or desire, for buyers to complete their own inspection as a condition on the sale of the home.

Whether or not you should complete a Pre-list home inspection depends on your sales strategy, which your Zoocasa agent will be able to advise on, but generally:

If you're hoping to receive multiple offers - [YES](#)

Being able to provide a Pre-list home inspection will improve your chances of receiving a firm offer (with no conditions) on offer night because you have provided the buyer with the information they need to feel comfortable enough to do so.

If you're planning to accept offers at any time - [MAYBE](#)

A Pre-list inspection gives the seller important insights into any home maintenance they may want to do prior to listing, and ensure there shouldn't be any surprises during a negotiation process. This can be a worthy investment to help the process move more smoothly.

By not offering the Pre-list inspection, you're telling buyers that you expect them to do their own due diligence and conduct their own home inspection on your property. This means that offers you receive will likely include the condition of home inspection, reducing the likelihood you'll receive a firm offer.



Selecting Your Listing Price

There are two predominant pricing strategies when listing your home: price at market value or price below market value. Here's how to price with each strategy:

PRICING AT MARKET VALUE

Traditionally, homes are listed at their market value, cognizant of current trends in pricing. Your agent will compare the features in your home to similar homes in your area to help determine the market value of your home.

In a sellers' market, demand for your home should be higher than in a buyers' market, but you still want to price on-trend. If you price too high, buyers will be turned off and may look elsewhere, and you don't want to scare buyers off, even in the most promising market.

If your home is the best on the block—a brand-new home after tearing down the old structure, for example—you'll be looking to set a new benchmark for the area, meaning that price is well above the others in the neighbourhood. In this instance, you will want to list at the number you are looking to achieve, since buyers may not come to this number on their own. This is the same if your home is very unique or there are no comparables in the area. In these situations, listing at your target price will usually lead to better outcomes.

PRICING BELOW MARKET VALUE

There are a few circumstances in which you should list your home below market value. First of all, in a buyers' market, you may be eager to sell your home and you may not get interest in the property if the price is not attractive. A lower price can attract buyers that may not consider your home otherwise.

If you need to sell your home quickly for any reason—you're separating from your spouse, you've already bought another home and need to sell, or you're moving a great distance—listing below market will usually spark interest from multiple buyers.

There's also the pricing strategy of listing low in an attempt to drum up multiple offers. If you price your home lower than your expected target in a sellers' market, for example, you could excite buyers, hopefully getting more than one offer, pushing the sale price higher. However, be careful! This can potentially backfire if there's not enough interest, and you need to readjust your price point. Listings that have been re-listed, or on the market for a number of days, can put off buyers who are concerned there's something wrong with the property. Your Zoocasa agent can assist you in determining the optimal price point given market conditions in your area at the time you want to sell.

NUMBERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The actual amount you choose can affect how people view your listing price. Ideally, the listing price is attracting qualified buyers that are in the market for a home

1

Choose a searchable price

Think about when you search for homes online. If you choose a minimum and maximum price, do you choose round numbers or odd numbers? If you keep these round numbers in mind when deciding on a pricing strategy, your home will likely be found more often.

For example, \$499,900 will only be found by people searching for homes up to \$500,000; and pricing at \$510,000 will exclude anyone looking up to \$500,000. Consider choosing an in-between list price, like \$500,000, which would turn up in searches of up to \$500,000, as well as \$500,000–\$600,000.

2

Don't choose a unique asking price

Prices that aren't typical can draw negative attention. If you're thinking between \$500,000 and \$550,000, don't choose \$522,566. It draws attention to itself and to the seller, when the buyer should only be focusing on the home. Busy digits like this can have a negative impact.

Determine How To Market Your Home

The last step before you list your home is deciding on your marketing strategy. Working with the right agent, like our team at Zoocasa, will make this part easy.

At a minimum, agents will typically list your home through the multiple listing service (the MLS), a database which pushes listings onto various popular websites. It's also common to host an open house. Outside of this, your agent might:

- Use printed advertisements in magazines or newspapers
- Send mail flyers in the neighborhood
- Purchase digital advertisements, like Google or Facebook Ads
- Promote your home on social media

To make your home look its best in these advertisements, your agent will also get photos, videos, and even floor plans made of your home. Having professional photos taken of your home is a service nearly all full-service agents will include, but depending on your market, your agent may also pay to have:

- A digital 3D tour created of your home
- A video made highlighting the homes best features and potentially drone or aerial footage of the property

A Zoocasa agent will be able to share which strategies will be the best fit for your home given its price point, location, and what's been happening in the market.

It's best to talk to the agents you're interviewing about what services they include as part of their commission to sell your home, and what new tactics they will use if the home doesn't sell in its first month on the market.



BENEFITS OF DIGITAL MARKETING

It's no surprise that digital marketing plays a huge part in any new listings marketing – industry research shows that 90% of buyers search online during their buying process.*

If you want to get your home in front of more buyers, one of the best strategies you can use is selecting an agent from a brokerage with a large digital presence, like Zoocasa. More than 600,000 buyers and sellers use Zoocasa every month to browse homes and learn about the market – and clients who list with us get featured status on our website and social media channels.

*A study from REALTOR® shows that 90% of buyers search online during their buying process.

WHAT IF YOU WANT A MORE PRIVATE SELLING EXPERIENCE?

Although marketing your home to a wide range of potential buyers is one of the best ways to drum up interest in your home, in some cases, sellers prefer to keep their listings private. If that's the case for you, ask your agent if there is an opportunity to offer your home as an exclusive network listing, or an "off-market" property.

Although this will limit your pool of potential buyers, the right agent will know how to utilize their network to get your home sold in the way that works best for you. Our partnerships enable us to include your home in the largest exclusive property network in Canada – with other top brokerages – to access the highest producing agent network.

Note: All Zoocasa agents have access to an exclusive network of properties not listed on the MLS, and can help you sell your home in a more private setting.



YOUR TIMELINE FOR SELLING

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STEP FOUR

Listing Your Home

Preparing Your Home For Showings

If you aren't living in your home during the showing process (which we always recommend) you won't need to do much to prepare your home for showings – your stager and Zoocasa agent will leave the home show-ready, and you can relax knowing it will stay like that throughout the various appointments.

However, finding other accommodations isn't always possible. In that case, you should consider some strategies to help keep your home looking its best during the listing period – since showings can be requested with less than 30 minutes notice. To have the most exposure to potential buyers, you'll want to meet these requests as much as possible.



HERE ARE OUR TIPS TO HELP MAKE PREPARING FOR SHOWINGS EASIER WHEN LIVING AT HOME:

Every day during the listing period:

- Make your bed first thing in the morning
- Make a point to keep up on tidying more so than usual – eating only in the kitchen, putting things away immediately, and staying on top of laundry.
- Clean all major areas, including the bathrooms, kitchen, and floors.
- Avoid cooking foods with strong odours that can linger – this is a great time for takeout or freezer meals that reduce the mess and clean up from cooking!

Staying on top of these tasks daily will make sure your home is always looking great – so if a surprise showing request comes, you can mobilize quickly on putting together the finishing touches and leaving the home in little time.

Immediately before a showing:

- Give the floors a quick sweep
- Wipe all surfaces for dust, crumbs, or fingerprints
- Take out the garbage and green bin
- Fluff your couch pillows and arrange any throw blankets
- Collect any stray clutter, toys, or anything out of its place and store it in the trunk of your car

With a short-notice showing, you won't have the opportunity to deep clean your home, but running through these tasks will make the biggest impact on the look of your home in a short period of time.

At Zoocasa, we use an online showing scheduler that makes accepting appointments from prospective buyers as easy as one click. You can accept the appointments directly from your smartphone and view the calendar at any time! You will always know who is viewing your property at any given time for safety, security and comfort throughout the selling process.

Reviewing and Negotiating Offers

After all the hard work you've put into listing your home, the most exciting part has come: time to finally review the offers!

Depending on your sales strategies, offers will come in two ways:

1

On a set "Offer Night"

- Where your real estate agent will tell all interested buyers that you will be reviewing offers on a set day, and if they're interested in the property, should submit their best offer at that time.

2

Accepted at any time

- Where your real estate agent will encourage buyers to submit an offer at any time. Typically, buyers will be incentivized to see your property quickly and offer as soon as possible to avoid competition if they are serious about your property.

Based on what's going on in your local market, your Zoocasa agent will help you determine the best way to receive offers and communicate that to the interested buyers and their agents when bringing your home to market.

Regardless of the way you're receiving offers, there are two types of offers that you may receive on your home:

1

Conditional Offers

- A conditional offer means that the buyer is interested in purchasing your home on the condition of something else happening – like their own home selling, or receiving a firm mortgage commitment from the bank. These conditions are typically time-bound, meaning the buyers will have a set amount of time to clear the conditions on the home before the offer will expire. These are the most common offer types, especially outside of a hot sellers' market.

2

Firm Offers

- A firm offer means that the buyer is buying your home exactly as it is, with no contingency of further due diligence – like having the home being inspected, or getting confirmation that the bank will provide the buyer with a mortgage after the home has been appraised.
- Although a firm offer is typically good news for sellers (there is no backing out for buyers without significant penalty) buyers with a firm offer who are unable to complete their deal may end up delaying alerting the seller as they try to work out alternative arrangements – so you may end up with a headache closer to your closing date. As these offers present more risk to buyers, they are less common to see outside of a hot sellers' market.

Note: If your goal is to receive firm offers there are steps you can take to reduce the number of conditions buyers would likely place on your home, like getting a Pre-list home inspection.

HOW TO EVALUATE OFFERS

In some instances, the highest offer isn't always the best offer.

If showing your home is hugely inconvenient for you, you might want to pass on a higher offer that has many conditions, as this could mean it's more likely the deal will fall through and you will need to re-list your home.

Or, if your highest offer requests a closing date that will require you to find other temporary accommodations (and storage for your belongings) before your next home is ready for you, it may make more financial sense to choose a lower offer with a closing date that better suits your needs.

Your Zoocasa agent will be able to help advise you on the best offer to take given your unique circumstances - but the four main things to consider when evaluating an offer include:

- **Purchase Price**
Naturally, most sellers want to receive the highest offer possible. But, it's important to consider if the other elements of the offer make a lower offer more convenient (or more affordable long term!)
- **Deposit**
Purchasers will put down a deposit along with their offer to show they're serious about the property. Higher deposits do show that the buyer is more serious about their commitment to close on the property - as they will lose their deposit (in addition to facing potential legal action) if they do not fulfil the contract.
- **Closing Date**
Aligning the closing date of the home you're selling with your next move will allow for an easy transition. Remember, if the home you're selling closes before your next home is ready, you will need to find temporary accommodations and storage, which should be factored into your budget. If it's much later, you may need to speak to your lender about Bridge Financing.
- **Whether the offer is firm or conditional, or how difficult the conditions are to fulfil.**
When you accept a firm offer, the buyer has immediately committed to closing on the property - which reduces the chance of further negotiations, or you needing to list your home again. If the buyer includes conditions, like a home inspection, they may use this as an opportunity to further negotiate - like asking you to replace the roof if the home inspection reveals that it's needed.



NEGOTIATING AN OFFER

If the buyer's offer isn't perfect, don't write it off as there may be room for negotiation. A good real estate agent will be able to represent you in these negotiations and help you leave the table with the best possible offer. For instance:

- If the buyer is looking to close a month before you're ready, your agent can request that the closing date be extended.
- If you have two with close purchase prices, but one with more favourable terms, your agent can request that the lower offer increase its offer price.

While the buyers may not agree to your request, your Zoocasa agent will be able to help position your needs in a way that will increase your chances of success.

Understanding A Conditional Sale

If you are evaluating a conditional offer, it's important to understand the scope of the condition and the process to clear it. The process usually looks like this:

- The buyer submits a conditional offer
 - The seller reviews and accepts the offer
 - The home is now "Sold Conditionally", and the buyer begins the process to remove the conditions within the time frame specified in the offer
 - The buyer clears all conditions and the home is now "Sold Firm", which is the same status as if the offer came in "Firm" at the beginning.
- OR**
- The buyer does not clear the conditions and the deal falls through. At this point, the seller will need to re-list the property again in hopes of finding another buyer. The buyer's deposit will be returned.
- OR**
- The buyer runs into something they would like to negotiate during the conditional period. Their agent will work with yours to try and reach an agreement. If you can come to an agreement, your home will become "Sold Firm". If you can't, the deal will fall through and you will need to re-list.

Common Conditions

HOME INSPECTION

Another extremely common condition is the condition of home inspection. This condition grants the buyer the ability to have your home professionally inspected with a certified inspector to review any defects in the home. The home must pass the inspection to the buyer's satisfaction before the condition is waived.

If the buyer finds something that requires repairs during the inspection, they may try to negotiate for you to fix it before they close. To avoid the later negotiations that often come along with this condition, you can conduct a Pre-list home inspection before listing your home – reducing the chance that buyers will include their own inspection as a clause.

FINANCING

The most common condition included on home sales, even in hot real estate markets, is the condition of financing. This means that sale is conditional on the buyer receiving financing for their purchase, usually in the form of a firm mortgage commitment from the bank.

This protects buyers from purchasing a property that they ultimately won't be able to close on (whether that's due to them not qualifying for the mortgage amount, or their lender not appraising your home as high as the purchase price). But, it can also protect you as the seller, as it identifies potential issues with financing before the closing date, giving you more time to find another buyer so that your next move isn't impacted.

LEGAL REVIEW

Legal review is a more common clause seen in condo sales, specifically to give the buyer's lawyer a few days to review the status certificate for the condominium corporation after making their offer. This is not typically seen in freehold properties.

SALE OF THE BUYER'S HOME

In cooler real estate markets, some offers will come contingent on the buyer selling their own house before closing. This will lead to a longer conditional period, sometimes 30 or 60 days, where the buyer will attempt to sell their own home. If they are unable to sell their home, your sale will not complete – which can leave you in a rush to find a new buyer, or impact your ability to close on your next property.

Naturally, this isn't a preferred option for sellers, who want to see their deal firm as quickly as possible. However, if you find yourself in a situation where market conditions are making this type of offer more common, there are strategies your agent can use to help protect you.

Adding an escape clause to the agreement, which is common when an agreement has conditions that will take more than 15 days to fulfil, will allow you to review other offers during this conditional period. When you receive another offer, the original buyer will have a short period of time (typically 24 or 48 hours) to decide to firm their offer or pass. If they pass, you're able to move forward with the second buyer and "escape" your previous agreement.



YOUR TIMELINE FOR SELLING

- Selecting Your Agent
- Deciding Your Next Move
- Getting Your Home Market Ready
- Listing Your Home
- Preparing For Closing



STEP FIVE

Preparing For Closing

Real Estate Lawyers For Sellers

When a home is bought or sold, a real estate lawyer is needed to act as an intermediary between the buyers, sellers, mortgage lenders, and governments. They ensure all the details of the sale are handled correctly at closing. Real estate lawyers should be involved from offer time leading up to closing day.

Why do I need a real estate lawyer?

Although it may sound easy to check and double-check all the information for the sale, it's actually much more complicated than that. Sellers need a real estate lawyer to verify and collect closing costs, ensure the title and ownership are transferred to the correct parties and ensure the municipalities update their tax roles, remove the mortgage and liens from the property, ensure land transfer taxes are paid by the buyers, and file all necessary paperwork. It is best to engage a lawyer who specializes in real estate.

What do real estate lawyers do specifically for sellers?

Your lawyer will be sure the proceeds of the sale are delivered to the rightful place, including paying off any mortgages or liens, deducting all associated fees, and returning the balance to you and any partners.

If the home is sold due to divorce, for example, the lawyer has to be sure the split is accurate according to the separation agreement. They will also deal with second mortgages, liens on the home, and unpaid taxes—essentially resolving anything issues on title that could hinder the closing of the property.

When should I hire my lawyer?

Ideally, you should begin interviewing potential lawyers as you prepare to list your home for sale

- this way, they will be available to review any offers you receive on the home.

How do I select the right real estate lawyer?

Because you want your sale to go as smoothly as possible, you'll want your real estate lawyer to be:

- An expert in real estate
- Experienced with the same type of property you're selling
- In a convenient location for you to go for document signing, or allow for digital signatures
- Answer as many questions as you want about experience, fees, and knowledge before agreeing to work with them.

It's a good idea to ask your Zoocasa agent, friends, family, or even your lender for recommendations. If someone you trust recommends a lawyer, you'll feel more comfortable working with them.

How much are legal fees?

The lawyer can walk you through what documents will need to be signed on closing day and the exact calculations behind the amount of funds you'll need to provide on closing day.

Here's a rough guide for how much you can expect to pay. These prices usually fluctuate by region:

Professional services	\$750 – \$1500
Disbursements	\$200 – \$500
Title insurance	\$250 – \$2500

Note: Title insurance is not mandatory, but covers buyers from losses regarding the title or ownership of the property. This includes protection against title defects, pre-existing liens on the property, errors in public records, and other title-related issues. The cost of your title insurance is relative to the size of your purchase price.

Understanding Your Statement Of Adjustments

Statements of adjustments are created to clearly show all credits to the buyer and seller in the transaction, including the final amount due to the seller on closing day. There are two statements created—one by the buyer's lawyer, one by the seller's lawyer. They then meet and combine their work to be sure the amounts are correct, and develop one final statement.

WHAT WILL YOU FIND ON YOUR STATEMENT OF ADJUSTMENTS?

Statements of adjustments are fairly straightforward, and resemble a bank statement.

Any adjustments against the sale price are listed on the statement of adjustments, including the purchase price, your deposit, and other expenses and fees, like utility or oil adjustments. There are also taxes payable, as well as property tax adjustments.

There are two columns: credit purchaser and credit vendor. The first column lists dollar amounts the buyers have made to their lawyer—primarily deposits. The second column lists

payments you can expect to receive as the seller, including the sale price, tax adjustments, and common expenses. The amount to be paid and the amount to be received are the same, balancing the statement. The prepaid adjustments and purchase price in the credit vendor column are what you can expect to receive on closing day.

We've put together a sample statement below so you'll know what to expect. This example assumes the seller has prepaid one year property taxes, which the buyer will need to pay back to the seller.

Calculation	Credit Purchasers	Credit Vendors
Purchase Price		\$350,000.00
Deposit	\$18,000.00	
2016 prepaid property taxes paid-to-date		\$2,805.10
Seller's share for 73 days		- \$561.02
Balance Due on Closing to Seller	\$334,244.08	
Totals	\$352,244.08	\$352,244.08

What Happens On Closing Day

Congratulations! The sale of your home is nearly complete.

On closing day, the title and possession of the home will be transferred to the new homeowner. This typically will take place between 3–6 PM, as it takes the lawyers some time to work with the lenders to ensure everything is in place. Typically, your lawyer won't be able to confirm an exact time of closing for this reason.

When it comes to dropping off your keys, your process will depend on your lawyer. Typically, sellers would drop their keys off to their lawyers on the morning of closing day, and their lawyer would courier to the buyer's lawyer for release. Recently, a more hands-free protocol has been gaining in popularity. In this instance, the full set of keys are left at the property, usually in the kitchen, with the front door key placed in a lock box left on the front door or railing (or left with concierge for condo properties). The listing agent will give the lock box code to the lawyer who will then release the code to the buyer's lawyer once the transaction is complete.

Once the title has been transferred and the property has been closed, the home will no longer belong to you, so it's important that you have moved your belongings out ahead of time. We typically recommend that you plan to move out the day before, if not earlier.

After this is complete, all that's left to do is celebrate – you've successfully sold your home!

Notes



Sell your home with us.

At Zoocasa, our goal is to deliver the best client experience and ensure every homeowner receives the most personalized and tailored service that is as unique to them as their property.

When you're ready to take the next step, we're here for you.

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