

# YOUR HOME

APRIL  
2013

TIPS AND TRENDS FOR HOMEOWNERS, BUYERS AND SELLERS

## WHAT HOMEBUYERS WANT

Most homebuyers prefer newer homes with extra space, according to the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR) 2013 *Profile of Buyers' Home Feature Preferences*. The survey, which examined buyers who purchased a home between 2010 and 2012, finds that the typical recently-purchased home was built in 1996 and had 1,860 square feet. The typical buyer purchased a home with three bedrooms and two full bathrooms. Repeat buyers, buyers of new homes, married couples, and families with children tend to purchase larger homes, while first-time buyers and single women were more likely to buy older homes.

Nearly two-thirds of buyers said central air conditioning was the most important home feature, followed by a master walk-in closet, desired by 39 percent of buyers. Some home features are so sought-after that buyers were willing to spend more money to have them. More than two-thirds of buyers (69 percent) who did not purchase a home with central air conditioning said they were willing to pay \$2,520 more for a home with this feature, and the same percentage of buyers said they would be willing to pay \$1,840 more for a home with new kitchen appliances.

Buyers placed the highest dollar value on waterfront properties and homes that were less than five years old. They were willing to spend the most money for a basement (\$3,200) and an in-law suite (\$2,920), while the highest percentage of buyers were willing to spend more for a laundry room (63 percent) and a home office or den (44 percent).



## OVERCOMING HOUSE BLINDNESS

If you have lived in your home a long time, chances are you've become so comfortable that you no longer see the buildup of dirt and dust that has accumulated. According to Merry Maids, a national home cleaning service, here are some commonly overlooked areas and a few solutions to fix them.



Pay attention to the stuff above your head. The ceiling, ceiling fans, light fixtures, and the tops of curtains and window treatments attract dust, cobwebs and remnants of dead insects, so make sure you dust them frequently.

If you're not organized, clutter will take over. Recycle those magazines stacked on the desk, store books on bookshelves, and toss the half-dead houseplant or give it away to a more caring friend.

The kitchen is another hotbed of clutter. The refrigerator door may seem like a logical place to keep shopping lists, recipes, coupons and school notices, but the exterior needs to be cleared so it can be properly cleaned. Remember to clean appliance handles too, which can be a breeding ground for germs.

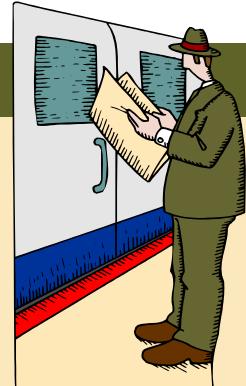
When you've lived in one place long enough, it's easy to become desensitized to odors from pets, kids, cooking, cigarettes or mustiness. A deodorizer, usually available as a spray or in crystal form, can neutralize odors without chemicals or fragrances.

If you still have a hard time seeing the dirt in your home, call a trusted friend who can give you an honest assessment. Just be ready to listen to the truth — and take action.

### fast fact >> >>

**Workers in Maryland have the longest one-way commute at 32.2 minutes, while those in the Dakotas have the shortest commute at 16.9 minutes.**

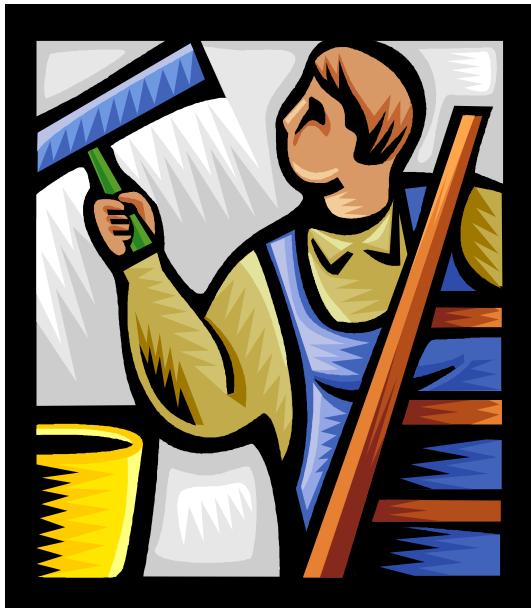
*Source: US Census Bureau*



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# WINDOW CLEANING TIPS



**W**indow washing is an annual rite of spring. While cleaning windows may seem like a simple task, these tips from TLC and the Mrs. Clean blog (<http://mrscleanblog.blogspot.com>) can make them shine.

For starters, windows should be cleaned on the inside and outside twice a year. For best results, wash them early in the day or in the evening on a cloudy day so direct sunlight won't dry the cleaning solution.

Avoid using harmful chemicals on the windows by making your own cleaning solution. Combine two tablespoons of vinegar, ammonia or lemon juice with 20 ounces of warm water in a spray bottle, and shake well. For greasy windows, add a few drops of dish detergent to help remove smudges easily. If the cleaning solution drips onto the frames or windowsills, wipe it immediately so it does

not damage the surface. Use a squeegee or terry cloth to wipe the glass. It's helpful to use vertical strokes on one side and horizontal strokes on the reverse so you can pinpoint where there may be streaks. For added shine, polish the windows with an old well-washed cotton T-shirt or crumpled newspaper, which leaves a film that's resistant to dirt. Use a cotton swab or a toothbrush with soft bristles to clean hard-to-reach corners.

Pay attention to the window frames and tracks too. Use a terry cloth or vacuum to remove dirt and dust from the grooves and around the frame. For high-up windows that may be hard to reach without a ladder, experts suggest calling a professional window cleaner for the job.

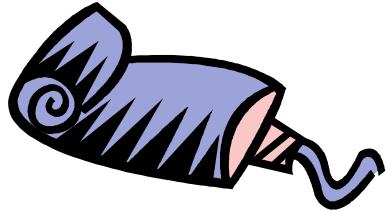
## Say Yes to CRS

Buying a home is one of the biggest and most emotional decisions you will ever make. So it's important to work with someone who can provide sound advice and a steady, guiding hand when you need it. That's why a CRS agent is the best person for the job.

A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) is among the top 3 percent of all agents in the country. CRS agents have achieved a high volume of transactions and advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing and technology. They must also maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and abide by its Code of Ethics. Why work with anyone else when you can work with a CRS agent?



## DID YOU KNOW?



To eliminate tiny scratches on glass surfaces, polish the affected areas with toothpaste.

Source: TLC/How Stuff Works.com



**Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.**

This newsletter is for informational purposes only and should not be substituted for legal or financial advice. If you are currently working with another real estate agent or broker, it is not a solicitation for business.

