

# GARAGE SALES

## How to Prep for an Estate Dispersal

Getting ready for an estate sale can be tough. If someone has passed away, you're not only dealing with things, you're dealing with memories.

Luckily, professional estate sale organizers can help with that. Before you reach out to one or more of them for pricing, however, there are a few things the National Estate Sales Association says you can do to get ready.

### GO THROUGH THE HOME

Conduct a thorough search of the home. People hide things, the NESAs says, or things get misplaced over the years. Look through clothing, books, drawers, cupboards, boxes and closets. Look under and behind furniture, making sure to pull out drawers and look behind them. Search attics, crawlspaces and basements.

### REMOVE PERSONAL ITEMS

If it's personal or particularly valuable, remove it from the home, including diaries and journals. Also gather up financial records and any records that should be retained for record-keeping purposes. If you find any fire-



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arms, make sure they are unloaded and properly secured. Also keep an eye peeled for gold, coins or jewelry; family photos and personal papers; materials of a sexual nature and opened food and alcohol.

### TAKE PICTURES

Take photos or video. Make an extensive pictorial record of the home should you ever need documentary evidence of the estate. This can also help a group of heirs make decisions about what to sell and what to keep. Take pic-

tures in categorical sequences: furniture, art, etc. Upload the pictures or videos to a cloud or portable drive to share with heirs.

### MAKE A LIST

Start with a general inventory to help organize your thoughts, tasks and responsibilities. Consider making a binder to help you get organized. Make other lists for items bequeathed to heirs; items thought to be valuable; professional contacts, real estate paperwork, liquidators and contractors; tasks

to be done.

### WHEN YOU SHOULD GET APPRAISALS

If personal property is going to be divided up between heirs, you'll want to have appraisals done of valuable items. These appraisals will be helpful if disputes arise and make the overall process of dispersal more efficient. You should also get appraisals when they are asked for by an attorney, heir, CPA, courts or probate referee; when you have known items of high value; when

there are contesting heirs; or when you want equitable disbursements.

### GET READY FOR DISPERSAL

The more orderly the home, the more smoothly the dispersal process should go. Before anyone shows up to pick up or view items, clear away debris and establish clear pathways around the house. You can also post general inventory sheets to make the process easier. Keep bequeathed items in plain sight. If there are contesting heirs or the will is vague, you may need to get creative with dispersal strategies. You could use a lottery system, draw straws or use other means to decide how people get to pick items for dispersal.

### PICK WHAT YOU WANT TO SELL

Now that you and the other heirs have chosen what to keep, it's time to get ready for your estate sale. As a group, decide what you want to sell so that you can communicate the scope of the sale to the estate sales professionals you're speaking to. Make sure you have packed up all the items you want to keep and have them out of the home before the estate sales professional arrives. Also have your appraisals ready before meeting with the professional.

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### BUYER'S TIP

#### Check Out Estate Sale Pros' Email Lists, Social Media Accounts

Estate sales professionals maintain active email lists and social media pages to help their buyers find great sales to fit their collections and their budgets. Join lists and follow accounts in your area to find the best sales.

## AD SPACE