

Preparing for Closing

As the seller, you have relatively little to do at this point. Avoid common glitches by keeping abreast of progress on both sides.

Be aware if the buyer is having trouble getting a loan on the terms specified in the contract. If he/she is turned down, it could jeopardize the whole deal and your house could be put back on the market. A day or so before closing, make sure all the necessary papers and documents have been gathered and are in the hands of the right parties.

Things can go wrong. Documents can be misplaced, delayed or lost. However, common last-minute difficulties can be avoided.

Parties who should be present at closing need to be informed of any change in the date, time or place. They should be reminded a week before closing and again the day before.

Everyone named on the deed under which you hold title must sign the new deed by which you grant title.

Know when and how you will be paid. Don't expect to walk away from the settlement table with a check in hand.

If you are buying another property, consider having both closings at the same office scheduled back-to-back. That way, the timing of the disbursement is not a problem. You sign a paper authorizing the title company or attorney to assign the funds from sale to purchase.

The papers you'll need:

A copy of the sales contract and documentation showing that any contingencies have been removed or satisfied.

All documents needed to complete the transfer of title. This may include certificate of title, deed, correcting affidavits, quitclaim deeds, survey and title insurance policy.

Prorations for ongoing expenses such as insurance premiums, property taxes, accrued interest on assumed loans and utilities (if not shut off between owners).

Receipts showing payment of the latest water, electric and gas bills.

A certificate from your lender indicating the mortgage balance and the date to which interest has been prepaid.