Selling the Long-Held House From Where You Live Now

Every step for selling a house you owned for many years after you have moved, including the pack-out.

People, contacts and check-ins

- [ ] Set a standing check-in on video at an hour that suits both time zones, and choose text, email or calls for news.
- [ ] Pass along your HOA manager's details plus any gate, parking or pool rules.
- [ ] **Outside the U.S.:** Find out from escrow, well ahead, what identification you need and how documents get to you overseas.
- [ ] **Military:** Talk with the legal assistance office on base about a power of attorney ahead of time, and let escrow know if one will be used.
- [ ] **If you can't travel:** Thinking of letting a trusted person sign? Speak with an attorney about it, and clear it with the title company before anyone signs.

Access, keys and house details

- [ ] Gather and count all the keys: doors, garage openers, mailbox, gate fobs, pool.
- [ ] **No keys nearby:** Settle where the keys need to end up, then pick tracked overnight shipping, a courier or someone you trust.
- [ ] **Neighbor or relative:** Settle with whoever holds a spare set who opens up for vendors.
- [ ] **Property manager:** Settle with your manager who books vendors and showings.
- [ ] List the house basics: alarm code, Wi-Fi, main water valve, sprinkler clock and collection day.
- [ ] **Empty home:** Leave electricity, water and gas running through the closing date.
- [ ] **Empty home:** Let your insurance company know nobody is living there, and ask how that affects the policy.
- [ ] **Rented:** Once your tenant agrees, pass along their contact details; showings need written notice, and Civil Code 1954 presumes 24 hours is reasonable.
- [ ] **Rented:** Choose between selling with the tenant staying or waiting for the lease to end, and pull together the lease and deposit paperwork.
- [ ] **Someone living there:** Settle a showing schedule, a quick tidy-up habit and a move-out day with the person living there.

Prep work handled from afar

- [ ] Tour the house room by room over live video, then settle on a brief to-do list.
- [ ] Get every quote approved by you in writing first, and decide how each bill is paid.
- [ ] Book a handyman to test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and look at the water-heater straps.
- [ ] **Empty home:** Pick a look for the empty rooms: rental furniture, labeled virtual staging with originals on hand, or simply spotless.
- [ ] **Things still inside:** Clear surfaces, clean top to bottom, and pack what is moving to your new place.
- [ ] **Rented:** Schedule photos and showings with your tenant's routine in mind.

- [ ] Put permits, warranties, HOA documents and receipts in a single digital folder.
- [ ] **If you travel back:** If a trip is possible, use it well: before the photos, or for the final pack-out.

Forms and signatures, wherever you live

- [ ] Read the listing paperwork and disclosures, ask your questions, then e-sign them.
- [ ] Confirm with escrow which papers you can e-sign and how the deed gets notarized.
- [ ] **In the U.S.:** Find a mobile notary, or a notary office close to where you live now.
- [ ] **Outside the U.S.:** Plan on a U.S. embassy or consulate notary, or a local notary, and sort out how originals travel back.
- [ ] **Military:** Check whether a notary at a military legal office can handle the deed.
- [ ] Had the homeowners' exemption? Let the County Assessor know you moved.
- [ ] Talk with a tax professional ahead of closing about the gain exclusion and California's real estate withholding.
- [ ] **Military:** Selling a home with a VA loan? After closing, look into restoring your entitlement.

The last days before closing

- [ ] Schedule the signing a few days ahead of closing, and return documents exactly as escrow instructs.
- [ ] Have utilities move or end on closing day, and not before.
- [ ] Arrange for the keys, openers and manuals to reach the buyer.
- [ ] Forward your mail through USPS, and save the closing statement for tax time.
- [ ] **Rented:** Check with escrow on how the tenant's deposit and lease carry over.

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Preferred lender: Point Mortgage Corporation (NMLS #231073), (619) 475-4095. You are always free to choose any lender you like.

General information for orientation, prepared October 2026. It is not legal, tax or financial advice, and rules and forms change. Confirm details with your lender, the county, an attorney or tax professional and your agent.