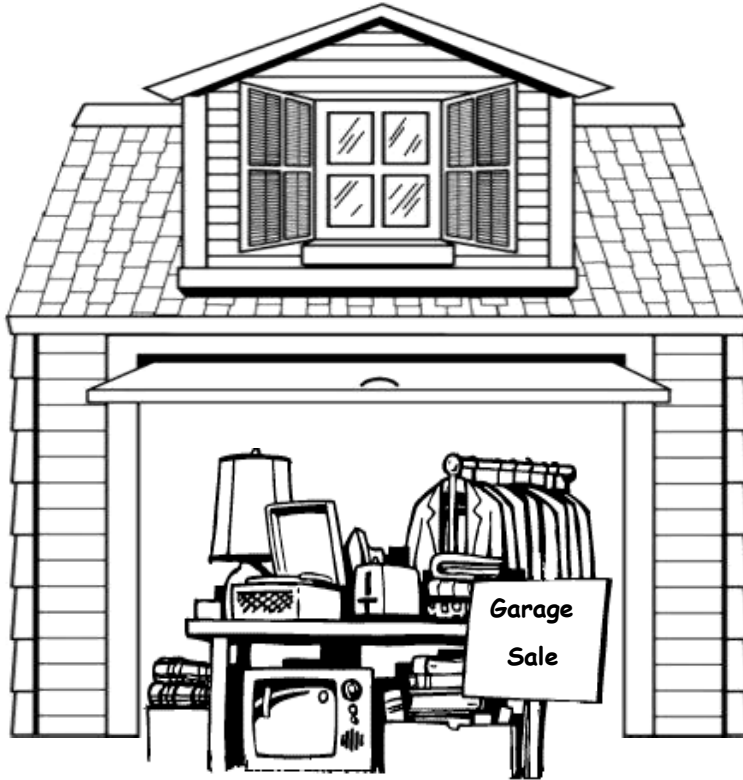


Citywide Garage Sale

“How To” Tips



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City of
Mountain View

Public Works Department
Recycling & Zero Waste Section
MountainView.gov/GarageSale
650-903-6311

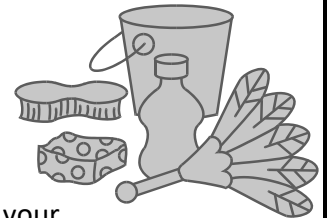
Remember *your* goal is to get rid of stuff!
(and help the environment!)

What to Sell

- Sell “*gently used*” items that still have value.
- Antiques - regardless of their state of repair or condition.
- Memorabilia and nostalgia items sell well. Display prominently.
- Furniture: dressers, bookcases and tables are very popular.



- Appliances, electronics, tools, and garden equipment labeled “working” or “needs repair.”
- Clothing (clean, folded on tables, or hung). Label sizes.
- Books, music, videos, CDs.
- Baby clothes, baby items, toys, games, dolls, and kid stuff.
- Costume jewelry (at a separate, attended table if valuable).
- Incomplete silverware, glassware, or china sets – customers are looking to fill in their patterns or use items for craft projects and wall decorations.
- Plants, sports equipment, camping gear, and pet items.
- Let it go. Sure, you paid lots of money for this item, but are you using it?



Setting Up Your Sale

- Start planning about two weekends ahead of time. Use the opportunity to clean out your garage, closets, attic, etc.
- Clean and shine sale items. Soap, water and a little elbow grease can really improve the appearance and value of your items.
- Consider holding a group sale with neighbors, friends or family.
- Set up your “store.” Display items in an orderly fashion, grouping by function (garden, kitchen) or by price (paperback books \$1/bag).



- Set items on tables or on a blanket, sheet or tarp on the ground. Be creative.
- Place furniture, lawnmowers or other “hot” items near the sidewalk to draw attention.
- Stage furniture with a lamp or plant.
- Place small, valuable items further away from the sidewalk near the jewelry table or “cashier.”
- Set up a “freebies” area near sidewalk--add items throughout the day as needed.
- Display your “Garage Sale” sign near the sidewalk or on the front lawn; or attach the sign to your parked car or cardboard box. Please do not block sidewalks or nail signs to trees.
- Give kids a chance to have their own table, and the responsibility for pricing and selling their merchandise (with proper supervision).
- Smile, be courteous and deal fairly with your customers.
- Get out that radio! Listening to music makes shopping and selling more relaxing. Keep the volume low and tuned to easy listening stations.



Shop Keeping Tips

- Be ready to sell as advertised (8 a.m.), or post the time you will open.
- If possible, assign one person to answer questions or haggle, and another for cashier duty.
- Block off areas you don't want customers to enter by roping off areas or using sheets to block garage shelving or bicycles.
- Put up a "Not for Sale" sign on items you don't want to sell such as the chair and table you use for the sale.
- Keep your money secure. Wear a fanny pack or money belt, keeping it in front of your body and zipped. When counting out change, do not expose the contents to customers.
- The same is true for cash boxes. Keep the lid down when counting money or screen it from view of customers by stacking books or boxes around it.
- Have coins and dollar bills on hand for change. Most customers carry \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills. Don't be pressured to accept large bills or checks unless you know the shopper personally.
- Consider electronic/contactless payment options such as person-to-person payment apps.



Pricing Your Merchandise

The most difficult problem for sellers is pricing items because they remember how much it cost new. Be realistic, but if you have expensive items in excellent condition, consider either a consignment shop or charity (however, be prepared to share half the profits with a consignment shop, and call the charity before you donate, as they often don't accept hard-to-sell items).

- Price to Sell. Your garage sale will be successful when all items are sold. Wouldn't you rather see an item go to a good home than thrown in the trash or dumped on a thrift store?
- As a general rule, start pricing at 20-25% of the retail cost for most items, except antiques, collectibles, and tools. Price tools at 50-75% of retail, depending on condition and age. A lamp bought new at \$80, should sell for about \$20 plus or minus depending on condition.
- Put price tags on items or make a price list sheet. Customers may assume that items without tags will cost *more* than you planned to charge! Many office supply stores carry ready-made price stickers.
- Group/multi-family sales: Use an inventory sheet to track other sellers' items. Put the seller's initials on price tags or use color-coded stickers to identify sellers.



- Your customers are bargain hunters, so price items appropriately. Remember, "price to sell" because the goal is to get rid of stuff! If the price is firm, say so, politely.
- Better yet, give customers a discount to make them feel they got a bargain, or ask them to pick out a few other items for a group discount.
- Re-arrange items as items sell, or reduce prices on things that are not selling. Customers are discouraged if it looks like everything is picked over.
- Advertise "cash only" prominently if that is your preference.
- **Don't be discouraged if your sale gets off to the slow start. In citywide garage sales, customers will come throughout the day, sometimes in a steady stream or in surges.**

Supplies Needed

- Stickers to price items and a calculator to total up purchases (or give them one price for “the lot”). Purchase stickers from an office supply store or drugstore.
- Empty boxes, grocery bags and newspaper to package and wrap breakable items you sell. Staple bags shut after purchase if shoplifting is a concern.
- Tarps, blankets, sheets to display merchandise or cover stored boxes.
- Tape measure. Customers may need to know the exact dimensions of an item (especially furniture).
- Electrical outlet. Customers may want to test appliances and electronics to see that they do work. Tape down extension cords to prevent them from becoming a tripping hazard.



Advertising

- The month before the sale, the City will advertise the garage sale online, in email newsletters, in regional newspapers and on a banner over El Camino Real.
- The day before the sale, maps of garage sale locations and list of items for sale will be available outside City Hall and the Library and on the City's website: MountainView.gov/GarageSale.

Using Garage Sale Signs

- Display your “Garage Sale” sign near the sidewalk or on the front lawn, or attach the sign to your parked car or a cardboard box. Please do not block sidewalks or nail signs to trees.
- Post signs on private property only. It is illegal to post signs on utility poles, streetlight/street sign poles or in medians. Staples left in utility poles can present a hazard to workers. The City may issue citations for illegally posted signs.
- If you post sale signs on a surface, use blue painter’s tape to prevent damage. Keep track of where you place signs so you can remove them.
- Please remove ALL signs when your sale is over. Signs left out are unattractive to neighbors and can become litter.

When it’s Over

- Donate unsold merchandise to a charity or reuse organization (see MountainView.gov/GarageSale) for a list of organizations in the area).
- Call Recology (650-967-3034) to schedule an On Call Plus clean-up appointment for items not suitable for donation.
- Let us know how well you did! Send us an email at Recycle@MountainView.gov.
- Feel great about conserving resources by turning your trash into someone else’s treasure.



Environmental Goals

The Five R’s: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot & Restore.
Congratulations! By holding a garage sale, you helped your community divert waste from the landfill by “reusing” items made from our natural resources.