

Northern Virginia Realtor Shares the 7 Biggest Mistakes Homeowners Make When Selling During a Relocation

From double housing payments to vacant-home surprises, here's what home sellers should know before they leave town.

FAIRFAX, VA, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Relocating to a new city or state is often an exciting milestone, whether the move is driven by a new job, military orders, retirement, family needs, or a lifestyle change. Yet for many Northern Virginia homeowners, the biggest challenge is not the move itself. It's managing the sale of a home from hundreds or even thousands of miles away.



Northern Virginia Realtor Philippa Main shares seven mistakes homeowners make when simultaneously relocating and selling.

According to Northern Virginia Realtor Philippa Main, many relocation sellers unknowingly make decisions that can delay a sale, increase costs, or reduce their final proceeds, only realizing the consequences after the damage has already been done.

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Philippa Main, Northern Virginia Realtor

"Most people spend months planning the move, but very little time planning the sale," said Main. "By the time they realize certain decisions are creating problems, they're already juggling a new home, a new job, and a property they no longer live near."

Based on years of helping homeowners sell properties

after relocating, Main identifies seven of the most common mistakes sellers make during the process of selling from out-of-state.

Mistake #1: Waiting Too Long to Start Preparing the Home

Many homeowners focus entirely on the logistics of their move and postpone conversations about selling until the relocation date is approaching. This often creates unnecessary pressure. Decluttering, repairs, photography, and marketing all require time. Sellers who begin planning several months before their move typically have more flexibility and fewer last-minute surprises. Starting early also allows homeowners to make strategic decisions rather than rushed ones, so they can [sell their home in Northern Virginia quickly without sacrificing value](#).

Mistake #2: Moving Out Before the Home Is Ready for Market

In some situations, relocating before listing is unavoidable. However, leaving a property before completing preparation can create complications. Once a home becomes vacant, coordinating contractors, cleaners, landscapers, photographers, and showings becomes significantly more difficult. Small projects that could have been addressed easily while living in the home often become time-consuming long-distance management tasks. A clear preparation plan before moving can help avoid delays and additional expenses.

Mistake #3: Assuming Remote Selling Is Impossible

Many homeowners believe they need to travel back for inspections, appraisals, showings, repair meetings, and closing appointments. But modern technology has changed the process considerably. Electronic signatures, virtual meetings, remote notarization options, digital document management, and video walkthroughs now allow many sellers to complete an entire transaction without returning to Northern Virginia. The key is having trusted local professionals available to coordinate activities on the seller's behalf.

"I've had clients sign documents while sitting in the airport or living in Asia. Selling remotely isn't unusual anymore," said Main.

Mistake #4: Overpricing the Property to Offset Moving Costs

Relocations can be expensive. Between moving expenses, deposits, travel, temporary housing, and purchasing another home, many sellers feel pressure to maximize every dollar. Unfortunately, some homeowners respond by pricing their property above market value in hopes of covering those expenses. Buyers do not evaluate a home based on the seller's costs. They evaluate it against competing properties. Overpricing often leads to longer market times, price reductions, and increased carrying costs that can ultimately leave sellers with less money than if they had priced correctly from the beginning.

Mistake #5: Underestimating the Cost of Keeping an Empty Home

"An empty house has a remarkable talent for finding ways to cost you money," said Main. An unsold property continues generating expenses after the owner leaves. Mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, utilities, lawn care, HOA fees, routine maintenance, and emergency repairs continue. Many relocation sellers focus on their moving budget without fully accounting for the monthly costs of maintaining a vacant property. Even a short delay in selling can become expensive.

Mistake #6: Neglecting the Property After Moving

Vacant homes require ongoing attention. Grass continues growing, HVAC systems need monitoring, plumbing leaks can occur without warning, and minor maintenance issues can quickly become larger problems when no one is regularly checking on the property. Buyers also notice when a home appears neglected. Poor curb appeal or visible maintenance issues can create negative first impressions before buyers even enter the front door. Having a plan for routine property oversight is an important part of a successful relocation sale.

Mistake #7: Trying to Manage Everything Alone

One of the most common challenges relocation sellers face is attempting to coordinate every detail themselves from another city or state. Managing contractors, scheduling repairs, arranging cleanings, meeting inspectors, coordinating appraisers, handling paperwork, and responding to buyer requests can quickly become overwhelming. Many successful relocation sellers rely on local professionals who can act as their eyes and ears throughout the process. Having someone available to oversee details on the ground often reduces stress while helping the transaction move forward more efficiently.

Planning Ahead Creates Better Outcomes

Relocating and selling a home simultaneously can feel overwhelming, but many of the most common challenges are preventable with proper planning. Homeowners who prepare early, understand their costs, create a realistic strategy, and assemble the right team often find the process far smoother than expected.

"People are often surprised by how much of the process can be handled remotely today," Main said. "The goal is to put systems in place before the move so the home sale doesn't become a second full-time job after you've already relocated."

For homeowners planning a move out of Northern Virginia, understanding these common mistakes can help protect both their time and their equity during one of life's biggest transitions. If you're looking for more resources, Northern Virginia Realtor Philippa Main offers a step-by-step guide to selling your house when relocating out of Northern Virginia on her website.

About Philippa Main

Philippa Main is a Northern Virginia Realtor serving Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Prince William County. She specializes in helping homeowners navigate complex selling situations, including relocations, inherited properties, downsizing transitions, and remote home sales. With more than 300 clients helped and over \$100 million in career sales volume, she works with clients throughout the region to create customized selling strategies based on their unique circumstances. You can contact her at www.yourmainagent.com/contact

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