

# GARAGE SALES



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## What Is an Estate Sale?

An estate sale is a sale that moves most of a family's possessions, whether that's because of a death in the family, because a family is moving or because a family is downsizing.

One way to think of it is as a very large garage sale.

### WHERE TO HOLD AN ESTATE SALE

Estate sales are typically so large that they're held in the houses that the family is leaving. Shoppers file through the house and pick out the items they want to buy. Instead of just the usual items from garage sales – clothing, toys and games, dishes – estate sales offer up items from nearly every room in the house,

including most of the furnishings, linens, and other items.

### HIRING AN ESTATE SALE SERVICE

Estate sales are so large that they generally cannot be handled by just the seller or the seller's family. Instead, they're handled by professional companies. The American Society of Estate Liquidators encourages people to interview estate sale professionals. Some questions the accreditation society suggests are:

- How long have you been in business?
- Do you have professional references?
- Do you have credentials, certifications or special education?
- Do you charge a flat fee or a commission?
- What services are included?
- Are there any additional fees or additional services that you offer?
- How many days will it take for you to set up?
- Do you price every item?
- How do you keep track of what items sell for?
- Are you insured or bonded?
- Do you also clean out estates and, if so, how much do you charge?

The society also recommends that potential customers check out companies with the Better Business Bureau and other online review companies.

### ESTATE SALE COSTS

Estate sales, because of their size and the involvement of a professional company, are usually more expensive than garage sales. For the seller, however, this can mean time saved in pricing, setting up and cleaning up after the sale. It can also mean more profits because professional sellers may negotiate better prices for your goods. For the buyer, it means a more organized sale. Many companies also publicize their sales through email lists and websites where the items

are organized and clearly described.

### HOW ESTATE SALES WORK

In an estate sale run by a professional, the company usually goes through the items to be sold, organizes and appraises them. They then help advertise and market the sale. On the day of the sale, shoppers are let into the home and allowed to walk through to examine the goods for sale. It's recommended, the American Society of Estate Liquidators says, the family not be present on the day of the sale. Some estate sales run over the course of several days, with each subsequent day seeing a cut in prices. Unsold items may be disposed of by the service, usually for an additional fee.

### BUYER'S TIP

#### Stay in the Know

If you enjoy going to estate sales frequently, sign up for estate liquidators' email lists to get regular updates on estate sales they're holding in your area. You'll likely get previews of the big-ticket items that will be offered, giving you a head start on your shopping.

## AD SPACE

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