

GARAGE SALES

Estate Sale vs. Garage Sale

Estate sales and garage sales are both sales that get rid of someone's possessions, but there are some critical differences. Here's what you need to know about these two types of sales.

GARAGE SALES

Garage sales are where a family or group of families get rid of a variety of household items. Popular garage sale merchandise includes kitchen utensils, kids clothes and toys, books, sporting goods, furniture and more. There's probably not a theme to a garage sale; it's assorted used goods from across a lifetime. And it's usually not a wholesale clean out of someone's life or property. Most garage sales are only one or two days, and negotiating is welcome. They tend to be smaller in scale and the goal is to get rid of unwanted items.

ESTATE SALES

Estate sales are held inside the home and usually involve the accumulations of a life-



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time. They are usually held after someone has passed away, but can also be held in the event of a divorce, extreme downsizing or other life-changing events. They're usually run by for-profit com-

panies who will organize the sale and price the items. The company gets a fee, usually a negotiated percentage of the proceeds of the sale.

Estate sales may be held over multiple days and typi-

cally feature a larger variety of items than a regular garage sale. Negotiations aren't usually welcomed; in fact, bidding wars have been known to break out for items of higher value.

Browsing an estate sale is also different than the garage sale experience. Estate sales are set up for merchandising. You'll generally arrive and get in line or be assigned a number. Groups of people appropriate to the sale's size, space and staffing will be let in to shop. The best items typically go the first day but the best deals may be had the afternoon of the last day, when the company is trying to get rid of items.

GET ON THE LIST

If you enjoy bargain hunting, start establishing relationships with your local estate sale companies. Sign up for their email lists to be alerted of sales before they happen and even score some discounts.

Just don't ask for a discount right off the bat. Estate sale companies say they can and will negotiate prices for some buyers, especially ones that they're familiar with and who they feel have treated them fairly in the past. Remember to be polite and respectful, and at estate sales, that also means being discreet. If your offer gets turned down, be gracious in defeat. Don't make a scene. That's more likely to get you banned from this sale as well as any future ones.

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SELLER'S TIP

Choosing an Estate Sale Company

Shop around for estate sale services like you would any other professional service. Ask advice from friends and family members, especially ones who frequent estate sales. They can tell you which companies hold events that are clean, organized and do well when it comes to sales. Then, get several bids before selecting a winner. Make sure they answer any and all of your questions to your satisfaction, have a written contract and read that contract thoroughly.

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