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Critical Mistakes to Avoid When Buying a Home

Here are the top **non-negotiable "don'ts" for buyers** who are actively shopping for or under contract on a home. These are the issues that most often blow up approvals, delay closings, or weaken negotiating power—even for otherwise well-qualified buyers.

1. Do NOT change jobs or income structure

This includes:

- Switching employers
- Going from W-2 to 1099 (or commission-heavy roles)
- Starting a new business or side hustle

Even a positive career move can reset income calculations or require additional verification, which can derail underwriting late in the process.

Rule of thumb: If it affects how you get paid, don't do it until after closing.

2. Do NOT open, close, or move money between accounts

Common mistakes:

- Opening new credit cards or auto loans
- Paying off large balances without guidance
- Moving large sums of cash without documentation

Lenders track credit, debt-to-income ratios, and asset sourcing all the way to the finish line. One unplanned move can trigger a full re-underwrite. Always ask before touching credit or cash.

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3. Do NOT make large purchases. This includes:

- Furniture
- Appliances
- Cars, boats, or “I’ll just finance it” purchases

Even if the payment seems small, it can push DTI over the limit or reduce reserves below required thresholds. Yes—even a couch can cost you a house!

4. Do NOT skip inspections or ignore red flagsWaiving inspections or brushing off issues to “win the offer” can backfire:

- Expensive repairs after closing
- Insurance issues
- Appraisal or financing problems

Smart buyers negotiate strategically, not emotionally. You’re buying a financial asset and a home.

5. Do NOT rely on advice from Google, TikTok, or well-meaning friends

Every transaction is different:

- Loan programs vary
- Local rules matter
- Contract terms aren’t universal

Conflicting advice often causes buyers to:

- Miss deadlines
- Misunderstand contingencies
- Make decisions that weaken their position

Your lender + your agent = your only sources of truth during the transaction.

Bottom line

Once you start shopping seriously—or especially once you’re under contract—your financial life should be boring and predictable until after closing day.