

Decommissioning - What to Expect

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints decommissions former meetinghouse properties when they are sold according to Church policies.

Baptismal Fonts:

Because of the religious significance of baptismal fonts, the Church prefers to decommission them. It is standard practice to:

1. Disconnect and cap off the faucets and drain.
2. Fill the font with sand, gravel, concrete, or nothing.
3. Frame in the top of the font and cover it with plywood.

Depending on the availability of the original carpet or tile, the plywood may be covered and finished to match the surrounding space, but this is not guaranteed.

In the case of a non-standard or fiberglass font, decommissioning methods and results will vary.

If the buyer would like access to the drain for future plumbing use, accommodations can be made but must be at the expense of the buyer. Church funds will only cover the cost of a standard decommission.

If the buyer is a religious organization that performs baptism by immersion, they may request permission for the baptismal font to remain in place. This request will be reviewed by a Church committee for approval. If approved, the font will remain in place.

Steeple:

When a meetinghouse is sold, the Church prefers to remove the steeple so the building will no longer be viewed as a place of religious worship.

Due to the variety and methods of construction, there is no standard way to decommission steeples. The facility manager and contractor will determine the best way to decommission the steeple according to its type, construction, and location. The decision is typically deferred until a buyer is secured due to the costly nature of decommissioning. The work is usually not completed until the due diligence deadline is expired.

The Church may determine to do any one of the following:

- Remove the entire steeple - the roofing will be repaired according to construction standards.
- Remove only part of the steeple (depending on the type).
- Leave the steeple as-is (even if the buyer is not a religious user).

If the buyer is a religious organization, they may request permission for the steeple to remain in place. This request will be reviewed by a Church committee for approval. If approved, the steeple will remain in place.

Brokers and buyers should understand that it is standard practice to decommission the steeple, but the decision is determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the type of steeple, costs, and various other factors. Brokers should not make commitments to buyers about steeple decommissioning or give them a choice in the matter, but they may communicate requests to have it remain in place in religious use cases.