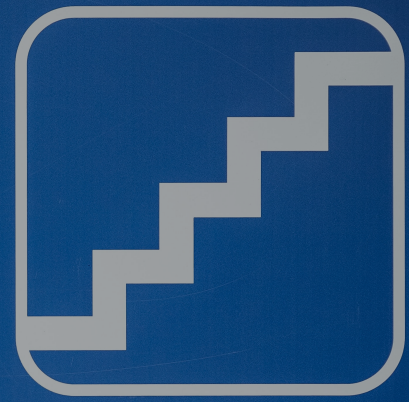


REALTOR SAFETY TIPS



Keep it light: Show properties before dark. If you must show a property after dark, turn on all lights as you go through, and don't lower any shades or draw curtains or blinds.

Checking in: When you have a new client, ask him/her to stop by your office and complete a Prospect Identification Form. Be certain to properly discard this personal information when you no longer need it.

Touch base: Always let someone know where you are going and when you will be back; leave the name and phone number of the client you are meeting and schedule a time for your office to call you to check in.

Double check: Don't assume that everyone has left the premises at the end of an open house. Check all rooms and the backyard prior to locking the doors.

Keep track of colleagues: Have a check-out employee board at your office, listing your name, destination, customer name, date and expected return time.

You take the wheel: Whenever possible, take your own car to a showing. When you leave your car, lock it.

Wear your REALTOR® ID: Always wear a visible company identification, such as a badge. It is also best to drive a vehicle clearly marked with your company name. These will be invaluable for identification if you need to get assistance.

Bring up the rear: When showing a home, always have your prospect walk in front of you. Don't lead them, but rather, direct them from a position slightly behind them. You can gesture for them to go ahead of you.

Choose flight over fight: While every real estate agent should take a basic self-defense course, the primary goal in any threatening situation is to escape from immediate danger and call for help.

Agree on an office distress code: Create an voice distress code, a secret word or phrase that is not commonly used, but can be worked into any conversation for cases where you feel that you are in danger. Example: "Hi, this is Jennifer. I'm with Mr. Henderson at the Elm Street listing. Could you e-mail me the RED FILE?"

Nothing personal: When talking to clients and prospects, be friendly, but still keep your personal information private. This means avoiding mention of where you live, your after work or vacation plans, and similar details.

Rely on good neighbors: Inform a neighbor that you will be hosting an open house, and ask if he or she would keep an eye and ear open for anything out of the ordinary.

Be Alert: At an open house, be alert to visitors coming and goings, especially near the end of showing hours. Police have reported groups of criminals that target open houses, showing up en masse near the end of the afternoon. While several "clients" distract the agent, others go through the house and steal anything they can quickly take.

Take a second while walking to your destination to check out potential risks:

- Are people coming and going or is the area unusually quiet?
- Do you observe any obstacles or hiding places in the parking lot or along the street?
- Is anyone loitering in the area?

Don't get parked in: When showing property or meeting someone, park your car in front of the property, rather than in the driveway. You will avoid having your car blocked in and you'll have an easier time escaping in your vehicle.

Plan ahead with escape routes: Upon entering an open house property for the first time, check each room and determine at least two "escape" routes. Make sure all deadbolt locks are unlocked for easy access to the outside.

Be prepared - pre-program! To best prepare for an emergency, pre-program important numbers into your cell phone. These may include your office, your roadside assistance service or garage and 9-1-1.

Make your clients your safety partners: Inform clients who are selling that while you are taking safety precautions and that you've checked and locked the home before leaving, they should immediately double check all locks and scout for missing items immediately upon their return, in case you've missed any less than obvious means of entry.

Don't use the "V word": When describing a listing, never say that a property is "vacant." This may be an invitation to criminals.

Be in Charge: Whenever possible, be sure your cell phone has a full battery charge or is in the process of charging. This is critical, especially if you plan on leaving the house/venue.

Have a lifeline: If you find yourself to be the last one in an open house and your car is not in the immediate vicinity of the venue, then make a phone call as you walk. Assailants will be less willing to attack if you are in mid-conversation with another person. Give your best friend a call; they would love to hear about your day.

All tips are taken from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® Safety Resource Kit. For more tips and information, go to Realtorsafetyfirst.com.