

Crime Prevention Recommendations for Realtors

Due to the nature of their responsibilities - frequently showing property to strangers and manning residential open houses - real estate agents often find themselves in situations where they may be uncomfortable for their own safety. The following crime prevention recommendations were developed specifically for these situations.

- Realtors should avoid meeting a stranger or unqualified buyer alone at any property. It would be preferable for a first meeting to take place at the Realtor's office.
- When showing property to a stranger or unqualified buyer, Realtors should avoid wearing expensive jewelry or carrying large amounts of cash.
- Realtors should use good personal safety procedures (see Chapter 16 for detailed recommendations) when driving to and from appointments, particularly at night.
- When they are showing property, Realtors should be sure either their office or a family member knows where they will be, whom they expect to be meeting with and when they will return or be in touch.
- If a Realtor is uneasy or has concerns about a possible buyer, they should trust their instincts. They should have someone accompany them and should not meet the buyer alone.
- Most Realtors have a pager or cell phone they carry with them. When on a call with a stranger or unqualified buyer, it is recommended they have their office or family member page or call them at a pre-arranged time.
- If they have a cell phone or easy access to a telephone, the Realtor should call their office or a family member when they arrive at a property to be shown and also when they leave. It is preferable for the client to hear these calls being made.
- Both the real estate office and an available family member or trusted friend should have information about the Realtor's motor vehicle — make, model, color, license plate number, etc.
- If property to be shown is in a dangerous or isolated neighborhood, at least two Realtors should go to the showing together.
- It is recommended that real estate agents, particularly women, not man an open house alone. If it is necessary to do so, however, they should have an escape route from the part of the house they are manning — don't get trapped in dead-end rooms.
- Real estate offices should sponsor a Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.) or similar quality self-defense training course for female agents.
- Although it is a personal decision, Realtors, particularly women, may wish to carry pepper spray or a high decibel battery-powered audio alarm with them when showing property.
- Before a home showing, have the owner remove easily concealable valuables, particularly jewelry. Items that would tempt a would-be burglar posing as a potential buyer such as coin collection, guns, jewelry boxes, etc. should be put out of sight.
- While showing a home, the Realtor should not leave their purse or laptop computer in sight and unattended. Place them in a drawer or cabinet to keep them out of sight.
- After a home showing, check all rooms to insure there are no stragglers and lock all doors. If the owner has not returned home when the Realtor leaves, they should leave enough lights on to give the home an occupied appearance.