



## **REALTOR SAFETY TIPS**

SDPD Crime Prevention

March 28, 2017

As a realtor you will be meeting people you don't know when performing real estate functions. These tips will help keep you safe while sitting open houses and model homes, and showing homes. First are some general tips for your personal safety in any real estate activity.

### **Personal Safety**

- Try to have at least one other person working with you. They could be partners, others from your office, title company representatives, loan officers, or escrow agents.
- Inform your office, a friend, or a family member where you will be and when you will return. Call them periodically to let them know you're OK. And ask them to call you if they don't hear from you.
- Keep your personal information private. Never give out your home address or phone number, full name, date of birth, names of family members, etc.
- Wear a company identification badge. And drive a vehicle clearly marked with your company's name.
- Make all your marketing materials polished and professional. Use your cell and office phone numbers and office address. Advertise without using your photograph.
- Wear sensible clothes that you can move around in easily. Avoid short skirts, low-cut tops, expensive jewelry, and shoes with heels. Dress professionally.
- Take a basic self-defense course where the primary goal in any threatening situation is to escape from immediate danger and call for help. Stay physically fit so you can escape when necessary.
- Have a secret phrase to use to notify your contact that you're in trouble and need help.
- Trust your instincts. Be especially careful when alone with a client. Find a way to get out of a situation that doesn't feel right. Have some excuses ready. Don't worry about offending a client.
- Charge your phone fully before you arrive at the property. Keep your phone on hand at all times and have emergency numbers programmed on speed dial.
- Lock your handbag, purse, wallet, laptop, tablet, notebook, and other valuables in your vehicle's trunk before you arrive at the property. But keep your keys with you.
- Park on the street in front of the property. Don't park in the driveway where you might be blocked in.

### **Sitting Open Houses and Model Homes**

- Inform the neighbors that you will be showing the house or homes and invite them to come visit.
- On first entering the house or homes, check that no one else is present and plan escape routes. Make sure all door deadbolts are unlocked and if a backyard is fenced in, make sure you can get to the street through a side-yard gate.
- Have visitors sign in a guest book when they enter. Ask for their full name, home address, phone number, and e-mail address. Ask to see a driver license to verify the visitor's information.
- Walk behind visitors when them showing around. Direct them, don't lead them. For example, say "the kitchen is on your left" and gesture for them to go ahead of you.
- Keep everyone in a party together.
- Don't go into attics, basements, and other rooms where you might be trapped.
- If you bring a computer to use, lock it to a desk with a security cable.
- Check all rooms and the back and side yards before locking the doors at the end of the open house. Don't assume that everyone has left the premises by then. Be prepared to escape, if necessary, from anyone who remains.

## Showing Homes

- Don't show homes at night.
  - Meet a new client at your office or some public place before showing the home. Fill out a client information form with the client's full name, home address, phone number, e-mail address, and driver license and vehicle information. Ask to see the client's driver license to verify the information. Also find out if the client is working with another realtor. If you meet at your office and another realtor is present, introduce the client to him or her.
  - Drive to the home separately. Have the client follow you.
  - Before entering a vacant home, walk around it and check all the doors and windows. Don't enter if you suspect it has been broken into. A squatter might be inside. Call the SDPD on its non-emergency number, **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**, to report the break-in and trespassing.
  - Walk behind clients when showing around. Direct them, don't lead them. For example, say "the kitchen is on your left" and gesture for them to go ahead of you.
  - Keep everyone in a party together.
  - Don't go into attics, basements, and other rooms where you might be trapped.
-