



Message from the CEO of Bronx-Manhattan North Association of Realtors: Safety first!

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The holiday season will soon be upon us and a celebration will be taking place wherever you may turn. As we prepare for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanza, to name a few, safety has to be a priority. More specifically, safety for the Realtors and their clients as the business of real estate involves inherent risks.

The holiday season is a time to be charitable, generous and joyous. However, the holiday season is not a time for Realtors to let down their guards. Thinking more critically about your work environment will keep you on the "Safety First" track. Before you host an open house, inform your clients about safeguarding their valuables during showings and remember your online marketing campaign may reveal a lot of information about you. Information that may be of use by someone with larceny in their heart.

To make sure we all have the best holiday season ever, here are a few safety tips taken from the National Association of Realtors' Realtor Safety Resource Kit:

1. Best practices for showing a listing: When a person comes through the office, have them complete a guest register that includes their full name, address, phone number, e-mail, and vehicle information.
2. Don't use the "V" word: When describing a listing, never say that a property is "vacant." This may be an invitation to criminals.
3. Rely on good neighbors: Inform neighbors 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.
4. Wear your Realtor ID: Always wear 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.
5. Thwart thieves: Remind your clients that strangers will be walking through their home during showings or open houses. Tell them to hide any valuables in a safe place. For security's sake, remember to remove keys, credit cards, jewelry, crystal, furs and other valuables from the home or lock them away during showings. Also, remove prescription drugs. Some seemingly honest people wouldn't mind getting their hands on a bottle of Viagra, uppers or downers.

6. 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, you'll have an easier time escaping in your vehicle, and you will attract lots of attention running and screaming to your car at the curb area.
7. Take two seconds to pause and look around as you enter your destination: Does anything seem out of place? Is anyone present who isn't expected?
8. Have your excuse ready: Part of being prepared to deal with a threatening situation is having "an out." Prepare a scenario in advance so that you can leave—or you can encourage someone who makes you uncomfortable to leave. Examples: Your cell phone or pager went off and you have to call your office, you left some important information in your car, or another agent with buyers is on his way.
9. Touch base: Always let someone know where you are going and when you'll 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 and say, for example, "The master suite is in the back of the house."
12. 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.
13. Agree on an office distress code: Create a 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. Use this if the person you are with can overhear the conversation, but you don't want to alarm them. Example: "Hi, this is Jennifer. I'm with Mr. Henderson at the Elm St. listing. Could you e-mail me the RED FILE?"
14. 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.
15. Open house: It ain't over till it's over: Don't assume that everyone has left the premises at the end of an open house. Check all of the rooms and the backyard prior to locking the doors. Be prepared to defend yourself, if necessary.

For more safety tips, NAR has a wealth of resources, including articles, videos, webinars, and

courses, to help agents, brokers, and associations better understand and educate each other about the risks they face. Please visit NAR's REALTOR® Safety website at www.nar.realtor/Safety.

These tips should be followed every day because your safety ought to always come first! I look forward to seeing all of our members and friends at our 35th Annual Holiday Party and Toy Drive on December 12th, 2019, at the fabulous Marina del Rey. Celebrate your Holiday office party with us. Tickets are \$150.00 for members and \$200.00 for non-members. For tickets, sponsorships or more information, please contact 718-892-3000. Remember, "There's no place like home!"

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