




**MOVOTO SELECT NETWORK
REAL ESTATE AGENT
SAFETY GUIDELINES**



An Overview of Best Practices
for Staying Safe on the Job

The three keys to staying safe on the job:

-  Knowing how to react appropriately to a dangerous situation,
-  Being aware of your surroundings, and
-  Empowering yourself with careful precautions.

(Source: National Association of REALTORS® [nar.realtor/safety](https://www.nar.realtor/safety))

NOTE: You should always follow our intuition, and never step into situations that you feel uneasy about.



The Movoto Select Network recommends the following REALTOR® Safety Practices in addition to any safety policies or guidance from your brokerage:

SAFETY AT PROPERTY SHOWINGS

When meeting a client alone, you can minimize your risk by adopting these safety precautions:

- When you have a new client, ask him/her to stop by your office and complete a Prospect Identification Form (an example of this form is online at www.REALTOR.org/Safety), preferably in the presence of an associate. Get the client's car make and license number.
- Call references and verify their employment and current address and retain this information at your office.
- Check county property records to confirm the ownership of a property before you go to a listing appointment or approach a for-sale-by-owner listing. The more information you have, the easier and faster it is for police to catch a perpetrator if you become a victim.
- Introduce the prospect to someone in your office. A would-be assailant does not like to be noticed or receive exposure, knowing a person could pick him/her out of a police lineup.
- 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.
- Have a check-out employee board at work, listing your name, destination, customer name, date and expected return time.
- Never list a property as "vacant." This is an open invitation to criminals.
- Show properties before dark. If you are going to be working after hours, advise your associate or first-line supervisor of your schedule. 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.
- Be sure to use the lockbox property-key procedure that has been established to improve real estate agent safety. A reliable, secure lockbox system such as those made by REALTOR Benefits® Program partner SentiLock (www.sentrilock.com) ensures that keys don't fall into the wrong hands.
- Try and call the office once an hour to let people know where you are.
- If you think it may be some time before a property sells (and you may, therefore, be showing it often), get acquainted with a few of the immediate neighbors. You will feel better knowing they know your vehicle, and they will feel better about the stranger (you) who frequently visits their neighborhood.
- Establish a 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. The distress code could be something as simple as "Hi, this is Jane. I'm at [address]. Could you e-mail me the red file?" You can make up your own distress code, i.e., DOG FOOD (when



you don't have a dog) or I'm going to MAYDAY Lane (and there is no Mayday Lane). The distress code should be used if you are uneasy, but do not feel you are in danger. If you are in immediate danger—stop the car and leave the area or jump out of the car at the next stop. Do not hesitate to call 9-1-1.

- Preview the property and don't go into a neighborhood that you perceive as unsafe. Be familiar with the area so you know the location of the nearest police station. Drive there immediately if you feel you are in danger.
- In showing a property, always leave the front door unlocked for a quick exit while you and the client are inside. As you enter each room, stand near the door.
- Prepare a scenario so that you can leave or encourage someone who makes you uncomfortable to leave. Examples: Your cell phone or beeper 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.
- It is better to not display purses while at a property. Lock your purse in the car trunk before you arrive. Carry only non-valuable business items (except for your cell phone), and do not wear expensive jewelry or watches, or appear to be carrying large sums of money.
- Park at the curb in front of the property rather than in the driveway. You will attract much more attention running and screaming to the curb area. It is much easier to escape in your vehicle if you don't have to back out of a driveway. Besides, parked in a driveway, another vehicle could purposefully or accidentally trap you.

(Sources: National Association of REALTORS®, Louisiana REALTORS® Association; Washington Real Estate Safety Council; City of Albuquerque, NM; City of Mesa, AZ)



SAFETY AT OPEN HOUSES

An open house can be a great sales tool, but it also exposes you to numerous unfamiliar people for the first time. Stay safe by practicing these guidelines:

- If possible, always try to have at least one other person working with you at the open house.
- Check your cell phone's strength and signal prior to the open house. Have emergency numbers programmed on speed dial and keep your phone with you at all times.
- Upon entering a house for the first time, check all rooms and determine several "escape" routes. Make sure all deadbolt locks are unlocked to facilitate a faster escape.
- Make sure that if you were to escape by the back door, you could escape from the backyard. Frequently, high fences surround yards that contain swimming pools or hot tubs.
- Place one of your business cards, with the date and time written on the back, in a kitchen cabinet. Note on it if you were the first to arrive or if clients were waiting.
- Have all open house visitors sign in. Ask for full name, address, phone number and e-mail.
- When showing the house, always walk behind the prospect. Direct them; don't lead them. Say, for example, "The kitchen is on your left," and gesture for them to go ahead of you.
- Avoid attics, basements, and getting trapped in small rooms.
- Communicate frequently with the office, your answering service, a friend or a relative that you will be calling in every hour on the hour. And if you don't call, they are to call you.
- Inform a neighbor that you will be showing the house and ask if he or she would keep an eye and ear open for anything out of the ordinary.
- Don't assume that everyone has left the premises at the end of an open house. If you feel safe doing so, check all of the rooms and the backyard prior to locking the doors. Be prepared to defend yourself, if necessary.

If you are showing model homes, here are three tips that can help keep you safe:

- If possible, always try to have at least one other person working with you at the home.
- When a person comes through the office to view a model home, have them complete a guest register that includes their full name, address, phone number, e-mail, and vehicle information.
- Keep your cell phone and your car keys with you at all times. Keep your handbag locked in the trunk of your vehicle.
- When closing the model homes for the night, never assume that the home is vacant. Check the interior of the house prior to locking the doors, working from the top floor to the bottom, back of the house to the front, locking the doors behind you. Be familiar enough with each home to know the exits. Be aware of your surroundings. Be prepared to protect yourself.

(Sources: National Association of REALTORS®, Washington Real Estate Safety Council; City of Mesa, AZ; Georgia Real Estate Commission)



CELL PHONE SAFETY

Your mobile phone can be a lifeline for situations from car breakdowns and getting lost on your way to a property showing, to potentially threatening situations. Keep a fully charged cell phone with you during your workday and after work, including while you're showing a property or hosting an open house.

Here are some "do's and don'ts" for making the best use of your cell phone:

- To best prepare for an emergency, pre-program important numbers into your phone. These may include your office, your roadside assistance service or garage, and even 9-1-1.
- In case you are incapacitated in an emergency such as a car accident, you can help responders identify who they should contact by using the acronym "I.C.E.": In case of emergency. Simply enter ICE before the name of the person or people you want contacted, such as ICE Larry. This is becoming an accepted standard across the U.S.
- Be careful with giving confidential information such as bank account numbers over your cell phone. Eavesdropping is a genuine problem for users of analog cell phones and cordless phones. The FM radio signals these phones transmit are easily monitored using readily available radio receivers, commonly called scanners. Digital cellular and cordless phones are dramatically less vulnerable to eavesdropping. Also be aware of your surroundings and eavesdroppers when talking on your cell phone in public.

(Source: National Association of REALTORS®)

SMART PHONE SAFETY FEATURES

iPhone

- **Emergency SOS Mode:** Check your settings: Go to Settings > Emergency SOS. Do any of the following: Turn Auto Call on or off: When Auto Call is on and you start Emergency SOS, iPhone plays a warning sound, starts a countdown, then calls the emergency services in your region. Turn the countdown sound on or off: When Countdown Sound is on, iPhone plays a warning sound even in silent mode or when Do Not Disturb is turned on. <https://support.apple.com/guide/iphone/make-emergency-calls-iph3c99374c/ios>
- **Medical ID & Emergency Contacts:** **Medical ID.** Open the Health app and tap the Summary tab. Tap your profile picture in the upper-right corner. Under Medical Details, tap Medical ID. Tap Edit in the upper-right corner. To make your Medical ID available from the Lock screen on your iPhone, turn on Show When Locked. **Emergency contacts.** Open the Health app and tap the Summary tab. Tap your profile picture in the upper right corner. Under Medical Details, tap Medical ID. Tap Edit, then scroll to Emergency Contacts. Tap the Plus button next to "add emergency contact." Tap a contact, then add their relationship. Tap Done. <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT207021>
- **Do Not Disturb While Driving Mode:** Tap Turn On While Driving, and it will turn on automatically when your iPhone connects to your car via Bluetooth1 or when your iPhone



senses driving motion. You can change the method that your iPhone uses to determine whether you're driving or turn the feature on manually. <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT208090>

- Best Practice - Turn on FindMyiPhone: On your iPhone, open the Settings app. Tap your name. Tap Find My. If you want friends and family to know where you are, turn on Share My Location. Tap Find My [device], then turn on Find My [device]. <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT210400>

Android

- Add Emergency Information & Contacts to The Lock Screen: Open your phone's Settings app. Tap About Phone and then Emergency information. Enter the info that you want to share. For medical info, tap Edit information. If you don't see "Edit information," tap Info. For emergency contacts, tap Add contact. If you don't see "Add contact," tap Contacts. To clear your info, tap More and then Clear all. <https://support.google.com/android/answer/9319337?hl=en>
- Lockdown Mode: To do this, follow these steps: Open Settings, Go to Security & Location, & Go to Lock screen preferences. <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-to-use-the-android-pie-lockdown-mode/#:~:text=Lockdown%20mode%20aims%20to%20protect,code%2C%20password%2C%20or%20pattern>
- Best Practice - Activate Find My Device: Open your device's Settings app. Tap Security and then Find My Device. If you don't see "Security," tap Security & location or Google and then Security. Make sure Find My Device is turned on. <https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/3265955?hl=en>

(Source: Carl Carter, Jr., Founder of the Beverly Carter Foundation)



REALTOR® SAFETY PLEDGE:

As a REALTOR®, my first priority is the well-being and safety of myself, my REALTOR® colleagues, the clients and customers we serve, and the business partners who foster our profession.

Therefore, I pledge to always conduct business and prospecting activities in a reasonably safe manner, which includes following the recommendations from the National Association of REALTORS® and adhering to the Safe Listings Form to the best of my ability.

I am committed to receive education and in turn to advise consumers and colleagues on best safety practices.

REALTORS® are committed to safety, and I take this pledge because I care about the wellbeing of myself, my clients and customers, my colleagues, and my profession.

To take the REALTOR Safety Pledge, visit <https://www.nar.realtor/safety/pledge>.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- National Association of REALTORS® Safety Program, www.nar.realtor/safety.
- National Association of REALTORS® Safety Tips, <https://www.nar.realtor/safety/realtor-safety-tips-from-nar>.
- Beverly Carter Foundation, www.beverlycarterfoundation.org/safety-resources.
- RealSafeAgent, <https://www.realsafeagent.com/resources/video-library>.