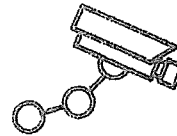


# Real Estate Safety Matters: Safe Business = Smart Business



1-Hour Presentation Student Handouts

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## ***Agent's Property-Showing Safety Checklist***

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### **Before a Property Showing**

- Check out prospects on Google, social media or a background checking site.
- Ask prospect to meet at your office or in a public place.
- Ask all prospects to fill out a customer identification form and provide ID.
- Photocopy a prospect's driver's licenses.
- Ask for a prequalification letter from lender, verify the letter's authenticity.
- Introduce prospects to the office manager or a coworker.
- Sign out on the office tracking board.
- Leave a copy of your property-showing itinerary at the office.
- Wear a company identification badge and display your company name on your car.
- Dress professionally in business outfits, wear shoes that you can run in.
- Take a partner—another agent, friend, or family member—with you.
- Set up a distress code with the office, friends, or family.
- Make sure that co-workers, friends, or family who receive an alert know what to do.
- Lock your purse or briefcase in your car trunk before arriving at an appointment.
- Remind your clients to remove or lock away keys, credit cards, mail, bills, family photos, firearms, drugs, jewelry, fine crystal, furs, and other valuables and secure pets.

### **At the Property**

- Learn the house before your show it, look for escape routes and obstacles like fenced yards.
- Show the property in daylight.
- Park your car at the curb in front of the property, not the driveway.
- Take a photo of the prospect's license plate and send it to the office.
- Call or text the office to let them know you have arrived, where you are, and who you are with.
- Set the alarm app on your phone for the time you think it will take to show the home.
- Set the alert app on your phone for quick emergency notifications.
- Keep at least one hand free.
- Before entering a vacant property, walk the perimeter to check for signs of squatters, break-ins, or other illegal activity.
- Follow lockbox procedures.
- Leave the front door unlocked for a quick exit.
- Walk behind the prospect as you view the property, don't turn your back.
- Keep prospects together.
- Stay close to the entrances of rooms and avoid going into cellars, attics, walk-in closets, and other "dead-end" rooms.
- What else could you add to the list?**

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## *Open House and Model Home Safety Checklist*

### Before

- State in advertisements that identification will be required and surveillance will be in use.
- Ask a friend or colleague to sit the open house or model home with you.
- Lock your purse in your car trunk before arriving at the open house location.
- Park at the curb so your car cannot be blocked.
- Keep a hand free--carry only non-valuable business items.
- Keep your phone and car keys with you at all times.
- Check mobile phone's signal strength prior to the open house.
- Inform neighbors of the open-house event and ask them to alert you of suspicious activity.
- Check the rooms for dead ends and small spaces.
- Position webcams, start up surveillance app.
- Determine at least two escape routes from the property.
- Check the outside for escape route obstacles--fences, shrubbery, ponds.
- Unlock all deadbolt locks for easy access to the outside.
- Lock other entrances so there is only one entry point.
- Do not allow visitors to enter before you have completed your safety check.s

### During

- Sit in a room with a strong phone signal.
- Start up the alert and alarm apps on your smartphone.
- Establish a schedule for calls or alerts so that if you don't check in, your contact will call you.
- Ask visitors to complete a guest register with full name, address, phone number, email, and vehicle information.
- Throughout open house and model home hours, be alert to visitors' comings and goings.
- Consider hiring a security officer for the open-house event.
- If the home has a security system, know how to trigger a remote notification of distress.

### After

- Inform the office, friend, or family when you begin closing; set an alert countdown or check-in time.
  - Lock front door before you do the security check of all doors and windows.
  - At close-up time, check the interior of the house prior to locking deadbolts.
  - Work from the top floor to the bottom, back of the house to the front, locking the deadbolts behind you.
  - Check the backyard and garage.
  - What else could you add to this list?
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### ***Seller's Property-Showing Checklist***

- Remove keys, credit cards, checks, and cash.\*
- Lock up anything that contains personal information including letters and bills, ID badges, address books, and family notes and schedules on the refrigerator or a bulletin board.\*
- Remove or lock up valuables such as jewelry, furs, crystal, small electronics, laptops, and valuable collectibles.\*
- Remove or lock up firearms and ammunition, knives, and other weapons including knife blocks on kitchen counters.\*
- Lock up prescription drugs.\*
- Remove family photos, particularly of children.\*
- Repair items like a loose bannister and remove obstacles that could cause a fall.
- Make arrangements to remove or secure pets during showings.
- Consider extra security or monitoring for the period that the property is on the market.
- After a showing, do a walk-through to check that doors and windows are locked, no items are missing, and nothing has been damaged.
- Don't show the home on your own if prospects or another agent comes to the door.
- Warn children not to open the door to strangers.
- Place a "Not For Rent" sign in the window of a vacant property to prevent rental fraud.
- Review homeowners insurance coverage.
- What else could you add to this list?**

\*These items should be out of sight during photographing and filming for virtual tours posted on the Internet.

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## 10-Second Safety Scan

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People can find themselves in dangerous situations simply because they weren't paying attention. Whenever you arrive at a property, step out of your car, approach and enter, follow this 10-second safety scan to observe your surroundings.

Make it part of your daily routine.

### Take 2 seconds when you arrive at your destination

- Is your car parked in a well-lit, visible location?
- Can your car be blocked in the driveway?
- Is there any questionable activity in the area?

### Take 2 seconds as you step out of your car

- Are there suspicious people around?
- Do you know exactly where you're going?

### Take 2 seconds as you walk toward the property

- Are people coming and going?
- 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?

### Take 2 seconds at the door

- Do you have an uneasy feeling as you're walking in?
- Is someone following you in?

### Take 2 seconds as soon as you enter your destination

- Does anything seem out of place?
- Is anyone present who shouldn't be there?

Remember **POWDER**

Parking your car

Out of your car

Walking to the property

Door

Entering the property

Reverse the scan steps when leaving

Adapted from "What You Can Do About Safety," *REALTOR® Magazine*, September 2000, courtesy of Night Owl/Vector Security, Landover, Maryland.

## Office Safety

Does your office feel like your home away from home? How could such a familiar environment present risks? Do you:

- Work alone late in the evening, early in the morning, on weekends or on holidays?
- Meet unknown prospects there when no one else is around?
- Carry large sums of cash to the bank on your own?

Use these precautions to protect your office premises, business and personal property, and the well-being of your colleagues.<sup>1</sup>

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get to know workers in other nearby businesses and be aware of their schedules  | <input type="checkbox"/> If you encounter an individual while working alone, indicate that you are not alone. Say something like, "My supervisor will be right with you"                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lock doors other than the main entrance and keep a clear exit route from the reception desk to the door   | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't discuss where you live or after-work or vacation plans within earshot of visitors, temporary or new coworkers, or anyone else who makes you feel uncomfortable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep windows unobstructed so that passersby can see in  | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't leave purses, wallets, or small electronic on desks or tucked behind counters  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In large companies, require visitors to sign in and wear a visitor badge—a simple stick-on name tag will do   | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep file cabinets locked  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> When visitors arrive, the person with whom they have an appointment should escort them from reception and to the meeting area   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lock up business letterhead, business cards, checkbooks, invoices, and business forms  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain an agent sign-in/sign-out board and ask agents to leave a property-showing itinerary at the office   | <input type="checkbox"/> Inventory and mark business equipment for easy identification in case of theft or damage   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep an up-to-date list (for use by managers and supervisors only) of agents' emergency contact information as well as make, model, and license plate numbers of vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> Lock up AV equipment when not in use   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Secure spare and master keys in locked cabinets  |

If you must carry large sums of money—cash or checks—to the bank, use the buddy system or arrange for a security service or police escort. Stay aware of your surrounding throughout the trip. Be wary of any strangers lurking around the building entrance or office parking lot.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from NAR's REALTOR® Safety website, courtesy of Sonoma County Crime Crushers.

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## *Auto and Parking Lot Safety Checklist*

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### Auto Safety

- Whenever possible, drive separately; ask prospective buyers to follow you from listing to listing
- Avoid riding in a stranger's car
- Keep your car in tip-top operating condition
- Schedule regular auto service and inspection including tire rotation
- Keep roadside breakdown essentials in the trunk: flares, a tire-inflation canister, basic hand tools, spare belts and hoses, water, a flashlight, a first-aid kit, bottles of water and snacks, and spare warm clothes
- Know how to change a flat tire
- Consider membership in an auto service, like AAA
- Display company identification on your car
- Dress for the weather in case of breaks down or need to escape a dangerous situation on foot
- Know where you are going and the exact address
- When driving in an unfamiliar area, make mental notes of landmarks and intersections
- Avoid aggressive drivers and situations
- Avoid texting while driving
- Use hands-free mobile phone mode while driving

### Parking Lot Safety

- Be wary of any van or large vehicle with tinted windows parked next to your car
- If feeling uneasy, ask a security guard to walk with you to your car
- Don't stand next to the car searching through purse or pockets for car keys
- Keep car key out and ready to open the car door
- Unlock only the driver-side door
- Glance in the back seat and make sure that no one is hiding there
- Make sure that the dome light is always functioning properly so you can see the backseat after dark
- Once in your car, lock all the doors
- Drive away immediately
- Don't sit in the car talking on the phone, adjusting the music, or looking through a purse or briefcase
- If threatened, drive to another location and pull over to call police
- Keep house and office keys on a separate key ring from car keys
- Leave only your car keys with parking attendants and repair garages



## Should You Take a Self-Defense Class?

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Self-defense training offers two important benefits:

- Rehearsing simulated confrontations develops muscle memory of actions to take when threatened.
- Learning to recognize and evaluate threats fosters safety intelligence.

A worthwhile self-defense class is not just about developing muscle, although improving your fitness level may be a side benefit. Effective self-defense training empowers by bolstering confidence in your ability to handle a threatening situation, choose an appropriate response, and defend yourself when necessary. Remember that confidence calms the fear responses that scramble our thoughts and gains time to choose a course of action.

### Choosing a Self-Defense Class

- **Ask for suggestions**  
Ask family, friends, and colleagues for suggestions. Health clubs, martial arts studios, YMCAs, and community colleges often offer classes.
- **Observe a class**  
Watch a class in progress before you sign up. Observe how the instructor conducts the class and interacts with participants. Make sure the atmosphere of the class is conducive to learning and every student has the opportunity to participate.
- **Ask about the training goals**  
You should look for comprehensive training that teaches how to assess threats and choose the best course of action. Comprehensive programs offer a variety of defense options and techniques, and emphasize evaluation of threats before taking action.
- **Match your fitness level**  
Observation of a class in action helps you choose the best training for your fitness level. You will have a better learning experience if your fellow students have similar levels of physical fitness and mobility.
- **Choose group instruction**  
Group instruction offers advantages over one-on-one training. In a group setting you can gauge your progress in comparison to classmates. In addition, you gain experience practicing with and observing the variety of body types and skill levels of the other students
- **Check for safety precautions**  
Look for a controlled environment and the use of padded safety equipment. Self-defense training typically requires some physical exertion, but it shouldn't put you at risk for injury. Avoid training that subscribes to the "no pain, no gain" approach.
- **No-pressure environment**  
Students should not be pressured or bullied into participating in activities they are hesitant to do.

