

Tips for REALTOR® Safety Month

Forbes magazine recently published a list of the world's most dangerous jobs, which included loggers, electrical power line installers, ranchers, and steel workers. We're happy to say that real estate professionals didn't make that list—but that doesn't mean your chosen profession is risk free!



Real estate professionals interface with the general public, which always presents a few risks. Since September is REALTOR® safety month, here are some tips to help keep you out of harm's way.

Meet Prospective Clients in Your Office: Predators avoid the spotlight, and meeting at your office for the first time is a smart way to vet prospective clients. When you meet, make a copy of their driver's licenses to place on file. If/when you do meet them alone in a house, make sure your colleagues know where you are and whom you're with.

Trust Your Intuition: Do you ever get a creepy feeling from a stranger? Your body is hardwired to pick up on signals that somebody is just a little off. Sure, you could be wrong—your client with the shifty eyes or the intense, disturbing gaze may just be a harmless eccentric—but the price of doing business with a shady character far outweighs the cost of losing a client.

Keep Your Cell Phone Charged and Ready: This may seem like a no brainer in an era when our business activities are tied to our cell phones, but we've all run out of juice between texting the family and e-mailing clients all day. Keep a cell phone charger in your car, and carry a battery booster that can charge your phone in your pocket or purse.

Keep It Professional: Don't offer too much personal information to clients—especially in the beginning, when you're still getting a sense of who they are. This applies in all social media outlets as well.

Lead from Behind: When showing a home, allow your clients to enter each room first. This gives you quick access to the door, preventing you from getting cornered.

Carry a First Aid Kit: Anything can happen when showing a home, and you never know when you or your clients might need access to a first aid kit. Keep one stashed in your car—just in case!

Hide Valuables During Open Houses: Criminals target open houses, and they may rummage through drawers and medicine cabinets looking for anything of value, including prescription drugs. Make sure your clients understand the importance of keeping their valuables tucked away.

Brokers Should Ensure a Safe Environment for Agents: Establish safety procedures for your agents such as: Office Check in Policies, Distress Codes, Agent Identification Forms, Agent Itinerary Forms, Advertising Guidelines/Policies, Prospect Identification Forms and Annual Agent Safety Programs or Training.

An excellent brochure, "Safety Awareness for the Real Estate Professional" by the Georgia Real Estate Commission is available on-line as a great resource:

<http://www.garealtor.com/Portals/0/Documents/SafetyManual.pdf>