

Realtor® Personal Safety

Crime Prevention Fast Facts courtesy of Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department, Crime Prevention/Community Education.

- Never meet a stranger or unqualified prospective buyer alone at any property. If possible, always try to meet a prospective buyer at your office.
- It is very important that Realtors® act and dress professionally.
- Always qualify your buyer as best you can. Is he whom he says he is? Is he staying at a motel? What is his car license plate number? (Leave this information at your office).
- While driving to and from appointments, take the safest route and best-lighted streets (day and night) and keep your car doors locked.
- Do not wear expensive jewelry or carry unusually large sums of cash on your person during house showings.
- Never hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers, male or female. (Many female hitchhikers work in teams with male counterparts.)
- If you have any suspicion about a buyer, never meet him/her alone, day or night. Ask another salesperson to accompany you to the showing.
- Make sure that you advise the people in your office of your schedule, either in person or by phone. Make sure the prospective buyer is aware that you have give the information concerning him to your office.
- Be aware of the neighborhood in which you are showing listings. If that neighborhood possesses any possible threat to your personal safety, have another salesperson accompany you to the showing.
- Whenever possible, have the owners of the listed residence personally notify the neighbors in the area and if they see any suspicious activity in or near the home, call 911 or the police immediately.

Personal Safety Tips provided by the Real Estate Safety Council

Ask prospect to stop by your office and complete the personal identification form before going to a property. This should be openly obtained, preferably in the presence of an associate. Information should be retained at office; knowing that a name and address are known may discourage an assailant.

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 out of a lineup.

Use an emergency code word. If you sense you are in a dangerous situation - call an associate or the office with a preassigned emergency code word i.e. "We are on MAYDAY street" or "Look in the RED FILE." Whoever receives the emergency code word should send help immediately and remove the agent from the situation.

Use your own car to show a property. The prospect could have a weapon concealed or even another person

hidden within their car.

The police department recommends: Do not try to talk your way out of a situation. If you are attacked, scream. It has been found that by screaming "FIRE" people sometimes respond more quickly than a plea for "HELP."

Call the police when: Any time you're are suspicious about a prospect. You feel uncomfortable about showing a house to a prospect. You feel suspicious about a person after you have shown a house. You have been assaulted in any way, i.e., robbed, raped, mugged.

Safeguard your office. Keep your windows and counters clear. Robbers and attackers like to work in private and police like to see in. Keep a radio or T.V. playing fairly loudly in the back room when you're alone in the office. Secure all unused doors and windows, especially if they are in the rear of the office and out of sight and sound.

Open House Precautions

- 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 if you were to escape by back door, that 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 on the back, in a kitchen cupboard. Note on it if you were the first to arrive or if clients were waiting.
- When prospects begin to arrive, jot down their car description, license number and physical description.
- 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.
- Watch what the prospects are doing at all times. Do not become preoccupied with viewing the home.
- Notify someone in your 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 notify the police immediately.
- Inform a neighbor that you will be showing the house and ask if he would keep an ear open for any thing out of the ordinary.
- Have someone from your office, a relative or friend stay with you.