



DON'T BECOME A REAL ESTATE AGENT VICTIM STATISTIC

www.ClovisRealEstateAgents.com care about the safety of its members and the real estate professional in general. Real estate agents enjoy working with the public and have historically felt safe while practicing in their professions. However, in recent years the trend has shifted and times have drastically change in our profession regarding safety, with a number of agents raped, robbed and murdered while showing homes and other properties in our valley and around the country.

Many real estate firms have responded to the violence by implementing procedures to help keep their agents safe, but it takes the agent to understand the danger and put those procedures to work for their safety. Agents tend to think that no one is out to get them, and in more cases than not, these days that frame of mind is not longer accurate. If your office has developed agent safety policies, follow them. That is why they are there. We understand that as independent contractors and professionals you do not have to follow rules setup by the office you selected to be associated with, however, danger is a sad reality in our profession today. If your office has not implemented or made available for you especially design safety guidelines, there are several things you can do to help minimize your risks of an attack.

First, verify your customers information. Ask your customer for work, phone and cell phone numbers and a physical address. Verify the information by calling the customer at one or more numbers. If you cannot do that, enter the customer's home phone number or name, city and state on a internet search engine like Yahoo or Google to see if you get a match. Do not meet unknown customers at a property. Require that they come to your office and make sure someone writes down their license plate number and notes the type of car they are driving. Personally, I ask them for their drivers license and make a photo copy for my files. It is NOT rude or out of line to do that.

If are not working with a partner, give someone in your office an itinerary of properties you plan to show and check in as often as possible by cell phone — or ask someone at the office to call you occasionally. If you are working with a partner, make sure him or her can either go with you or know exactly where are you going to be and for how long. Work with others in your office to come up with a code phrase that alerts them when you are uncomfortable about a showing and a second phrase for emergency situations. If you call and say those words, they'll know that someone should either head out to accompany you or call the police.

Never get into a car with someone you don't know. Use your vehicle for showings or ask your customer to follow you in another car. If you encounter a threatening situation while in your vehicle, hit the brakes to startle your attacker. An alternative that some agent advocates recommend is to create a minor, slow speed accident in a public place by brushing up against a fixed object — then open your door and run. If that's not possible, pull the car very close to an object on the right side so that your passenger cannot easily get out, then run. Be noisy — create as much attention as possible to frighten your attacker. Only if you are properly trained use a gun in self-defense.

These Real Estate Agent Safety Tips Are Not To Amuse You. They Are Designed To Save Your Life In An Emergency.

- Carry a cell phone in your pocket and program it to dial 911 at the touch of one key stroke.
 - Never work at a public open house by yourself
 - Do not show vacant properties by yourself unless you know your customers
 - Carry pepper spray or mace in your pocket, but be sure to get the type that can be aimed at a specific target (some are general and might affect you as much as they do your attacker)
 - Let your customers enter a room while you stay by the door
 - Pay attention to exits before hand
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Trust your gut feelings and instincts. Ask someone else to accompany you to show or list a property if you feel uncomfortable about the people you are working with. Don't assume that women are safer customers than men, because they are as capable of armed robbery as a man and sometimes work with a partner who waits at the house for the two of you to arrive.

If your office doesn't have safety procedures, ask the broker of record or office manager in charge to conduct a meeting where agents can work together to devise and implement a plan that keeps you all safe as possible while you're showing real estate. Our profession is fun and rewarding. We help the public achieve the wonderful dreams of home ownership, investments for the future, establishing a business, guiding the customer through mortgage financing, real estate law, contracts, inspections and many more hurdles. It is admirable that we can do that, however, we need to stay safe so we can continue to do so and at the same time enjoy our lives as a result of a job well done.

www.ClovisRealEstateAgents.com searched for official guidelines for real estate agents safety in California. We found that aside of police and other general public safety organizations, there were no specific guideline report that we could find. However, many other Realtor Associations in other states have made one specifically design with tips for Realtors. One of the ones we like was the one prepared by the North Carolina Association of Realtors. They made a complete manual related to the increasing challenge of agent personal safety on the job. Here is the link to the North Carolina report. Please read it and learn from it. Our Clovis and Fresno agent safety is our concern.
<http://www.ncrec.state.nc.us/pdf/brochures/Safetyguide.pdf>

REMEMBER AT ALL TIMES:

We can't over emphasize the need for safety awareness for our members. Fresno and Clovis are continue to grow. That is good for our business as well as for our customers, clients and our area. With progress, also comes danger. Keep in mind at all times the following:

Safety begins with following office procedures designed to minimize risk:

Office Procedures

- Always let someone know where you are going and leave the name and phone number of the client you are meeting.
- Have someone from your office call you every half hour or check in with your office every half hour. Designate one person in the office as the point of contact for this procedure.
- Have a code word for cases where you feel that you are in danger. The designated person at the office is in charge of calling 911.
- Always carry a charged cell phone and program 911 in the speed dial.

- Establish an alert network among REALTORS in your office and association. Use this network to report incidents or suspicious individuals.
- Keep a log of every agent's car make, model and license number.
- Post 'REALTOR Watch' signs on vacant or rehab homes.
- Do not use home phone number on business cards.
- Wear jewelry conservatively.
- Never meet clients after dark in limited cell phone areas.
- Carry pepper spray or mace.

Prospects

- If a prospect requests to see only vacant property or asks if you are coming alone...these are red flags. Beware.
- Never meet a prospect at a property site unless you've met before.
- Beware of individuals that walk up to you on the street and ask to see the property you're locking up.
- Take down the prospect's phone number. Call them to verify that the information is valid. Ask a prospect to come into your office before showing them any properties. Make a copy of their I.D. Place this information in their file.
- Work with a partner

Showing a property

- Know your surroundings.
- Always be aware of your nearest exit.
- Unless you know your client well, do not go into bedrooms or the basement with them.
- Work open houses with a partner. If not possible, have someone check up on you throughout the day every hour on the hour. No exception.
- Let clients go upstairs and/or into bedrooms by themselves.
- If there is a need to show a property after dark, travel with a partner.

These tips were compiled by the Editor of www.ClovisRealEstateAgents.com from diverse police and public agencies as well as including but not limited to the National Association of Realtors, North Carolina Association of Realtors, Washington Association of Realtors, Texas Association of Realtors, Realty Times, and diverse Interstate Law Enforcement Agencies for your benefit and safety.
Be Prosperous, Be Ready and Be Safe.