

Policies on Safety Precautions

Assistance in Developing Brokerage Policy

All brokerage policy / guidance should reference the extensive information available from the CDC to avoid the spread of this deadly virus. It is extremely important for all agents to know and agree to health and safety standards for any in-person and on-property activities, if allowed by the broker.

Brokers may want to consult with legal counsel to determine their liability levels for operations that include public and property contact, and liability if, having given office policy or direction to an Independent Contractor, they fail to operate accordingly.

Suggested office policy directives to consider:

- ✓ Brokers should outline if / when agents are allowed to meet in-person (prospective or current clients), to host in-person property showings (seller clients), or to attend in-person property showings (buyer clients). The Governor's mandate does not prohibit such behavior, provided safety, assembly and distancing mandates are followed. That said, showings and client interactions should be handled virtually whenever possible. The broker will decide their risk tolerance for allowing in-person or property showings. Individual sellers should be consulted regarding any access to their property.
- ✓ Make sure there are rules established for the safety of agents visiting a property for the purpose of taking interior photography, creating virtual tours or creating CMAs if not able to be performed virtually.
- ✓ There should be a differentiation in policy consideration between serving new/existing listings and those transactions that are currently under contract.
- ✓ At no time should anyone enter a property or meet with a client (even at a distance) if he/she has known exposure to the virus or is currently exhibiting symptoms or sick.
- ✓ At no time should anyone enter a property if someone staying in the property has the virus or symptoms.
- ✓ If a brokers allows their agents to meet with clients or attend in-person showings, brokers should also develop guidelines for coverage for agents who are feeling ill, have exposure or symptoms, who have compromised immune systems, who are at higher risk because of age, health or that of those in their household. Brokers may want to consider alternatives for those that are choosing to self-quarantine as well.
- ✓ Agents and brokers should acknowledge through policy and practice that most people do not show symptoms for weeks, so any in-person activity needs the most stringent of caution and care. Defined care should include how touching any home

interior or exterior surfaces must be sanitized, safety protections that must be worn or provided to clients or those entering a listed home, social distancing measures from clients or other agents, limitation of the number of people present at any given time, and finally, what information your firm will share with clients that allow in-person or property access during the emergency order.

- ✓ Rental brokers should not show occupied properties whenever possible and should instead utilize virtual showings. When absolutely necessary, rental brokers should give the existing tenants as much advance notice as possible before showing the unit and the broker should issue the safety procedures for all, including but not limited to how to proceed if a tenant is sick and unable to vacate.

You should note that during the process of helping buyers and sellers reach the closing table, many of the duties that you perform can (and should) be transitioned to an electronic service order to protect the health and welfare of your agents and your clients as well as the community at large.

Activities That May Not Require an Agent's Presence: Policy / Guidance for Brokers to Consider (Based in part on Connecticut Association of REALTORS suggestions)

While brokerages should have a blanket office policy that may allow limited in-person showings, you should also establish that you will only do so if the seller consents and agrees to follow sanitary procedures as well, is not ill, has not been exposed, etc...

- ✓ Consider offering virtual or online tours of exclusively listed property to best serve your seller clients and restrict the opportunity for a showing to only those who would not proceed with an offer without physically entering the property.
- ✓ Consider limiting property showings to only those making the decision, and not others. Liability for exposure grows with the number of people exposed to a home and others who may be a carrier. Showings accompanied by family members, children, parents or friends that are not the direct buyers could elevate a brokerages risk.
- ✓ Consider if you will allow buyers agents to access to property by themselves to conduct virtual tours on behalf of their clients. How safety can access be provided?
- ✓ Connecticut asks brokers to consider providing prospective buyers with the opportunity to view multiple properties only if you are certain a contract may result in the next 30 days. Again, all virtual and online tours should be strongly encouraged.
- ✓ Consider how you will advise sellers on the potential for a limited buyer pool if showing / accepting offers during the State of Emergency, as many buyers are quarantined or not risking exposure during this time.
- ✓ Consider a policy to protect your sellers indicating that any individual without an essential need to enter a property for a transaction is restricted until after the State of Emergency.