

10 Tips for REALTOR® Safety

Add these tips to your personal REALTOR® safety plan.

Tip #1: Don't be too public.

Limit the amount of personal information you share. Consider advertising without using your photograph or home phone number in the newspaper or on business cards. Don't use your full name with middle name or initial. Use your office address -- or list no address at all. Giving out too much of the wrong information can make you a target.

Tip #2: Wear your REALTOR® ID.

Always wear visible company identification such as a badge. It is also best to drive a vehicle clearly marked with your company name. These will be invaluable for identification if you need assistance.

Tip #3: Got cell service, everywhere?

When you're showing commercial property, thick walls and/or remote locations may interfere with mobile phone reception. Check in advance to be sure your phone is serviceable in the area in which you are showing property.

Tip #4: Be in charge.

Whenever possible, be sure your cell phone has a full battery charge or is in the process of charging. This is critical.

Tip #5: Have a lifeline.

If you find yourself to be the last one in an open house and your car is not in the immediate vicinity of the property, then make a phone call as you walk. Assailants will be less willing to attack if you are in mid-conversation with another person. Give your best friend a call; they would love to hear about your day.

Tip #6: Agree on an office distress code.

Create a voice distress code, a secret word or phrase that is not commonly used but can be worked into any conversation for cases where you feel that you are in danger. Use this if the person you are with can overhear the conversation, but you don't want to alarm them. Example: "Hi, this is Jennifer. I'm with Mr. Henderson at the Elm Street listing. Could you email me the RED FILE?"

Tip #7: Have your excuse ready.

Part of being prepared to deal with a threatening situation is having "an out". Prepare a scenario in advance so that you can leave -- or you can encourage someone who makes you uncomfortable to leave. Examples: Your cell phone or pager went off and you have to call your office, you left some important information in your car, or another agent with buyers is on the way.

Tip #8: Nothing personal . . .

When talking to clients and prospects, be friendly but still keep your personal information private. This means avoiding mention of where you live, your after-work or vacation plans, and similar details.

Tip #9: Don't get parked-in.

When showing property or meeting someone, park your car in front of the property rather than in the driveway. You will avoid having your car blocked in, you'll have an easier time escaping in your vehicle and you will attract lots of attention if you need to run, screaming to your car at the curb area.

Tip #10: Plan ahead with escape routes.

Upon entering an open house property for the first time, check each room and determine at least two "escape" routes. Make sure all deadbolt locks are unlocked for easy access to the outside.