



SHINE BRIGHT

TAKING PRECAUTIONS: 5 TIPS TO IMPROVE A REALTOR'S PERSONAL SAFETY

Hosting open houses, going on listings appointments, and meeting relative strangers in vacant homes, are all part of a typical day for a Realtor. They are also situations that can more often than we realize put real estate professionals in danger. Last year alone, roughly 1,000 crimes, from robbery to rape or assault to murder, were committed against Realtors nationwide.

The National Association of REALTORS (NAR) has for many years published Realtor safety guidelines, and the recent conviction in the Arkansas murder of Realtor Beverly Carter sparked a new wave of determination to increase personal safety awareness. NAR's expanded safety program includes one- to three-hour safety presentations that can be downloaded for use by Realtor Associations, as well as a Real Estate Guide to Safety booklet and a wallet-sized card with practical tips available to every member.

From these sources as well as input from real estate professionals to Real Estate Magazine, here are five tips to help real estate agents stay safe on the job:

TIP 1 Be Aware of Your Surroundings

Be on the alert, pay attention to exits, and keep your phone charged and handy. When you show a home, leave doors open, avoid attics and basements, and walk behind your clients.

TIP 2 Trust Your Instincts

Do at least a cursory check on new clients before meeting them at a vacant home. Arrange an initial office consultation and have them fill out an ID form including address, phone number and driver's license – and trust your gut if you feel something is 'off'.

TIP 3 Use a Buddy System

Let colleagues know where you will be and when you expect to return. Some offices have a safety code in place. If an agent calls in and uses that word, a colleague will call 911.

TIP 4 Take a Self-Defense Class

Commonly held at a local adult school or community college.

TIP 5 Research Available Safety Apps

Examples include StreetSafe, Moby and React Mobile. They are inexpensive and offer features like GPS trackers and Bluetooth 'panic buttons' you can stow in a pocket or purse and trigger with the touch of a finger.

HELPING YOU SHINE BRIGHT