NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

CONSUMER GUIDE: BUYER SAFETY WHILE VIEWING HOMES

Searching for your dream home is an exciting time. But there also are potential risks. Follow these practical tips to stay safe during your homebuying process.

Before:

- Work with a licensed real estate professional who is a REALTOR®. Not only is it their job to know the housing market, they also prioritize safety for themselves and you, their clients. Meet with a new agent at their office first, and don't be surprised if they ask for your ID. They are just following safety protocols.
- Only view homes that have been scheduled for you. Never enter a home on a whim even if the opportunity seems too good to pass up.
- Don't walk around vacant or occupied homes without making an appointment or without being accompanied by your agent.
- Drive your own car to showings if possible. If you choose to ride with your agent, have a plan in case you want to leave early or feel unsafe in a property or situation.
- View a home the first time during daylight if possible — you can drive by after dark or during other times of the week to learn what the street or neighborhood is like.
- Make sure your cell phone is fully charged before going out to view homes. Carry a portable power bank as a back-up.
- Ask in advance if there are pets in the home. If there are, you can request that they be secured or removed during the showing.
- Share your location with someone you trust, schedule regular check-ins and a plan for what to do if you miss a check-in.

During:

- Wear nonslip shoes and tour the home with care to avoid falls or damaging property. Watch for trip hazards, uneven flooring, steps, wet surfaces or other unfamiliar conditions.
- Exercise great caution in or around: vacant or under-construction homes; pools, spas or other water features; attics, crawl spaces, roofs or other potentially hazardous areas; electrical panels, furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces, generators or other mechanical systems; and doors and gates that can only be opened from one side.
- Supervise children at all times and don't allow them to wander a property on their own.
- Don't approach or interact with pets or unfamiliar animals.
- In today's high-tech world, assume audio/video recording devices are present and conduct yourself accordingly.
- If you encounter a strong odor, smoke, exposed electrical wiring, standing water, significant structural damage or other hazards, leave the property quickly and safely and let your agent alert the proper authorities.
- When viewing open houses without your buyer's agent, inform the host that you are represented and identify your agent. Let your agent know which homes you viewed.

After:

- Once you take possession of your new home after closing, always change or rekey all the locks. Reset and reprogram all security systems and garage codes.

With a little preparation and vigilance, you can make the purchase of your new home as safe and enjoyable as possible.

Your real estate agent will help you navigate the purchase or sale of your home. Only those who are members of the National Association of REALTORS® may use the term REALTOR®, and they are obligated under NAR's Code of Ethics to work in your best interest. Practices may vary by state or local law. For legal advice, consult an attorney licensed in your state. *Please visit facts.realtor for more information and resources.*