

# 7 SAFETY TIPS FOR BRAND NEW AGENTS

While you've probably thought about a lot of aspects of practicing real estate, the one you should start with is your personal safety. Here's how to stay safer as you go about your daily activities.

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You've made it through hours of, let's face it, often mind-numbingly boring real estate classes. You've passed your state and national exams. You've found the perfect real estate brokerage to hang your license with. You've set your credit card on fire buying supplies and association and MLS memberships. Now you're ready to set the world on fire and become a wildly successful real estate agent!

## How much have you thought about your safety?

Here are a few tips that can help you be safer in your daily activities as a real estate agent.

## DON'T DO IT ALONE

While it's virtually impossible to always have someone with you, there are many times when you can. And it not only helps you be safer, but it can also help your business. Take a partner to an open house (a good lender, home inspector, or contractor – for example). Does the listing have a pool? Tap a local pool store for an expert in pool care. Ask a fellow agent to accompany you on showings. As a new agent, it's an opportunity for you to learn from an experienced agent. Never meet a new client alone. Bring them into your office or meet them at a public coffee shop or café.

## PRACTICE GOOD SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Every safety expert agrees that proactively preventing a safety issue before it occurs is far superior to reacting to a live safety event. The single best way to avoid a serious situation is to practice good situational awareness. Situational awareness is simply being cognizant and aware of your situation and surroundings. Trust your gut. If something feels wrong, it probably is. There has never been a commission check cut that is worth compromising your safety.

## SCREEN YOUR CONTACTS AND CLIENTS

You have to show your driver's license to rent a car, stay in a hotel, buy a beer, donate blood, or get on an airplane. Yet the real estate industry is reluctant to ask a total stranger to show ID before meeting them, alone, in a vacant house. Yes IDs can be faked. But asking for an ID is a simple step that can prevent many potential safety issues.

## TAKE CLASSES & PRACTICE SELF-DEFENSE

The problem with any method of self-defense is that if the techniques and tools are not regularly practiced, they swiftly lose their effectiveness. There is a reason law enforcement regularly practices — it's to build muscle memory. No one knows how they will react in a situation, and the more you practice, the better chance you have of remembering your self-defense tactics and employing them correctly. This brings up the often discussed topic whenever safety conversions arise of whether to carry a weapon. That's a deeply personal choice, and much of the decision is governed by state and local law and regulations. If you choose to arm yourself, you must frequently practice using your weapon. Always remember that carrying a weapon does not guarantee your personal safety.

## USE A SAFETY APP

Technology can be both a blessing and a curse. In the case of safety, it's much more of a blessing. There are numerous safety apps out there that can be valuable tools in the safety toolbox. But simply installing an app on your phone doesn't help. You have to use it, every time.

## IT'S NOT JUST VIOLENT CRIME

Often forgotten are other safety-related things an agent should be aware of. Be prepared for a breakdown. Make sure your spare tire isn't flat and know how to change a tire. Keep a car safety kit in your trunk with basic tools, flares, and cones. Know what to do if someone suspicious starts following you (drive to a police station or public place). Being alert and aware of your surroundings goes for while you're driving, too. Don't drive when you're exhausted. Another thing agents do is send a lot of email and texts, some involving client financials. Be aware of cybercrime and understand basic preventive tactics.

## SADLY, NOTHING ELIMINATES THE SAFETY THREAT

None of these tips will eliminate the safety threat. They can, however, reduce that threat. Be vigilant, be aware, and never take your safety for granted.

*Beverly Carter*  
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