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Steps to Help Keep Your Family Safe and Protect Your Valuables While Your Home is on the Market.

Provided courtesy of your professional neighborhood REALTOR®.

1 NEVER let strangers who walk up to your door into your house.

Make them schedule an appointment in advance. Also, advise your children not to let anyone in the house, no matter what they say. Even if they claim to be a real estate agent and present a business card (anyone can print those), they need to follow your safety procedures.

2 Always screen prospective buyers before they step foot into your home.

Ask for employment information and get a phone number to call them at work. Ask for a cell number. Do internet research and confirm they live where they claim, for renters, call their landlord. "Google" them. You can also search county, sex offender and public records. Talk to their lender, request a copy of their pre-approval letter, which will confirm that they are legitimate buyers. However, remember that home buyers can be criminals, too.

3 Have the first meeting in a public place

Ask your lender, title or insurance company to use their space, or go to a coffee shop. This increases witness potential. Use this meeting to get basic information, including a copy/photo of their ID and to review their pre-approval letter (this will confirm that they can afford your home) and employment information. Utilize a buyer information sheet.

4 Beware of Open Houses

Open houses can be dangerous because you are unable to screen potential buyers and must be careful to follow Fair Housing Laws to avoid discrimination claims. If you decide to host an open

house, have an adult accompany you, get valuables out of sight and stored away. Do not wear expensive jewelry while showing. Have a phone handy in case of an emergency. Have a sign-in sheet and confirm their information on their ID. Note the make, model and license plate of their vehicle and text that information to your emergency contact. Utilize signage that states that you have a camera whether you do or don't.

5 Never give your work or home schedule to buyers

Telling would-be buyers that no one is home at a certain time of the day (for example, "We won't be home until 5:00, so I can show you after then") lets them know the perfect time to come back and victimize/burglarize you (when you aren't home). If you have a landline, do not share that number in case they call and don't get an answer, they will assume no one is home.

6 Never show your home alone

There is safety in numbers. Have another adult with you. Avoid exposing your children to strangers in the house.

7 Always accompany buyers throughout your house at all times

This allows you to prevent theft and the unlocking of windows and doors for later re-entry when you aren't home.



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Hide all valuables

Including jewelry, bank information, prescription medication, electronics, guns/weapons, etc. Hide them where thieves don't think to look. This means jewelry out of jewelry boxes, medicine out of medicine cabinets and guns/weapons in locked safes. If necessary, put valuables in storage. Put all mail away, including credit card bills and bank statements, which could allow identity theft. Put away personal photos of family members.

9

Always have your escape route pre-planned.

In case of an emergency know exactly which door you will use for your escape/exit. Nothing or no one should be allowed to block your emergency exit.

10

Never let buyers get between you and your escape route.

(The front or back door). You should never enter a room or space in front of the buyer, let them lead the way throughout the house. Always!

11

Always let someone; relative, friend or better yet, a neighbor, know who's coming to see your house and the time frame.

Share your check-in time and completion time. Advise who is viewing your home (share a copy of their ID). If they don't hear from you at a predetermined time, they need to call 9-1-1 or get to your house, immediately.

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Keep your cordless home phone in hand at all times, if you have one, or your cell phone, especially if you have an emergency app.

Verify that your cell provider has E911 service. Research location emergency apps that call for help when you are unable to call from your cell phone. See the recommendation below. For cell phones, be prepared to give the address and phone number right away.

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Beware of over-sharing on social media

This includes your children. Don't share or brag about vacations or plans to go out. Don't "check-in" to places. Don't photograph and show, or brag about expensive artwork, electronics, weapons (or even have them in the background of personal pictures), etc.. Be especially careful when photographing the rooms for marketing purposes. Do not discuss family health issues or reasons for selling your home. Do not disclose issues with your home (previous damage, some recent upgrades, etc.) Too much information can provide ammunition for potential buyers and reduce your ability to negotiate.

If you are uncomfortable taking these extra precautionary steps, **call the real estate agent** who shared this information. They have been trained to protect not only themselves but to advise you on protecting your family and valuables, as well.

For more safety information visit
www.safetyandsecuritysource.com