

SABOR Sunday Column

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Safety Protocols Home Buyers and Sellers Should Expect When Working with a REALTOR®

In 2016, the National Association of Realtors® released their Member Safety Report, which surveyed over 3,000 REALTOR® members about how safe they feel while on the job, their personal safety experiences, and the safety procedures and materials provided by their real estate brokerage.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents reported they experienced a situation that made them fear for their personal safety or the safety of their personal information. REALTORS® understand better than anyone the safety risks associated with real estate transactions, so it is imperative to create and share safety protocols with home buyers so they can learn about what they may encounter when working with a REALTOR®.

Here are some safety protocols and guidelines you should expect and keep in mind when working with a REALTOR®, which ensure a safe experience for all parties involved.

Meet your agent at their office. Instead of meeting for the first time at a property, a REALTOR® may set-up the initial meeting at their office. Most people agree that meeting at a real estate professional's office is much more comfortable and appropriate for the first meeting. Generally speaking, meeting a stranger at an unknown location can be an uneasy notion, and this is no different for that initial real estate transaction.

Secure your personal information. Your agent may make copies of your driver's license and mortgage preapproval letter for their records. This allows the agent to keep a record of your information at their office to be stored in a secure place. So be sure to have these items on hand for your initial meeting. According to the *2016 Member Safety Report*, 69 percent of real estate offices have standard procedures for safeguarding client data and information. Keeping this information safe and secure is a crucial step in maintaining a safe agent and client relationship.

Stay away from carpooling. When viewing a property, your agent may ask you to drive separately. This is a safety precaution for you and your agent – so do not feel offended. Most people don't pick up

hitchhikers so you can understand the importance of not transporting strangers to a property showing. Driving separately is also important, as many times, you or the agent will have an appointment to go to afterward.

Your agent might walk behind you. Agents typically let potential buyers take the lead when exploring a home. This is a common safety protocol and also allows you to view each room on the property first and make your own impressions.

View a vacant property by day. Your agent may only show vacant properties by day, so you can see what safety hazards exist, such as loose floorboards or any other defects. So when viewing a vacant – or even an occupied – property, expect to view it during daylight hours.

For more information on buying, selling, or leasing your home visit SABOR.com and use a San Antonio area REALTOR®.

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