



Sunday Column

By Kim Bragman, 2020 Chairman

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Sell Your Home Safely During COVID-19

COVID-19 has changed so many aspects of daily life and interrupted many well-laid plans. And that may include plans you'd been making to sell your home. Whether you need to downsize, change locations to be closer to work, or just want a change of scenery, you don't need to pause your plans to sell, even in the midst of COVID-19. In fact, Texas Governor Abbott declared real estate an essential service as did the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Sellers are still selling, and buyers are still buying.

However, the transaction might look a little different as certain safety protocols must be followed. Here's how you can adapt to this new way of doing business and still get your home sold.

1. **Allow virtual showings of your home.** With today's health concerns, many buyers are preferring to view homes online before making the decision to visit in person. Now more than ever, eye-catching photos and videos of your home are crucial to the sale. You may also talk to your REALTOR® about creating a virtual tour of your home to drive more interest in the property and really showcase what it has to offer. Not only will this add a more in-depth glimpse of the property to potential buyers, but it has the added benefit of allowing them to take a tour from the comfort (and safety) of their own home.
2. **Understand that extra safety precautions will be taken for in-person showings.** While open houses that bring large groups of people into one property are off the table for now, interested buyers can still make arrangements to view a property in person, often after exploring the property online and landing on one they want to consider seriously. You may be hesitant to let buyers into your home right now, but your REALTOR® will work with you on the safety protocols you feel comfortable with. This may include asking buyers to use hand sanitizer when visiting the property, avoid touching surfaces like doorknobs and light switches, and asking the buyer's agent to sanitize the space once the tour ends. You may also consider making hand sanitizer and soap readily available in your home so those touring it have ample opportunity to disinfect.
3. **Inspections and appraisals may be conducted with minimal contact.** While it's still true that you as the seller need to allow the buyer's inspector and appraiser into your home, you can minimize contact with them and request additional safety protocols be followed, though often they will already be doing this. You may be asked to leave the property or stay secluded elsewhere in the home in order to adhere to social distancing

guidelines, and the inspector or appraiser will likely use gloves and disinfectant to ensure the space is sanitized when they are done.

4. **Consider closing remotely.** Texas allows a notary and signer to execute closing documents while in different locations. This is something you'll want to discuss with both your REALTOR® and your lender to learn what options are available to you. Even if closing with a notary, you can maintain social distance, wear a mask and gloves and have minimal contact. If you do have an in-person closing, be aware that you may be limited to how many people can be in the room. This means only the parties signing may be allowed in the room.

Even with COVID-19 taking over headlines and causing disruption to everyday routines, real estate transactions continue to move forward. REALTORS® remain at the ready to provide you with the guidance you need in these uncertain times so you don't have to give up on your buying and selling goals.

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