

Two Steps for REALTOR® Safety

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Did you know according to a recent NAR survey, 1 in 3 Realtors report being attacked or threatened on the job? But whether the statistics are one in three or one in three million, it won't matter if you're the "one." But you can refuse to be a statistic if you'll follow the two most important safety rules.

1. Don't believe it can't happen to you.
2. Have a plan if you are attacked.

The first rule is as easy as recognizing that, just because you've been lucky so far, doesn't mean you are not at risk. The second rule requires only a little bit of time and forethought. Here are some tips to get you started.

- Be alert and trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable, get out!
- Make sure your office knows who you're meeting and when to expect you to check in. (Be sure to check in on time.)
- Before entering a vacant property walk around outside checking for signs of entry and occupancy. If you think squatters or others may be inside, do not enter.
- Try not to do open houses alone. Lenders are usually willing to sit at an open house.
- Know how to use the "panic button" and door chimes on security systems at showings and open houses.
- Never show property alone at night or advertise a property as vacant.
- Develop a coded distress signal with your office and family, so you can call the office or home with a message that alerts others something is wrong and you need help.
- If you feel threatened, announce you're expecting another party to arrive at the property soon.
- Never meet first-time prospects at a property based only on a phone call. Meet at your office first. Ask for identification.
- Always take your own car when showing property. Lock your car doors when entering or leaving. Keep your keys in hand when walking to and from your car.
- Always position yourself between the prospect and the nearest exit. Let prospects explore the home on their own with you following behind. Avoid basements and areas where you can become trapped.
- Make sure your team has an office safety meeting at least once a year.
- Keep your photo, car model and license number, driver's license number, emergency contacts and medical information on file at the office.
- Be ready to defend yourself! Carry pepper spray and learn basic self-defense techniques.
- Read "The Gift of Fear" by Gavin De Becker, available at libraries and bookstores.

To learn more ask your office and local association to have a safety program regularly and checkout the NAR's Safety page. (<http://www.realtor.org/topics/realtor-safety>)

Most importantly, remember that no sale is worth risking your life!

Joe Rosner is a nationally recognized expert on personal safety, crime prevention and self-defense for real estate professionals and other occupations. An updated, more comprehensive version of his "Real Estate Safety Book" will be available in August on Amazon.com