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COMMON PRACTICES THAT PUT YOU IN DANGER

The MLS has been getting reports of brokers being contacted by questionable “clients. Please make your safety a top priority.

These habits may be standard operating procedures when you’re in the field, but they raise your risk of being attacked if you’re with a sketchy prospective client. Here are ways to reduce your risk.

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How often do you do the following things on a day-to-day basis when you’re working with clients? They may seem innocent, but when you don’t know a prospect well and you’re in the field with them and in a vulnerable position, these practices could put you in greater danger. Here are some safety items to keep in mind the next time you’re at a showing or making arrangements with clients.

- **Taking clients into rooms with one exit.** Attics, basements, and interior bathrooms typically have a single doorway to enter and exit and no windows to safely crawl through, so you can easily be trapped. During showings, encourage clients to explore these rooms on their own while you attend to other details or wait in the hall.
- **Parking in the driveway.** Other cars can block you in, which will make it difficult to escape quickly if you need to. Park on the street instead.
- **Straying from windows in commercial properties.** When you’re showing large vacant buildings, the deeper you go into the interior, the better the opportunity for someone to attack you without anyone noticing. Walk clients around the outer perimeter of each floor, where there are windows in case you need to call for help from someone outside.
- **Putting your tech on display.** Displaying your high-end gadgets may help wealthy and technologically savvy clients feel connected to you, but it can also make you a target for robbery. Try to limit the gizmos to private meetings and presentations. If you don’t need it for the appointment, leave it at home or in the car.
- **Relaxing your protocols for relocation clients.** Meeting prospects at the office first is a primary safety procedure, but out-of-towners flying in to see a property may be short on time. You still should have face-to-face interaction in a safe environment before agreeing to meet them at a listing. Communicate with them on Skype or FaceTime before they come to town to get a sense of their demeanor.

Sources: Miki Bass, CEO of the Arkansas REALTORS® Association; Sam DeBord, CRS, managing broker of Seattle Homes Group-Coldwell Banker Danforth, Seattle; Tracey Hawkins, founder of Safety and Security Source, a real estate-focused security company



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