



BE SMART. **BE SAFE.**

Personal Safety Guide for Real Estate Agents

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"As a former hand-to-hand combat instructor in the Marine Corps, a veteran of the real estate industry, and also the CEO of a large real estate brokerage, I am passionate about educating and promoting agent safety. I fully endorse the guidance listed below, and I hope it helps to create a safer environment for you as an agent. Be smart and be safe."

- JOSH HARLEY
CEO & Founder, Fathom Realty

At Fathom we encourage our agents to be bold entrepreneurs and to be out in front of their community through open houses, showings, and other events. At the same time, we put a high priority on the personal safety of agents as they conduct business, recognizing the variety of potentially dangerous situations in which an agent might find themselves.

While we do not want agents to feel paralyzed and afraid to conduct business, we do want to equip agents with knowledge to practice good personal safety. The following tips are curated specifically for real estate agents to help establish a safer working environment for all parties.



1. Avoid Ever Being **Alone With Your Client**

- We highly encourage having an associate/friend/family member join you during showings or open houses, even if your clients are “nice people.” Oftentimes assailants are intimidated by the idea of a second person supporting you.
- Ask clients to use their own vehicle rather than riding with you.
- Do not linger alone in a vehicle. (e.g. doing paperwork, working on a smartphone, etc.) This can potentially make you a target for carjackers or kidnappers.
- Keep your doors locked until you’re ready to exit the vehicle and always park under a light when it’s dark outside.



2. Keep Your Activity **Visible and Shared**

- If you are doing a showing or an open house, introduce yourself to the neighbors. The more people who have seen you, the more people will be able to know your whereabouts if something were to go wrong.
- Introduce your client to your staff/team/group. The more people who know your client, the less likely your client would be able to remain anonymous if they had bad intentions.
- We encourage you to ask for and keep copies of IDs, license plates, and general info on your clients. The simple act of photographing your client’s driver’s license and sending it to a spouse or colleague will help dissuade a potential attacker from targeting you.
- Keep your colleagues aware of your travel plans when showing homes, meeting clients, etc. Share your itinerary and potentially even set up location tracking on your smartphone. Let your client know that you are sharing your itinerary as an added precaution.
- Establish a ‘safe word’ with your colleagues in case you ever need to communicate that you are in a dangerous situation.



3. Stay Prepared **And Ready**

- Keep your vehicle in good working order so you are not caught in a dangerous situation without transportation.
- Be aware of your location and the directions around your destination. Understand the area.
- If you are able to take a self-defense course, do it! Training prepares you mentally and physically for potentially dangerous situations. We highly recommend learning Krav Maga as the preferred method of self-defense.
- Consider carrying safety tools to protect yourself, such as a legally concealed firearm, pepper spray, or a taser. Other less-violent tools could even include a personal safety alarm or a smartphone safety app. If you are going to carry a weapon of any kind, be prepared to use it or do not carry it. Your own weapon may be used against you if you hesitate.



4. Be Smart **During Showings**

- When showing a home, avoid leading your clients into closed rooms that do not have secondary exits. If you are unable to avoid these areas, keep your clients in front of you, and remain in the doorway while they view the room.
- Only schedule showings in daylight if at all possible. Do not plan for night-time showings when they can be avoided.
- Be aware of squatters that might be occupying the home. If this is the case, do not enter the home and contact local law enforcement.
- Keep your valuables out of sight. Do not carry them into houses or in the open.
- Keep a phone on your person, but out of sight, in case of an emergency.



5. Stay Safe **During Open Houses**

- First, put away the knives in the kitchen. They will not help the home sell and the seller will not freak out if you hide them in another location. Don't unknowingly hand someone a weapon to use against you.
- Second, know where each exit point is, and if it's out to the back yard, know which side of the yard the gate is so you don't run to a side where you'll find yourself cornered with no escape.
- Third, bring another agent, your spouse, or a lender. This will reduce your chances of becoming a target.
- Fourth, carry some sort of protection that is accessible at all times... but if you do, know how to use it and be willing to use it otherwise it will be the weapon used against you.
- Fifth, check in with someone every 30 minutes. If you fail to check-in, they need to contact you and be ready to call the police with your location if you fail to answer.



6. Trust Your **Instincts**

- If in any scenario you feel uncomfortable for any reason, do not hesitate to act on your instincts, even at the cost of politeness. Your safety is priority. Your instincts are more reliable than you probably believe, so do not ignore them.
- Be watchful of your surroundings.
- If your client is making you feel uneasy, remove yourself from the situation.

For further resources on personal safety, the National Association of REALTORS® offers a wealth of resources dedicated to all things agent safety and disaster preparedness on their website. Visit www.nar.realtor/safety.