

## Cell Phone Safety: How to Use Your Mobile Phone as a Safety Tool

Here's how you can make the most of your mobile phone in your day-to-day job:

- 1. In general:** Always carry a charged mobile phone. Clip it on and make it part of your everyday apparel for immediate accessibility.
- 2. In your home office:** Even when you're using a regular telephone in your home office, keep a fully charged mobile phone with you, just in case. Program your emergency phone numbers onto your office line as well as your mobile phone, and keep a printout of emergency numbers at your desk.
- 3. At open houses and property showings:** Check your cell phone's strength and signal before each open house and showing that you host, and always carry an extra, fully charged cell phone battery. You should have emergency numbers programmed on speed dial. Also, notify someone in your office, your answering service, a friend or a relative that you will be calling in every hour on the hour. And if you don't call, they are to notify the police immediately.
- 4. In your car:** Keep your phone handy in car. Use it to report accidents and suspicious behavior, or to call for a ride or mechanical assistance if your car breaks down or you are in an accident. You can also call the office or a friend for directions if you are having trouble finding a property.

### Secret Code

Establish a voice distress code, a secret word or phrase that is not commonly used but can be worked into any phone (or in-person) conversation for cases where you feel that you are in danger. Use this distress code if the person you are with can overhear the conversation, but you don't want to alarm them.

The distress code could be something as simple as "Hi, this is Jane. I'm at [address]. Could you e-mail me the red file?" You can make up your own distress code that sounds natural to you and is easy to remember.

The colleague who receives this message will then be alerted that you may be in danger. With your pre-arranged signal, they will know to call 911 on your behalf, or, after asking a few careful questions, can arrange to meet you so that you are not alone, or call you back and ask you to leave to respond to an "emergency situation."

The distress code should be used if you are uneasy, but do not feel you are in danger. If you are in immediate danger – stop the car and leave the area, or jump out of the car at the next stop.

**One final and important note:** Do not hesitate to dial 911 in an emergency.

This article is part of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® 2005 REALTOR® Safety Week Kit.