

10 Safety Tips for Showing Property

Follow these 10 tips to minimize your risks while showing property.

1. Instead of meeting new clients at the property, ask them to stop by your office and complete a Prospect Identification Form. Gather information on each, including their car's make and license number, a copy of their driver's license and references.
2. While the client is in the office, introduce them to one or more of your colleagues. A would-be assailant does not like to be noticed, knowing a person could pick him or her out of a police lineup.
3. Always let a colleague, friend or family member know where you are going and when you expect to return. Give that person the name and phone number of the client you are meeting.
4. Try and call the office once an hour to let people know where you are.
5. Establish a voice distress code, a secret word or phrase that is not commonly used but can be worked into any conversation for cases where you feel that you are in danger. Use this 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?" 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. Do not hesitate to call 911.
6. Preview the property and don't go into a neighborhood that you perceive as unsafe. Be familiar with the area so you know the location of the nearest police station. Drive there immediately if you feel you are in danger.
7. Carry only non-valuable business items (except for your cell phone), and do not wear expensive jewelry or watches, or appear to be carrying large sums of money. Lock your purse in your car trunk before you arrive.
8. Park at the curb in front of the property rather than in the driveway. You will attract much more attention running and screaming to the curb area. It is much easier to escape in your vehicle if you don't have to back out of a driveway. Besides, parked in a driveway, another vehicle could purposefully or accidentally trap you.
9. In showing a property, always leave the front door open wide while you and the client are inside. As you enter each room, stand near the door.
10. When you show a home, always let the prospect walk ahead of you. Direct them;

don't lead them. Say, for example, "The kitchen is on your left," and gesture for them to go ahead of you.

(Sources: *Realty Times*, *REALTOR® Magazine Online*, Mesa, AZ Police Department, *REALTOR® Magazine*, Louisiana REALTORS® Association, Washington Real Estate Safety Council, Real Estate Safety Council, City of Albuquerque, NM)

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