 Safety Tips! 

Real estate is truly one of the greatest sales opportunities, but it also includes some challenges! No other business offers the opportunity to walk into a stranger’s house with a simple phone call or a welcome open house sign. We know that safety is an issue in any service business, but with a few smart practices, ***12 SAFETY TIPS*** you can feel safe and secure in your real estate business. We need to be aware and realistic that where we work and live may not always be safe.

 A recent FBI “crime clock” states that there is some level of violence that happens in days, minutes and even seconds! On average over 6 million violent crimes are committed annually, including a million robberies and 5 MILLION assaults! You might be thinking, that can’t happen to me…but you may be very wrong…even in your own neighborhood! You can increase your chances of survival with a few tips to keep you safer on and off the job!

1. **PAY ATTENTION!**

The first step sounds pretty obvious, but it is critical…and that is to pay attention! So often we are walking and deep into a phone conversation--this creates the perfect opportunity for someone who may be watching you to create a crime. People become victims because they fail to pay attention to what is happening around them--this signals a “would be attacker” that you are an easy target! Don’t allow yourself to be compromised…simply stay ALERT!

1. **PROJECT A CONFIDENT ATTITUDE.**

Most security experts will agree that crooks and criminals look for the weakest prey, so after paying ATTENTION, you must learn to project a confident attitude. When you project an image of confidence, strength and assertiveness you are on the right path! Don’t underestimate the power of strong DIRECT eye contact. Your Body language is key to whether you are an easy candidate for an attack. Avoid wearing headphones, big hats or be deeply immersed in a cell phone conversation as this will impair your sensory perception. Be in the moment to be aware!

1. **HAVE SYSTEM THAT KEEPS YOU ORGANIZED.**

Another important step is to find a system that keeps you organized when showing property. Use an easy to locate “clip” for your keys, and cell phone to keep them handy and accessible! As women, we tend not to wear clothing with enough pockets, so we shove way too much in our purses or briefcases and then spend precious time digging! Distraction is what a criminal looks for, so don’t look or appear distracted to a perpetrator!

 **4. BE SAFE IN YOUR CAR** Here are a few tips on CAR safety! Cars are often a magnet for criminals – they either want the car, what’s in it or you!

* Do what you can to make your car tougher to steal.
* Park in well lighted areas, and remember WHERE you parked!
* Before getting into the car, take a minute to scan the back seat and as you get in, look around to see if anyone seems too close to your car. If you approach your car and see a “note” on your windshield, leave the note there - Get in the car, drive away and check the note when you are in a safer place!
* Pay more attention to the time it takes for you to get in or out of your car! Some people take a lot of time getting themselves “situated” as they get into their car.
* When you are alone, just get in the car and hit the LOCK button. Then take the time to put on your seatbelt and dig out your phone and adjust the temperature. Women are often guilty of juggling purses, cell phones, and files, but we all need to get better at watching and aware of our movements getting in and out of our cars.
* When pumping gas, get out of the car, lock the car and take the keys with you. Of course, keeping your car fueled up so you can fuel up when it is daylight or safe to do so.
1. **PRE- QUALIFY YOUR PROSPECT BEFORE SHOWING PROPERTIES**

It’s great to get a floor time inquiry from a prospect that has interest in seeing a property! But just because you get a call doesn’t mean that prospect can actually AFFORD that property! Rarely is a prospect sitting in front of the house with a for sale sign stashing a bag of cash and ready to pay for it! Don’t feel like you have to drop everything to “meet” someone you don’t know and haven’t qualified them to see if they can even afford it before showing a property to a stranger! Be polite and say that your company policy --agreed to by your seller-- is to meet any prospects at your office FIRST before entering the home. Both you and your sellers deserve to know who is in their home and if the prospect is qualified to buy it! So getting a prospect to your office is a non-negotiable!

* If they **RESIST,** then **INSIST** that you would be offering them a much higher service by meeting in advance to help them identify similar properties as well discussing their needs and wants. This gives you the chance to qualify what they want, what they can afford and most importantly who they are and if they are in fact a legitimate prospect! –
* When you meet them at the office, ask them to fill out your prospect information form that includes their full name, address, and phone numbers. Make a copy of their driver’s license, and secure their vehicle information. This will be important to working together going forward to schedule private showings. •
* And when appropriate, have a customer sign your buyer rep agreements, a perfect time to find out if they are working with another agent…always good to know up front!
1. **USE A BUDDY SYSTEM**

Showing VACANT properties requires additional safety activities when showing VACANT property….use a BUDDY system. This should be a no brainer! Don’t show a Vacant property ALONE ever… Even if it is in your neighborhood! Use a “buddy” system and always have someone with you. If you can’t get someone to go with you at a given time, reschedule the showing at a time that you can have a partner be there with you. Remember, if someone truly is interested in only THAT property, it can be set up for another time. Better to be safe than sorry!

**7. BE SAFE AND PREPARED AT OPEN HOUSES**

Holding an open house? There are several smart strategies for a safe and successful open house.

* Have a system to let your office and family know where you are going to hold the open house – include the address and the time you will be conducting the open house.
* Keep your phone accessible during all showings. If you are alone when a prospect comes in, and for some reason, you begin to feel uncomfortable. Welcome them and mention that your partner is stopping by shortly to help answer questions. If for any reason during a showing a customer makes you uncomfortable, call your office.
* Set up a COLOR CODE system in advance to communicate your concerns should you feel compromised. Set up with your office to know that if you refer to a GREEN folder it means all is well, If you start talking about a YELLOW Folder that is code to indicate you aren’t sure about your safety and might be concerned. Any conversation that starts with an exchange about RED folder means I need help FAST! Be sure your office knows in advance where you are holding the open house, the hours you will be working there and directions to the property. If you need help, this will expedite any assistance.
* After your open house, take a few minutes to double check that all doors and windows are locked. It has happened where a prospect walks through and while you are distracted, can unlock a door or window for access later. It only takes a minute, but you could be eliminating easy access for a home invasion later.

**8. TAKE A CLASS IN SELF –DEFENSE**

 Take a class in self -defense. You might think this is an extreme recommendation, but many of us have not been in a situation where self -defense has been practiced or refined! You might think you will react aggressively, but that is not always the case! Women are rarely in situations to cause harm to anyone, so it is not a natural default. Learning how to defend yourself can save your life and is a great way to boost your confidence and even meet new prospects! You don’t have to be a black belt in karate, but one of the best programs for women is a program called MODEL MUGGING. It is a self -Defense program Designed for the special needs of Women. The key is to learn how to manage your adrenalin before you are in a situation where panic takes over. <http://modelmugging.org/>

**9. INVEST IN SAFETY APPS**

Invest in a new app that turns your cell phone into a personal safety device - Personal security apps for mobile phones are here! The app offers a silent panic button, where a person in distress basically sends an SOS signal with GPS coordinates by pressing a button on their cell phone. Then the data is sent to specific individuals who are preprogrammed into the person’s smartphone. These apps are affordable and a good reason to keep your cell phone accessible.

**10. BUY SAFETY ACCESSORIES** Want to have some tools or devices to defend yourself? According to security experts, weapons are used less than 5% of the time. But besides being proficient in self-defense, having a device can be helpful if you know how to use them. Believe it or not, in most cases, loud noises will do the job to scare off an attacker.

* The most inexpensive device to scare off an attacker is a good whistle. Invest in one made with metal that emits a very loud noise. Attach it to an elastic bracelet or hold it. Burying it on your keychain may not be a timely way to use it when you need it.
* Other devices include personal alarms, stun guns and Tasers. Stun guns are a hand held device and are only good in close proximity. They use high-voltage electricity to stop an attacker by momentarily disabling muscle control, but you have to be touching the attacker, and be strong enough to hold it on the attacker for several seconds. A TASER device is an electroshock weapon that emits an electrical current to disrupt muscle control, stopping an attacker dead in their tracks, and can be used both close and in far range. They are expensive and you do have to pass a felony background check to get one. Either way, in order to protect yourself, you need to have the device handy when you need it.
* Pepper sprays are legal in most states and do not cause permanent injury but can be less effective if it is windy. Any device you choose will require training and good judgment. You don’t’ want to wait until you “need” it before knowing how to deploy and use it for your safety, but do know that any expert will tell you that you cannot simply depend on any device.

**11. BE SMART WHEN MARKETING YOURSELF** A smart agent knows they must market themselves, but let’s be smart about what we are putting out there! Be mindful of what you say, when you say it and how you appear. If someone wanted to rob a person, it would be a smart move to attack a person that showed affluence. Be mindful of wearing expensive jewelry, flashy suggestive clothing that appears pricey and enticing. Always look and dress professionally. Be tasteful in posting your photos online. It’s not about minimizing your style, but more about sending the right message. Be careful about posting where you are at the moment, or posting pictures while on vacation. In addition, never list your home address or home number on any social portal. Instead, use the office contact information.

**12.** **USE AND PRACTICE QUICK SAFETY TIPS DAILY** – here are a few short tips to round out how to be safe and successful:

1. Take the time to drive through the neighborhood prior to a private showing or open house and observe…Note any items that convey a safety concern.
2. Before a showing or an open house, identify each of a home’s exits and note windows.
3. Leave your purse in the trunk of your car and don’t travel with a lot of cash and credit cards. Take what you need and leave the rest in a safe place.
4. Be sure your car is equipped with emergency items, like a working flashlight, jumper cables, tire repair products and flares. We work out of our cars, so take the time to schedule regular maintenance so you ensure that you have a safe and working vehicle as an on the road office. And finally

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS. If something doesn’t feel right, remove yourself from the situation. Don’t worry about offending a client. Your safety is most important!

Be successful and safe! Follow these 12 steps to make real estate fun, exciting, profitable, successful and most importantly SAFE!

*Note: The above are recommendations for safety. The IMT/TMC companies take no responsibility for products, recommendations made here are intended to inform the reader of options only*

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