

Appointments and Showings

REALTOR® Alliance of Greater Cincinnati

Listing REALTORS®

Prior to obtaining your client's signature on the listing agreement, it is your duty to discuss with your client your firm's policies with regard to how the property will be shown to potential buyers, including reviewing the video and audio surveillance acknowledgement form along with other listing documents. You should determine with your client:

- *Showing Instructions*

Determine entry and keybox location, how to handle pets, security system codes and system location. Make sure the seller understands the need to take precautions regarding valuables, medications, and firearms. If there are security cameras in use (video and/or audio), advise the sellers to check with their attorney regarding their legal requirements pertaining to use and disclosure. ([ORC 2933.52 - http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/2933.52](http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/2933.52)) Determine who will be allowed keybox entry to the listing and be certain the listing agreement reflects those instructions. Determine whether there will be simultaneous showings allowed, whether disclosure will be made to cooperating agents and how agents should handle the key in those situations. Determine whether a cooperating agent should be requested to leave a business card at the showing or if personal notes and/or video/audio messaging from the buyer's agent should be prohibited. Advise the seller that some buyers feel they are intruding on their privacy if they remain on the property, so it may be a good idea for the seller to leave the property and give the buyer the freedom of discovering their home.

- *Available Showing Times*

You should discuss with the seller any specific dates and times the property will or will not be available for showings. These times should be noted on the property's showing information sheet. You should encourage your seller to make the property available as much as possible as a convenience for potential buyers to view the home.

- *Seller Confirmation*

If the seller requires that every showing must be personally confirmed by him or her, the listing REALTOR® or third-party showing service representing listing REALTOR®, should take steps to determine how the appointment confirmation shall occur as quickly as possible. It is the responsibility of the listing REALTOR® to contact the cooperating REALTOR® immediately after confirmation has been obtained.

If the seller does not require personal confirmation, the listing REALTOR® should leave a message by the means determined at the time of listing, notifying the seller that a showing has been scheduled for that day.

- *Special Circumstances*

It is the seller's responsibility to make the property available for showings. In the event of any unforeseen illness or any other reason that requires the home not to be shown for a short period of time, the listing REALTOR® should note the names of any REALTORS® seeking cooperation, or any other interested party or parties, and contact them as soon as the property is once again available for showings. If there will be contractors or other persons (listing agent, seller, etc.) at the property during the time of a scheduled showing, notification should be made to the showing agents. Instructions as to how the property is to be left (locked/unlocked) should be provided.

- *Code of Ethics*

Article 3, Standard of Practice 3-6 of the Code of Ethics states: REALTORS® shall disclose the existence of accepted offers, including offers with unresolved contingencies, to any broker seeking cooperation. (Adopted 5/86, Amended 1/04)

If a seller accepts an offer, the cooperating REALTOR® must be informed, regardless of the status of contingencies or deposit of earnest money – even if the listing is not yet showing as “Pending” in MLS. Although the seller may want to entertain additional offers for possible back-up, the buyer's agent needs that information to convey to a potential buyer, so they can make an informed decision as to whether they want to proceed with the showing.

- *MLS Rules and Regulations*

Your listing becomes an offer of compensation and cooperation to other participants in the system. Cooperation in this context means you are granting all other MLS participants the ability to show the property.

If the seller agrees to list the property with you but requires that it not be shown for an extended period of time following the list date, submit proper documentation as required by MLS Regulations. If showings must be suspended for an extended period of time during the listing period, the listing must be withdrawn from MLS as required by MLS Regulations.

It is a violation of MLS Regulations to submit a property in the system and deny access to other participants. However, if the seller specifically requires you to deny cooperation and compensation to a certain individual participant, it is your responsibility to immediately inform that party, in writing, that this particular offer of cooperation and compensation is not extended to them.

Cooperating REALTORS®

- *Professional Obligations and the Code of Ethics*

Article 1, Standard of Practice 1-16 of the Code of Ethics states: REALTORS® shall not access or use, or permit or enable others to access or use, listed or managed property on terms or conditions other than those authorized by the owner or seller. (Adopted 1/12)

Article 3, Standard of Practice 3-9 of the Code of Ethics states: REALTORS® shall not provide access to listed property on terms other than those established by the owner or the listing broker. (Adopted 1/10).

- Prior to the showing, it is your responsibility to carefully review any special instructions regarding access to the home such as pets or a security system. Remember, you must follow the terms provided by the listing broker regarding these items.
- Make it clear if you are previewing a property and the buyer will not be attending. If you or the buyer would like to take photos, videos, conduct a live feed for an absent buyer, written permission must first be obtained from the seller. Advise your buyers that the presence of video and/or audio surveillance may be in place and that sellers may be watching and/or listening. Comments regarding the property should be reserved for after the showing, once the buyers are off-site.
- It is a violation of Ohio licensing law for home inspectors to conduct a “walk and talk” or “walking” inspection. You must seek permission from the seller and listing agent prior to bringing anyone other than the potential buyer(s) to a showing (i.e., contractor, designer, architect, etc.).
- If the appointment is for an inspection, make sure the listing REALTOR®, or third-party showing service representing the listing REALTOR®, is aware of the inspection that is taking place and that permission has been granted for the buyer to attend, if they intend to do so. Do not open the property for an inspector, **or any other party**, and leave the property. **You must remain on the property until they have vacated, and you can secure the property, unless you have obtained express, written permission from the seller to leave a non-real-estate licensee present on the property without a licensee present.**
- Be on time. **Adhere to the scheduled timeframe. You could be charged with a violation of the Code of Ethics and be subject to a hefty fine if you are present on the property outside the showing time.** Call the listing REALTOR®, or third-party showing service representing the listing REALTOR®, if you are running late (or early) and would like to reschedule or extend the time for the showing or must cancel the showing.
- Never give a key or keybox combination to a buyer (or anyone else), as it is a violation of the Code of Ethics to do so without the express written permission of the listing broker or seller. The scheduled showing is only for the licensee making the appointment. Any change in showing agent must be amended with the listing broker.
- As a cooperating REALTOR®, you have been entrusted with the reasonable and diligent care of the seller’s home. Ensure the combination for a manual keybox can’t be viewed by anyone, when opening the box. Always

knock or ring the doorbell, wipe your feet and wait a moment or two before entering. If a buyer has a service animal that will accompany them to the showing, the seller should be advised in advance.

- You may want to discuss the possibility of simultaneous showings with the listing agent. If unknown, it is a good practice to replace the key back in the keybox upon entering to avoid the potential of having to make a decision as to how to handle an unexpected second showing agent.
- Review and follow all showing instructions carefully. Stay with your clients during the showing. Rule of thumb: If you turn it on, turn it off; if you unlock it, relock it. **Turn off water faucets completely after testing water pressure, lock all doors and ensure the key is in the keybox prior to leaving the property.** Leave the property as you found it. Make sure lighting, thermostat settings, etc. are left undisturbed. It is a good practice to confirm that the property is left secured after the prospects have exited and that the prospects have left the grounds by the end of the scheduled showing time.
- If something seems amiss during the showing, (i.e., air conditioner not working, leaking water, door not locked, etc.) notify the listing agent.
- Check with listing agent or showing instructions to determine whether you should leave a business card prior to leaving the showing. Do not allow your buyer to leave personal notes, written or recorded, without first obtaining permission from the listing agent.

- *Cancellation of Showing Appointment*

If the buyer cancels the appointment or declines entering the property, it is your professional obligation to let the listing REALTOR®, or third-party showing service representing listing REALTOR®, know as soon as possible. It is unprofessional to ask a seller to leave his or her home in anticipation of a scheduled showing even though you already know the showing will not take place. If the buyer decides not to enter the property upon arrival, point out that the property may offer a desirable interior worth checking out or could serve as a comparison to other properties.

Communication Among Brokers

- *Follow-up Confirmations*

It is in your client's best interest to make each showing as easy as possible.

- *Streamline Appointment-Setting Procedure In-House*

If the ability for cooperating agents to place an automatic showing is not in place, ensure that procedures are in place that avoid long holds, multiple call transfers, etc. Advise showing agents whether there may be simultaneous showings and, if possible, who the other agents are, so they will know if someone who arrives during a showing in progress has authority to be there. Advise cooperating agents how to handle the key in those situations, (e.g. each agent should replace key in keybox prior to granting access to a subsequent licensee entering the property, so that there is a record of the subsequent licensee accessing the key).

- *Follow-up After the Showing*

As a courtesy, the cooperating REALTOR® should provide feedback on the property to the listing broker in a timely manner. Any issues discovered during the showing should be immediately reported to the listing agent.

The listing REALTOR® should contact the cooperating REALTOR® to confirm the viewing and request buyer comments.

- *In Conclusion*

There is no one solution for every situation. Use common sense.