



Des Moines Area
Association of Realtors®

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advice for members:

Real Estate is a people business, which means agents will deal closely with a wide range of people in many environments-workplaces, homes, shopping centers and so on. In doing so there are a few precautions they should take to aid the protection of themselves and others:

- Staying home if you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath or any other cold or flu-like symptom.
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for a least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with anyone who is sick
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Keep hand sanitizer with you while showing homes, use before and after
- Avoid shaking hands

What unique issues does coronavirus present to the real estate industry? When an infectious disease, such as coronavirus, is associated with a specific population or nationality, fear and anxiety may lead to social stigma and potential discrimination. REALTORS must be mindful of their obligations under the Fair Housing Act, and be sure not to discriminate against any particular segment of the population.

I typically drive my clients to showings. May I refuse to drive potential clients to see homes? Yes. However, be sure that any change to your business practices is applied equally to all clients. You may refuse to drive clients who show signs of illness or reveal recent travel to areas of increased risk of coronavirus, or you may instead decide to stop driving clients in your car altogether, and simply arrange to meet clients at a property. If you do continue to drive clients in your car, it is a good idea to frequently clean and disinfect surfaces like door handles and seat belt latches, and to ask clients to use hand sanitizer when getting in and out of the car.

Should I still conduct open houses on my listed properties?

Speak openly and honestly with your seller about the pros and cons of holding an open house. Assess the risk based on your specific location, and direct your clients to local and state health authorities for specific information about the severity of the risk in your area. You could also propose alternative marketing opportunities for your seller's consideration, such as video tours and other methods to virtually tour a property. If you do hold an open house, consider requiring all visitors to disinfect their hands upon entering the home, and provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers at the entryway, as well as soap and disposable towels in bathrooms. If you decide to do any cleaning at your client's home, be sure to check with your client in advance about any products you plan to use. After the open house, recommend that your client clean and disinfect their home, especially commonly touched areas like doorknobs and faucet handles.

What precautions should brokers consider taking in their offices?

Brokers should use their best judgment when formulating a plan. First, brokers should implement a mandatory "stay-home" policy for any staff member or agent exhibiting any sign of illness, and depending on where the broker is geographically located, a broker may want to consider imposing a mandatory remote work policy for employees and instructing agents to stay out of the office. In addition, taking measures such as holding virtual meetings or potentially postponing or cancelling in-person meetings or events may be good measures to take to limit close contact between individuals. Be sure to monitor updates from the CDC, as well as your state and local health authorities for additional information and guidance on holding meetings or events.

Finally, do not panic, stay informed, and use your best judgment. The situation is rapidly changing, so focus on putting policies and procedures in place to keep your employees informed, safe, and to avoid business disruption in the event the situation worsens.