



CORONAVIRUS: A BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR NC REALTORS®

North Carolina is currently easing statewide restrictions on business and gatherings. Real estate activity is considered essential and allowed under strict health and safety guidelines. The following best practices are for use by NC REALTORS®. Please make sure that you are following all direction issued by local, state, and federal authorities for all your activities, real estate or otherwise.

As business, including REALTORS®, begin to bring more people back into in person office settings, please remember to following the best practices listed below to keep yourself and your clients safe. Visit [ncrealtors.org/coronavirus](https://www.ncrealtors.org/coronavirus) for more information.

Here are some general preventative measures that the CDC recommends for individuals to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading coronavirus:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a face mask or covering when indoors.
- Practice social distancing by staying out of crowded places, avoiding group gatherings, and maintaining a distance of 6 feet from others when possible.
- Get the COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to you. All adults 16 years and older are currently eligible to receive the vaccine.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Stay home if you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath or any other cold or flu-like symptom.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you choose to conduct in-person showings or other activities, here is some important guidance:

BEFORE CONDUCTING IN-PERSON SHOWINGS

- Check state and local orders to confirm the permissibility, and any specific requirements, of conducting in-person showings.
- Encourage buyers to narrow their property search through photos, virtual tours, and leveraging other technology to reduce the number of in-person showings.
- Consider adopting a policy of asking all buyers for a pre-qualification letter to limit in-person showings only to qualified and serious buyers.
- Be familiar with state and local restrictions based on whether a property is vacant, owner-occupied, or tenant-occupied, and consider implementing different precautions for occupied properties versus vacant properties.
- Discuss with a seller the precautions that will be taken when showing their property, and adhere to any specific requirements requested by sellers showing the property.
- Require property showings by appointment, in lieu of open houses, to reduce the number of persons in a property at any given time.
- Request both the seller and potential buyers to self-disclose whether they have COVID-19 or exhibit any symptoms. However, note that COVID-19 is also spread by individuals who are asymptomatic.
- Be aware of any state or local restrictions on the number of people who may be present at the showing, and discourage non-essential parties from attending the showing.
- Be aware of and comply with fair housing obligations related to COVID-19, see Guidance for Fair Housing Compliance During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Ask buyers to remain in their vehicle until you arrive at the property.
- For owner or tenant-occupied properties, request that the seller or tenant open all cabinets, closets, window coverings, and to turn on lights before leaving the property.
- For vacant properties, arrive early to open the front door, open all cabinets, closet, window coverings, and to turn on lights.

DURING IN-PERSON SHOWINGS

- Adhere to social distancing recommendations, and maintain a minimum of six feet of space between persons at all times.
- Do not share phones, pens, or tablets or other personal property during the showing.
- Avoid shaking hands with clients.
- Limit the number of persons who may attend a showing.
- Comply with any requirements of the seller during the showing.
- Require all persons entering a property to immediately wash their hands or to use hand sanitizer, remove footwear or wear booties, and wear a face mask or covering, and gloves.
- Instruct buyers and others touring the home to avoid touching any surfaces in the home, such as light switches, cabinet and door handles.
- Instruct buyers and guests not to use bathroom facilities at the property.

AFTER SHOWING PROPERTY

- Wipe down any surfaces touched during the showing with a sanitizing wipe or disinfecting cleaner, as requested by seller, and suggest the seller also disinfect the property.
- Wipe down the key and lockbox with a sanitizing wipe or disinfecting cleaner after use.
- Speak with buyers outside of the property or in a ventilated area while maintaining a distance of 6 feet, or arrange to speak by phone or email.
- Do not provide any paper documents, and instead follow up with any information electronically after you leave the property.
- Use hand sanitizer upon returning to your vehicle.
- Maintain a detailed log of interactions to enable contact tracing, to include names, dates, and locations of interactions, as well as a party's contact information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**As restrictions ease, should NC REALTORS® continue to conduct open houses on their listed properties?**

Before scheduling an open house, agents should first consult with their BIC and consider how federal, state and local authorities' recommendations, actions, and mandates, along with local MLS rules, impact the advisability, and even permissibility of open houses. If scheduled, open houses should be conducted in strict adherence to the guidelines in this document and mass gathering restrictions.

How does COVID-19 impact a REALTOR®'s fair housing obligations?

REALTORS® must continue to adhere to fair housing laws during the COVID-19 pandemic. To help REALTORS® navigate their fair housing obligations, as well as some of the novel issues presented by COVID-19, NAR has developed a [Guidance for Fair Housing Compliance During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

May I ask clients or others I interact with in my real estate business if they have traveled recently, or have any signs of respiratory illness?

Yes, you may ask clients or others about their recent travel, particularly to areas identified as having an increased risk of coronavirus. To avoid potential fair housing issues, be sure to ask all clients the same screening questions based on current, factual information from public health authorities.

May I limit in-person showings to pre-qualified buyers?

Yes. Both listing and buyer's agents may ask if a buyer is pre-qualified to purchase and limit showings to qualified buyers. Be sure to ask all buyers for a pre-qualification letter to avoid a potential Fair Housing violation. Keep in mind that it may be difficult for buyers just entering the market to obtain a pre-qualification letter given the current circumstances, as many mortgage companies have been impacted by the pandemic with high volumes of refinancing applications and other operational issues.