



National Association of REALTORS® has dedicated the month of September as REALTOR® Safety month.

The core components of REALTOR® Safety are:

Knowledge - to help remind us to know the dangers we face every day

Awareness - to be aware of our surroundings

Empower - ourselves with precautions and preparations so that we can avoid risky situations

My #1 goal as LIBOR President is to help our members understand the daily risks we face which can mean the difference between life and death. The US Dept of Labor states that we have a “High Risk Occupation.” Did you know, that there are more real estate professionals killed every year than NYPD Officers?

The standard safety advice for real estate agents is to always meet new prospective clients in a neutral place, such as their brokerage office, or to bring someone with them to appointments. Those are both nice ideas and often unrealistic. Let’s face it: Many real estate agents do not vet strangers before meeting them in homes for fear of losing a sale.

This is why I am excited to see so many agents activate their Real Safe Agent app. This app, a free LIBOR Member benefit, is based in behavioral science. It helps agents vet unknown clients and allows us to leverage our own community to share information and help agents out if they feel unsafe - all without jeopardizing a sale.

Here’s how the Real Safe Agent App works: When first contacted by a prospective buyer, an agent sends the buyer a text message with a link where the prospect can upload their picture and name. The link says nothing about safety so there is nothing to make a legitimate prospect uncomfortable. Agents can also request a picture of the prospect’s driver’s license.

Then you can check Agent Comfort Index. This tells you, on average, how comfortable other agents have been while meeting with this person. It also gives you an idea on whether or not you should take someone with you on the appointment. You can also see how many agents have sent this buyer a prospect link, both in total and in the last 14 days. This is important as studies have shown that predators have victim shop.

Then, the agent creates the appointment in the app, noting the prospect's name, the property location, date, time, and expected duration of the appointment. Once the agent arrives, he or she turns on the app's "Showing mode," which makes a false home screen appear on the phone. If an agent becomes uncomfortable, the agent can press anywhere on the screen to send a "drop-in alert" request for assistance to all nearby agents and / or "buddies" previously specified by the agent.

All agents in the immediate area using the app receive the drop-in alert whether their app is on or off; the system allows 2 agents to respond. Buddies can see when a nearby agent is responding to the alert and when that agent has arrived at the property. Responding agents and buddies can also listen to what's going on at the property through the phone of the agent who issued the drop-in alert so that they do not walk into a dangerous situation and can call 9-11 on the agent's behalf.

Real Safe Agent recommends that when the assisting agent arrives, he or she enter the property as if they were previewing it — thereby neutralizing the potential danger, and not endangering the sale if the prospective buyer was not a threat.

In case of an emergency, you can notify 9-11 by shaking the phone as this is the motion similar to striking the attacker with your phone or by running away.

The best part of this Real Safe Agent app is its collaborative and community effort. Remember, after your showing you are requested to rate how comfortable you were on this appointment.

Please visit LIRealtor.com/Safety for safety tips and to activate your Real Safe Agent App.