



# CORONAVIRUS: A BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR NC REALTORS®

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE: YOU MUST FOLLOW YOUR LOCAL ORDERS. NOTHING IN THIS GUIDANCE ALLOWS YOU TO CONDUCT ANY REAL ESTATE BUSINESS THAT IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE AREA YOU ARE WORKING**

If you are in an area governed by a local order or the state's Executive Order 121, most real estate activity is considered essential and allowed under strict health and safety guidelines. The following best practices are for use by NC REALTORS® in those areas ONLY. Please make sure that you are following all direction issued by local, state, and federal authorities for all your activities, real estate or otherwise.

NC REALTORS® should, using available technology, endeavor to do as much of their business remotely as possible to avoid contact. **If you can work virtually, YOU SHOULD.** NC REALTORS® has compiled numerous resources to assist members in conducting their business through remote means. Visit [ncrealtors.org/coronavirus](https://ncrealtors.org/coronavirus) for more information. If virtual options do not exist, see recommended best practices below.

This guidance has been developed using the guidelines issued by the [National Association of REALTORS®](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#).

For transaction-specific questions, please contact your attorney or the NC REALTORS Legal Hotline: [legalhotline@ncrealtors.org](mailto:legalhotline@ncrealtors.org). NC REALTORS® has compiled a list of Q&As here: [ncrealtors.org/covid-19-qa/](https://ncrealtors.org/covid-19-qa/).

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

- 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.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice social distancing by staying out of crowded places, avoiding group gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible.
- 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.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve.

### **If you are allowed to conduct real estate activities in your local area and choose to conduct in-person showings or other activities, here is some important guidance—FOR SELLERS**

- Make sure to disinfect all commonly touched areas like countertops, doorknobs, light switches, cabinet knobs and faucet handles prior to and after each showing.
- Open all interior doors and turn on all lights to minimize touching during a showing.

## If you are allowed to conduct real estate activities in your local area and choose to conduct in-person showings or other activities, here is some important guidance:

- If you can show the property remotely, please do. Use existing virtual tours or walk-through the property on a video call.
- **If an in-person showing is necessary,**
  - You must travel in two cars. You cannot practice social distancing in one car.
  - Limit showings to the smallest group possible.
  - Only allow one buyer group to tour the home at a time. Wait outside if another showing is going on.
  - Use gloves or use a disinfectant wipe to open the lockbox and all doors.
  - You must practice social distancing by maintaining a 6-foot distance when in the property.
  - Don't allow potential buyers to touch anything in the house when showing a property. Wipe down any surface that must be touched with a disinfectant wipe.
  - Make sure that anyone who leaves the home washes their hands or uses an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Inspections and property appraisals necessary for the closing of transactions, purchase, refinance, etc., will be allowed. If possible, inspections and appraisals should be conducted alone. If accompanied, social distancing and the above guidelines must be exercised. Results should be discussed by phone

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### With the Governor's new Stay at Home Order, should NC REALTORS® continue to conduct open houses on their listed properties?

It is recommended to avoid open houses at this time. 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. Many local stay-at-home/shelter-in-place orders and some local MLS rules prohibit open houses during this time.

### What should I do if I live in one area but need to work in another area?

You must follow the order of the area you are working in, not the area you are from. Additionally, some local orders prohibit travel to another area to work. You must follow your local order in that case and not drive to work in another area.

### 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.

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