

2020-2021

General Update Course

Commercial Version

Student Manual



October 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The *2020-2021 General Update (GENUP) Course* is a four (4) hour course that must be completed by all provisional and non-provisional brokers who are not brokers-in-charge and/or do not have *BIC-Eligible* status and who wish to renew their licenses on active status on July 1, 2021, for the 2021-2022 license year. Refer to Commission Rules 58A .1702 and 58A .1703 for a full explanation of brokers' annual continuing education requirements and continuing education required for license activation.

Brokers-in-charge and brokers with *BIC-Eligible* status must take the *BICUP* course each year to maintain *BIC-Eligible* status, as prescribed by Commission Rules 58A .1702 and 58A .0110.

This four (4) hour course will include 210 minutes of classroom instruction and 30 minutes of breaks.

Comments and Complaints

This course, developed by the staff of the North Carolina Real Estate Commission, may be conducted only by Education Providers that are certified by and instructors who are approved by the Commission.

Comments and complaints about the course, Education Provider, or instructor may be directed in writing to:

North Carolina Real Estate Commission
Education and Licensing Division
P.O. Box 17100
Raleigh, NC 27619-7100
Email address: educ@ncrec.gov

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Section 1

Fair Housing & ADA



1. Betty hires Ray, a broker, to assist her with locating a tenant for her basement apartment. Betty informs Ray that the tenant is not allowed to have a pet. Ray places an advertisement on social media and indicates that pets are not allowed for this rental. Ray receives an application from an individual with a service animal and reviews it with Betty. Even though the prospective tenant meets all the qualification requirements, Betty tells Ray she will not rent the apartment to the tenant because of the animal. Ray informs Betty that she is in violation of the Fair Housing Act and State fair housing laws.

Is Ray correct? Why or why not? _____

2. John owns a residential house and decides to use it as a rental property. In his advertisement, John notes that “no pets” will be allowed in the property. He receives several applications and evaluates each based on employment, credit worthiness, and criminal history. He selects a tenant and notifies the individual that the application was approved. One week after signing the lease agreement, the new tenant emails John and asks for an accommodation for his assistance animal, a pig. John denies the request, stating that 1) the pig is not domesticated and may damage the property, and 2) the tenant did not request the accommodation prior to signing the lease.

Can John legally deny the accommodation request because it was submitted after the application?

3. Explain the differences between service and assistance animals.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This section will review the basic requirements of the federal and state Fair Housing Acts and will delve into reasonable accommodations that must be made for service and assistance animals.

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- explain the purpose of fair housing laws;
- list the seven protected classes in the federal Fair Housing Act;
- define handicapping condition;
- define reasonable accommodation;
- differentiate between assistance and service animals;
- explain the complaint process; and
- explain why automatic disqualifiers, such as housing vouchers, should not be used in tenant screening.

TERMINOLOGY

- **Assistance animal:** The *Fair Housing Act* provides guidelines for tenants to have assistance animals in order to use and occupy a dwelling. An assistance animal works, performs tasks, provides assistance, or provides emotional support for a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity or bodily function. An example of an assistance animal is a miniature horse, cat, monkey, etc.)
- **Disparate Impact:** A doctrine, policy or practice that seems neutral on its face, but has the effect of disproportionately harming people of a certain protected class.
- **Major life activity:** Seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, caring for one's self, learning, speaking, or working.
- **Reasonable accommodation:** A change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service that may be necessary for a person with a disability to have equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, including public and common use spaces.
- **Service animal:** The *American with Disabilities Act* provides guidelines for places of public accommodations to allow the admittance of a service animal for individuals with a disability. According to the *American with Disabilities Act*, a service animal is any **dog** that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or mental disability. A **miniature horse** is no longer considered a service animal.

PURPOSE & HISTORY OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT

The purpose of the federal Fair Housing Act (hereafter known as FHA) is to ensure that members of protected classes have equal access to housing.

WHAT ARE PROTECTED CLASSES?

The first U.S. law enacted to provide citizens with equal access to housing was the Civil Rights Act of 1866. The Act dictated:

...citizens, of every race and color, without regard to any previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude...shall have the same right, in every State and Territory in the United States, to make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, and give evidence, to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property, and to full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens....

The Federal Civil Rights Act of 1866, which prevents racial discrimination in the sale of and rental of housing, is still in place today. However, additional laws have since been enacted, to expand the protections to other groups of individuals.

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act of 1968, prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, and national origin. In 1974, sex was added as a protected class, and familial status and disability were added in 1988.

Consequently, there are now seven protected classes expressly listed under the Fair Housing Act, as follows:

- race,
- color,
- religion,
- sex,
- handicapping conditions/disability,
- familial status, and
- national origin.

Acronym "FR^eSH CoRN"



- **F**amilial status
- **R**ace
- **E**qual
- **S**ex
- **H**andicapped
- **C**olor
- **O**ppportunity
- **R**eligion
- **N**ational Origin

North Carolina General Statute § 41A (hereafter known as the State Fair Housing Act) includes protections for the same seven classes.

Also, brokers should be aware that five jurisdictions in NC have local fair housing ordinances certified by HUD as “substantially equivalent” to federal FHA. Those five jurisdictions are:

- the City of Durham;
- the City of Greensboro;
- the City of Winston-Salem;
- Orange County; and
- the City of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County.

These jurisdictions receive federal funding under the Fair Housing Assistance Program to investigate and attempt to resolve complaints within their area. However, only one of the substantially equivalent local ordinances includes additional protected classes. The Orange County, NC, local fair housing ordinance also makes it unlawful to discriminate in housing because of age and veteran status.

The most recent changes in FHA are related to sexual preference and orientation. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) persons are not expressly listed as protected classes under FHA or the State Fair Housing Act. However, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (hereafter known as HUD) has regulations that implement policies to “ensure that its core programs are open to all eligible individuals and families regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.”

Persons who identify as LGBT and who believe they have experienced housing discrimination may be able to file a claim based on:

- the Fair Housing Act;
- HUD’s equal access rule; or
- state and local anti-discrimination laws.

Due to HUD's expanding policy for fair housing to all eligible individuals and families regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, brokers should realize that discrimination in housing based upon LGBT considerations may violate FHA.

Protected Class: Handicapping Condition / Disability

60% (sixty percent) of all FHA complaints are related to the denial of reasonable accommodations and disability access. Also, most HUD charges of discrimination against a housing provider involve the denial of reasonable accommodations to a person who has a physical or mental disability that the housing provider cannot readily observe.

The State of Fair Housing in North Carolina (2019) report found that, in 2018, the most common complaint allegations filed were discrimination based upon a disability. Complaints alleging discrimination due to disability accounted for 59.7% (92 out of 154) of the total number of complaints filed. In addition, two-thirds of the complaints were filed in the following five counties:

- Durham;
- Forsyth;
- Guilford;
- Mecklenburg; and
- Wake.

Additionally, the FHA and State Fair Housing Act use different terminology to define a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activity. Regardless of the terminology used, the definition of the terms remain the same. The terminology and definitions provided by the FHA and the State Fair Housing Act are:

The Fair Housing Act defines DISABILITY as:

...those individuals with mental or physical impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities. The term mental or physical impairment may include conditions such as blindness, hearing impairment, mobility impairment, HIV infection, mental retardation, alcoholism, drug addiction, chronic fatigue, learning disability, head injury, or mental illness.

The State Fair Housing Act defines HANDICAPPING CONDITION as:

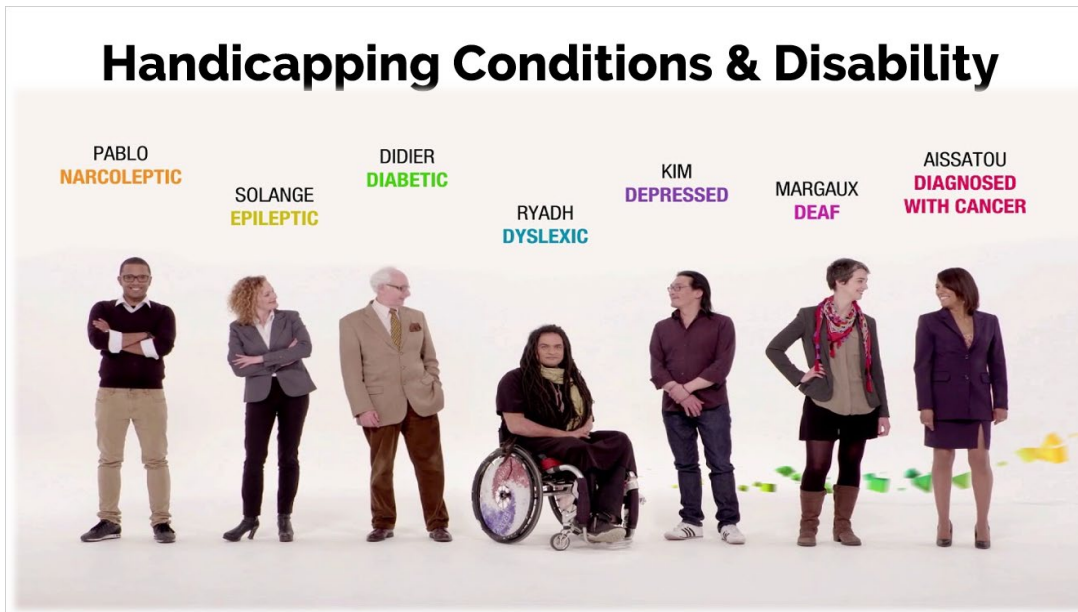
- (i) A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities;
- (ii) A record of having such impairment;
- (iii) Being regarded as having such impairment.

Handicapping condition does not include current, illegal use of or addiction to a controlled substance as defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802, the Controlled Substances Act. The protections against discrimination on the basis of handicapping condition shall apply to a buyer or renter of a dwelling, a person residing in or intending to reside in the dwelling after it is sold, rented, or made available, or any person associated with the buyer or renter.

Under Federal and State Fair Housing laws, if an individual has a disability/handicapping condition which substantially limits their major life activities, such as

- learning,
- walking,
- seeing, and
- breathing,

the individual may request a reasonable accommodation to occupy and use the dwelling.



WHAT IS A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

A reasonable accommodation is a change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service that may be necessary for a person with a disability to have equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, including public and common use spaces.

It is not necessary for an individual to submit a written request or use the words “reasonable accommodation,” “assistance animal”, or any other special words to request a reasonable accommodation under FHA. However, the person making the request is encouraged to do so in order to avoid miscommunication.

The request for a reasonable accommodation for an assistance animal may be:

- oral or written; and
- requested by others on behalf of the individual, including a person legally residing in the unit with the requesting individual, a legal guardian, or an authorized representative.

In addition, an individual may also want to keep a copy of a reasonable accommodation request and supporting documentation in case there is a dispute regarding the validity of the request later.

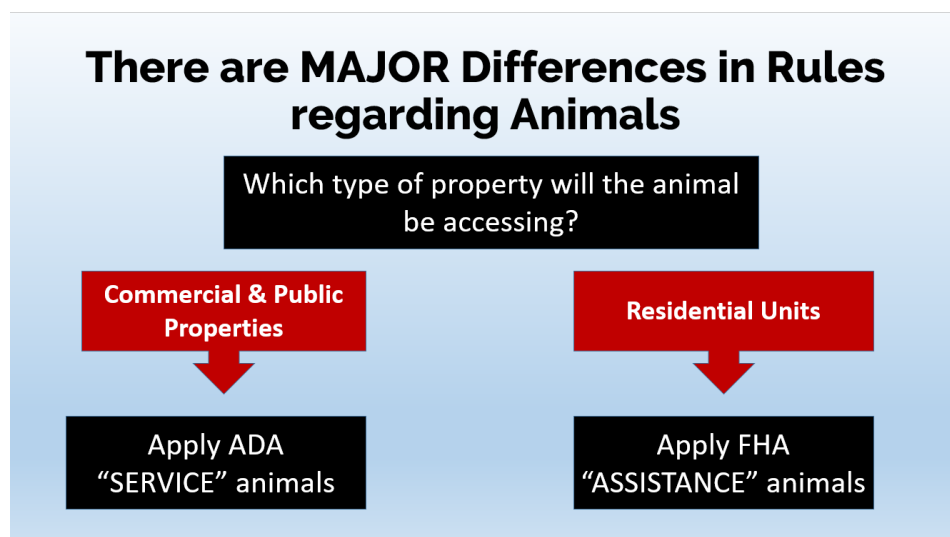
An individual may request an accommodation in order to use or occupy a dwelling either before or after acquiring the assistance animal. Under FHA, a person with a disability may make a reasonable accommodation request at any time; the housing provider must consider the request even if the resident made the request after bringing the animal into the dwelling.

A housing provider's failure to provide a reasonable accommodation is a violation of FHA and State fair housing laws.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SERVICE AND ASSISTANCE ANIMAL?

There are major differences in rules regarding accommodation requests related to animals. To determine which rules apply, you must first determine the type of property for which the accommodation request is being made.

- The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to commercial properties / places of public accommodation. The ADA defines criteria for **SERVICE** animals.
- The Fair Housing Act (FHA) applies to residential properties. The FHA defines criteria for **ASSISTANCE** animals.



Fair Housing Act (FHA): Assistance Animals

FHA makes it unlawful for a housing provider to refuse a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability who needs it to use and enjoy the dwelling.

Therefore, housing providers are required to modify or make exceptions to policies when it may be necessary to permit persons with disabilities to have assistance animals.

On January 28, 2020, HUD issued FHEO (Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity) Notice *FHEO-2020-01*, which states, in relevant part:

This notice explains certain obligations of housing providers under the Fair Housing Act (FHA) with respect to animals that individuals with disabilities may request as reasonable accommodations.

There are two types of assistance animals:

- (1) service animals, and
- (2) other trained or untrained animals that do work, perform tasks, provide assistance, and/or provide therapeutic emotional support for individuals with disabilities (referred to in this guidance as a “support animal”).

Policies including pet deposits, fees, and/or breed restrictions do not apply to assistance or service animals because these animals are not considered pets. A housing provider may charge a fee or deposit for pets.

Here is a link to the entire FHEO Notice *FHEO-2020-01* issued by HUD:

<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/HUDAsstAnimalNC1-28-2020.pdf>

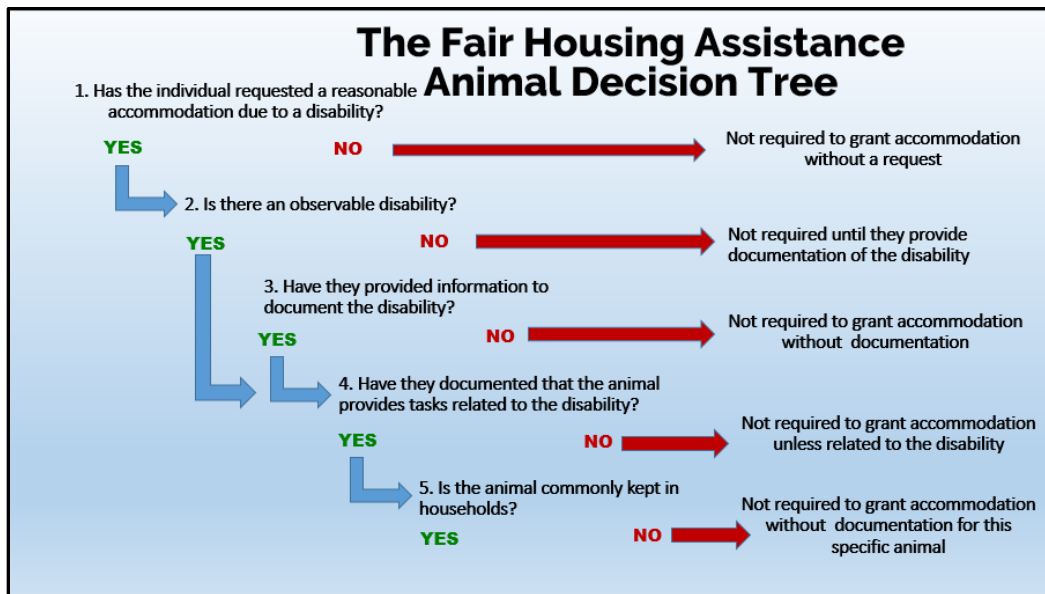


An animal that does not qualify as a service animal or other type of assistance animal is a pet for purposes of the FHA and may be treated as a pet for purposes of the lease and housing provider’s rules and policies.

Definitions and Guidelines under FHA

Assistance animals (i.e. support animals) work, perform tasks, provide assistance, or provide emotional support for a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity or bodily function.

According to the FHEO Notice *FHEO-2020-01*, issued by HUD, housing providers may use the following questions as a guide to help them make a decision regarding a reasonable accommodation request:



1. Has the individual requested a reasonable accommodation to get or keep an animal in connection with a physical or mental impairment or disability?

YES: Proceed to question 2.

NO: The housing provider is not required to grant a reasonable accommodation if the purpose is not related to a handicapping condition or disability.

2. Does the individual have an observable disability or does the housing provider (or agent making the determination for the housing provider) already have information giving them reason to believe that the person has a disability?

YES: Proceed to question 4.

NO: Proceed to question 3.

Note: Observable disabilities include blindness or low vision, deafness or being hard of hearing, mental illness, or mobility limitations. Some impairments may not be observable. In such case, the housing provider may request information regarding the disability and the disability-related need for the animal but is not entitled to know the individual's diagnosis.

3. Has the individual requesting the accommodation provided information that reasonably supports that the individual seeking the accommodation has a disability?

YES: Proceed to question 4.

NO: The housing provider is not required to grant the accommodation unless

this information is provided. Note that the housing provider must provide the individual with a reasonable opportunity to submit the information.

Information about the disability may include:

- a determination of a disability from a federal, state, or local government,
- a receipt of disability benefits, eligibility of a housing voucher due to disability, or
- information confirming a disability from a health care professional.

Before denying a reasonable accommodation request due to lack of information, the housing provider is encouraged to engage in a good-faith dialogue with the requesting party called the “interactive process.”

The housing provider may not insist on specific types of evidence if the information which is provided or actually known to the housing provider meets the requirements. Also, a housing provider may not request the disclosure of the diagnosis, severity of the disability, or medical records/examination.



An attorney should be consulted before denying a reasonable accommodation request to prevent violations of the Fair Housing Act. Also, the NC Human Relations Commission is a resource for brokers and housing providers regarding fair housing questions and concerns. This agency can provide information regarding reasonable accommodation request and when they can be denied.

Also, it is recommended that individuals seeking reasonable accommodations for support animals ask health care professionals to provide the following statements /certifications:

- the patient has a physical or mental impairment;
- the patient’s impairment(s) substantially limit(s) at least one major life activity or major bodily function; and
- the patient needs the animal(s) because it does work, provides assistance, performs at least one task that benefits the patient because of his or her disability, or because it provides therapeutic emotional support to alleviate a symptom or effect of the disability of the patient.

Some certificates and licensing documents can be obtained via the internet for a nominal fee. According to FHEO Notice *FHEO-2020-01*, documentation from the internet is not, by itself, sufficient to reliably establish an individual has a non-observable disability or disability related-need for the assistance animal.

4. Has the individual requesting the accommodation provided information which reasonably supports that the animal does work, performs tasks, provides assistance, and/or provides therapeutic emotional support with respect to the individual's disability?

YES: Proceed to question 5.

NO: The housing provider is not required to grant the accommodation unless this information is provided but may not deny the accommodation on the grounds that the individual has not provided the information until the housing provider has provided a reasonable opportunity to do so.

5. Is the animal commonly kept in households?

YES: The reasonable accommodation should be provided.

NO (animal is a reptile, barnyard animal, monkey, kangaroo, or other non-domesticated animal): A reasonable accommodation should not be provided unless the individual demonstrates a disability-related therapeutic need for the specific animal. The individual is encouraged to submit documentation from a health care professional confirming the need for the animal.

Unique animals may be a reasonable accommodation if the animal is trained to do work or perform tasks that a dog cannot perform and the information from the health care professional confirms:

- the individual has allergies that prevents using a dog; or
- without the animal, the symptoms or effects of the person's disability will be significantly increased.

It may be helpful for patients to ask health care professionals to provide the following additional information:

- the date of the last consultation with the patient;
- any unique circumstances justifying the patient's need for the particular animal (if already owned or identified by the individual); and
- whether the health care professional has reliable information about this specific animal or whether they specifically recommend this type of animal.

Example: A capuchin monkey is trained to assist a person with a spinal cord injury who has paralysis. The monkey, because it has hands, can retrieve a bottle of water from the refrigerator, unscrew a cap, insert a straw or place the bottle of water in a holder for the individual. A service dog is not able to perform these types of manual tasks.

Although domesticated, non-domesticated, and unique animals may be considered for reasonable accommodations, a housing provider may deny a reasonable accommodation request due to:

- a direct threat to the health and safety of others; or
- the potential of the animal to cause substantial physical damage to the property of others.

Reasonable accommodation requests must be analyzed using objective evidence about the particular conduct of the assistance animal, and not the conduct of similar animals.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Service Animals

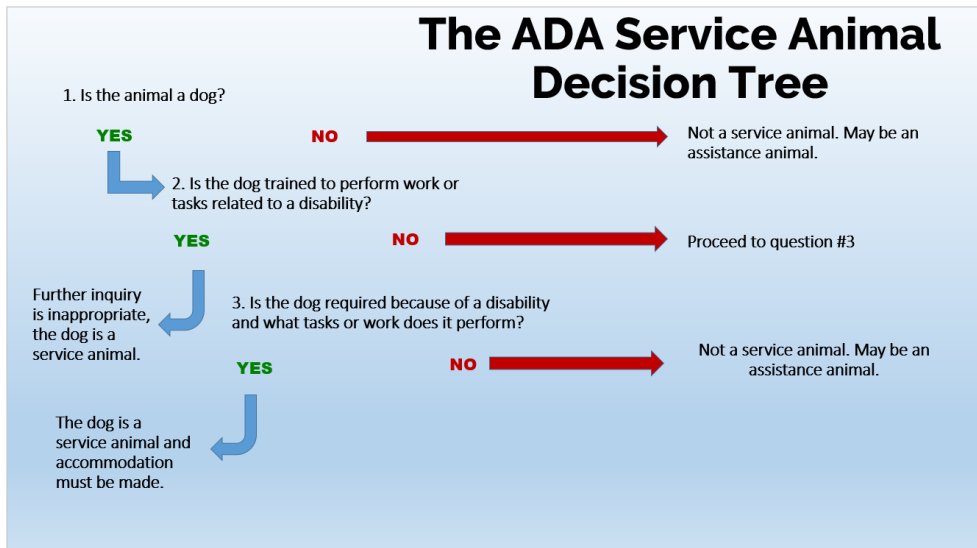
The American with Disabilities Act (hereafter referred to as ADA) defines a “service animal” as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or mental disability.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Although a miniature horse is not considered a service animal under ADA, HUD and the Department of Justice (hereafter known as DOJ) issues guidance for animals that are not commonly kept in households or “unique animals.” These types of animals are called assistance animals.

Miniature horses are considered assistance animals if they are animals they do work, perform tasks, and provide assistance, or emotional support for a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity or bodily function.

According to the FHEO Notice *FHEO-2020-01*, housing providers may use the following questions as a guide to help determine if the animal is a service animal under ADA.

The ADA Service Animal Decision Tree



1. Is the animal a dog?

YES: Proceed to question 2.

NO: The animal is not a service animal but may be another type of assistance animal for which a reasonable accommodation is needed under FHA. Proceed to question 1 under the questions for a reasonable accommodation under FHA.

2. Is it readily apparent that the dog is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability?

YES: Additional inquiries are unnecessary and inappropriate because the animal is a service animal.

NO: Proceed to question 3.

3. Is the animal required because of a disability and what work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

YES: If the animal is required because of a disability and the work or task is identified, then the reasonable accommodation should be granted because the animal is a service animal.

NO/NONE: If the animal is not required because of a disability, the animal does not qualify as a service animal under ADA but may be a support or other type of assistance animal that needs to be accommodated under FHA.

Performing a work or tasks means that the dog is trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. Some examples of the disability support functions service animals perform are:

- alerting a hearing-impaired person to sounds;
- guiding a visually-impaired person;
- pulling a wheelchair; or
- reminding a person to take their medication.

Moreover, policies including pet deposits, fees, and/or breed restrictions do not apply to service animals because they are not considered pets.

Questions for Discussion



I am a broker managing a property on behalf of an owner. My tenant has submitted an accommodation request. What is the correct process?

Brokers should educate their owners on fair housing laws and the differences between pets, service animals, and assistance animals before providing property management representation. If a tenant is requesting an accommodation for an assistance or service animal, brokers may request on behalf of their owner documentation to support the existence of a disability or need for that animal if not readily apparent. Lastly, brokers may provide a response to a tenant's accommodation request for an assistance or service animal after speaking with the owner.

If a broker receives a request for a reasonable modification to the property, the broker must communicate the request to the owner. The owner will then decide whether or not the request is reasonable. However, the broker may request on behalf of the owner documentation to support the request for the reasonable modification.

Additionally, brokers and owners must ensure that they are compiling with fair housing laws when responding to an accommodation request. Further, they have the burden of proof to demonstrate a legitimate basis for denying a reasonable accommodation request. Most importantly, a failure on the part of the broker or owner to respond is in itself a violation of FHA.



When can a request for a reasonable accommodation be legally denied?

A reasonable accommodation request may be legally denied when / if:

- the accommodation will cause an undue financial and administrative burden on the housing provider;
- accommodating the request will fundamentally alter the housing provider's services;

- the assistance animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation; or
- an assistance animal causes substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.



An attorney should be consulted before denying a reasonable accommodation request to prevent violations of the Fair Housing Act. Also, the NC Human Relations Commission (<https://www.oah.nc.gov/civil-rights-division/human-relations-commission>) is a resource for brokers and housing providers regarding fair housing questions and concerns. This agency can provide information regarding reasonable accommodation request and when they can be denied.

The North Carolina Real Estate Commission has published a brochure entitled “Fair Housing” to assist brokers and housing providers with the Fair Housing Act. It is available at: <https://www.ncrec.gov/Brochures/Print/FairHousing.pdf>.

Examples of Accommodations

Following are examples of accommodations a housing provider may provide an individual with a disability/handicapping condition:

- assigning a reserved parking space for one individual, even though no other individuals have assigned spaces;
- providing written material orally, in large print, or Braille;
- providing reminders for a developmentally challenged individual when lease payments are due;
- permitting a live-in aide with a disabled individual when it violates normal occupancy policies; and
- permitting service animals when the policies otherwise prohibits pets.

An example of failing to provide a reasonable accommodation occurred in *Castillo Condo. Ass'n v. U.S. Dep't of Hous. & Urban Dev.*, 821 F.3d 92.

In this case, Carlo Gimenez'Bianco, resided in a condo governed by the Castillo Condominium Association (hereafter known as the Association). The Association learned that Gimenz' had a dog in his condo which was in violation of the “no pets” policy and sent him a letter. Gimenz' promptly responded with a letter from his treating psychiatrist asserting the disability-related need for his emotional support dog. The Association failed to provide the reasonable accommodation after the response and this lead Gimenz' to sell his condo that he occupied for 15 years. Gimenz' filed a complaint with HUD and after a thorough investigation, HUD lodged a complaint against the Association. Initially, after a four-day evidentiary hearing, an Administrative Law Judge ruled that the Association did

not violate the Fair Housing Act because Gimenz´ did not prove that he had a mental impairment.

This decision was appealed to the Secretary of HUD and the Secretary found that the Association was in violation of the Fair Housing Act due to the following facts:

- Gimenz´ had a recognizable disability;
- Gimenz´ informed the Association of his need for the reasonable accommodation; and

The Association denied the accommodation request and failed to engage with Gimenz´ in an interactive process.

The Secretary awarded Gimenz´ damages for emotional distress, assessed a civil penalty against the Association, and implemented mandatory training in fair housing for the officers of the Association.

The Association appealed to the Court. The Court upheld the findings of the Secretary of HUD and stated in it's ruling that the Association knew or should have known of the disability, and the emotional support dog was a reasonable accommodation that would have afforded Gimenz´ an opportunity to use and enjoy his dwelling.

Further, the Court held that the actions of the condominium association violated FHA and affirmed that housing providers must modify or make exceptions to a "no pets" policy for persons with disabilities who require service or assistance animals.



The National Association of REALTORS® has provided a video, Window to the Law: Assistance Animals in Housing, indicating the criteria housing providers can use when considering a request for an accommodation under FHA. The video can be accessed at <https://www.nar.realtor/videos/window-to-the-law/assistance-animals-in-housing>.

Reasonable Accommodations Requests for Service Animals in Places of Public Accommodation

There are similarities and differences between the FHA and ADA. One similarity is that they both prohibit discrimination against a protected class of individuals.

However, they are distinguished by the FHA prohibiting discrimination and providing equal access to housing for protected classes and the ADA prohibiting discrimination in the use and enjoyment of places of public accommodation for protected classes of individuals.

According to the ADA, Title III Regulations, a place of public accommodation means a facility operated by a private entity whose operations affect commerce and falls within at least one of the following categories:

- places of lodging;

- restaurant or bar;
- theatre;
- places of public gatherings;
- grocery (i.e. retail) stores;
- laundromats;
- public transportation;
- places of public recreation;
- places of education;
- social center establishments (i.e. daycare, senior centers, etc.); and
- places of exercise or recreation.

Under the ADA, if an individual is requesting an accommodation be made for a service animal in a place of public accommodation, the owner/manager may not ask questions about the existence or nature of the individual's disability.

However, the following questions may be asked to determine whether the animal is a service animal.

1. Is the service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or tasks has the animal been trained to perform?

Questions for Discussion



Can the owner require the individual to provide documentation regarding the service animal's certification or training?

No. Asking the individual to provide proof of the animal's certification is not permitted. The owner/manager may only ask the two questions mentioned above, even if the disability is not known or the tasks and/or work performed by the animal is not readily apparent or known.



What if the tasks or services provided by the animal are readily apparent? Can the owner ask for more information?

No.



Can a service animal be legally denied access?

A service animal can be legally denied access to a place of public accommodation ONLY IF:

- the animal is out of control and the handler is not effective in controlling it;

- the animal is not housebroken; or
- admitting the service animal would fundamentally alter the nature of the goods, services, programs, or activities provided to the public (i.e. inability to go to certain areas within a zoo due to causing agitation of animals).

COMPLAINTS: HOW / WHERE ARE THEY FILED?

In North Carolina, complaints for alleged violations of fair housing laws must be filed within one year of the alleged violation with the North Carolina Human Relations Commission (NCHRC), 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh, NC.

Once a complaint has been filed, the NCHRC will investigate to determine whether unlawful discrimination has occurred, and

- attempt to eliminate discriminatory practices by (1) having an informal conference, (2) persuasion, or (3) conciliation; or
- issue a right-to-sue letter if allegations of discrimination are not determined.

If a resolution cannot be achieved by NCHRC, an individual may:

- request a right-to-sue letter so that they may file a civil lawsuit;
- allow NCHRC to file a lawsuit for them; or
- have an administrative hearing to determine a final decision on the matter.

An individual may choose to file a civil lawsuit at their expense without filing a complaint with the NCHRC at any time. A civil lawsuit must be filed within one year of an alleged violation of the state fair housing laws and within two years of federal fair housing laws.

Additionally, a complaint can be filed with HUD's Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity Housing Office using the following options:

- in English or Spanish online at <https://www.hud.gov>.
- download a HUD complaint form in a variety of languages and email it to a local FHEO office
- call an FHEO Intake Specialist at 1-800.669.9777 or your local FHEO office.

Penalties

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published adjusted civil penalty amounts on May 15, 2019, for individuals and entities that have been found in violation of housing-related laws after April 15, 2019.

The maximum civil penalty is \$21,039 for the first violation of FHA. The civil penalty is \$10,000 for the State Fair Housing Act. If an entity or individual has violated the act within

the previous five years a maximum fine of \$52,596 may be awarded under FHA and \$25,000 under the state. Consequently, if a violation has occurred two or more times within the previous seven years, a maximum fine of \$105,194 is awarded for FHA violations and \$50,000 for state violations.

Civil penalty amounts are in addition to any award for actual damages, attorney fees, and/or cash due to housing discrimination.

2010 Changes to Standard for Accessible Design

Commercial brokers and property managers should be aware that there are design standards and accessibility guidelines which apply to new construction of commercial facilities or places of public accommodation and are triggered by certain renovations or modifications to existing commercial facilities or places of public accommodation. In the same sense that brokers are not expected to be experts with respect to or to give advice with respect to the applicability or the particulars of compliance with restrictive covenants, but are expected to direct their clients to attorneys for assistance where restrictive covenants may apply, commercial brokers and property managers should be aware that these design standards and accessibility guidelines may apply to a particular property and should direct their clients to appropriate professionals (such as an architect or engineer who has working knowledge with respect to ADA matters) for advice as to the need for and manner of addressing any such regulatory implications.

While the ADA related design standards and accessibility guidelines for commercial facilities or places of public accommodation remained relatively static since initial enactment in 1991, commercial brokers and property managers should be aware that in 2010 the Department of Justice adopted revised ADA standards which impacted a number of facility types including amusement facilities, recreational boating facilities, gyms, golf facilities, and pools (among others) and also made changes to design guidelines including reach range requirements, single user toilet clearances, common area circulation and assembly area layout and location of accessible routes (among others). A fact sheet regarding these changes can be found at http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/factsheets/2010_Standards_factsheet.html and additional information is available at the ADA website www.ada.gov.

Questions for Discussion

John enters an office building to see his attorney. He has a dog wearing a harness with him. The dog is large and the building manager is getting calls about the dog being in the building and the elevator. What should the property manager do?

Ans: If a disability is apparent, probably nothing. If the dog is unruly, not house trained or causing damage to the property, it can be ejected. If the disability is NOT apparent, the property manager can ask:

1. Do you need this dog due to a disability?
2. What work or tasks has your dog been trained to perform?

Sara comes to work one day with a cat. It is a very pretty cat and mostly sits around Sara's office. Sara also has a litter box and cat food with her. Some in the office are unhappy with this as they fear odor from the litter box and cat dander in the hallways. Sara tells HR that the cat is an emotional support cat and she has paperwork from her doctor. What should HR do?

Ans: When in public spaces (not residential) ADA applies. Under the ADA, a service animal can only be a dog. The cat does not qualify. HR should follow company policy regarding pets in the workplace.

Jamal is in a wheelchair and cannot get in the front door of an office building because of the steps. There is wheelchair access on the side of the building. Is that OK?

Ans: Yes if that gets him into the building and to all public spaces.

Cindy is teaching a class in a building accessible to the public. One of her students brings in a medium sized pot bellied pig. The Pig, Amanda, is wearing a service animal vest and is on a lease. She is very well behaved. Can Amanda the pig be asked to leave?

Ans: Yes. When in public spaces (not residential) ADA applies. Under the ADA, a service animal can only be a dog. The pig does not qualify.

Garth is teaching a class and one of his students arrives with a dog on a leash. The dog appears well behaved and is calm. Can Garth evict the dog? What questions can he ask his student? Another student also has a dog. It is a small yappy ankle biter but has a little service animal vest on. The dog keeps yipping and then pees on the floor. What can Garth do?

Ans: If a disability is apparent, probably nothing. If the dog is unruly, not house trained or causing damage to the property, it can be ejected. If the disability is NOT apparent, Garth can ask:

- 1 Do you need this dog due to a disability?
- 2 What work or tasks has your dog been trained to perform?

A client wants to see space in a high-rise building. When they meet in the lobby, the broker sees that the client has a large dog in a harness. The dog is well behaved and calm. What questions if any can the broker ask the client about the dog?

Ans: If a disability is apparent, probably nothing. If the dog is unruly, not house trained or causing damage to the property, it can be ejected. If the disability is NOT apparent, Garth can ask:

1. Do you need this dog due to a disability?
2. What work or tasks has your dog been trained to perform?

A broker is leasing office space for her brokerage office. It is in an older building and the space has not been renovated for some time. When she is planning for renovations, what does she need to consider?

Ans: She needs to hire someone who understands accessibility. Her bathrooms will likely need to be redone and her doorways may be too narrow. She needs to make sure that there is access to her office for someone with a disability (elevator) and ensure that any employee will not be hindered by any inaccessible spaces or areas.

Latisha is sight impaired. She has a service dog. Her doctor just moved to a new office building. When she enters the lobby, she feels for the raised lettering to tell her which suite her doctor is in but cannot find any raised lettering on the directory. A nice lady leaving the building notices Latisha and asks if she can help. She gets Latisha to her doctor's office. Latisha complains to her doctor about the poor signage. The doctor says it is the building owner's fault, not his responsibility. Is that correct?

Ans: No. As a business, her doctor needs to be in a building that is accessible. Her doctor needs to have a discussion with the building owner. The doctor may or may not be required to pay for additional signage, but a wise owner will have raised signage for all tenants.

CAN REAL ESTATE BROKERS BE HELD LIABLE FOR THEIR CLIENTS' OR EMPLOYEES' FAIR HOUSING VIOLATIONS?

YES! FHA pertains to all individuals who are engaging in residential real estate transactions, so brokers may be held liable for their clients' or employees' violations of FHA, even if the brokers did not directly discriminate.

In an effort to prevent fair housing violations, brokers should educate their clients on fair housing laws before providing brokerage services. Most importantly, in order for a broker to educate their clients/employees, they must first obtain knowledge by attending training and educational programs.

Questions for Discussion



I am a broker managing a property on behalf of an owner. My owner-client does not want me to rent the property to families with young children, because the back deck is very high off the ground. If I follow the owner's directive, can I get in trouble?

YES! FHA prohibits discrimination based on the protected class of familial status, which means families with children under the age of 18. A broker may not legally exclude a protected class member at the directive of an owner, regardless of the reasoning behind it.

Also, if the broker knows that an owner unlawfully discriminates against a tenant or applicant, then the broker, too, is in violation of the Fair Housing Act.



I am a broker managing a property on behalf of an owner. I have explained that service animals must be permitted under the law, but the owner refuses, saying no animals will be allowed. What can I do?

If you proceed with this client, you, too, can be held liable for violations of Fair Housing. Also, you will be in violation of License Law and Commission rules. If the client will not relent, you should terminate the agency agreement immediately in writing and explain the reasons for the termination.



Will my firm be liable if one of the employees or affiliated brokers discriminates against a protected class member?

Yes, the firm will be liable for the actions of affiliated brokers and employees if unlawful discrimination against a protected class member occurs. The firm will be liable due to vicarious liability. Vicarious liability is when an employer is held responsible for the negligence of an employee or affiliate while they are performing a work related task.

One such violation occurred in the case of *Chicago v. Matchmaker Real Estate Sales Center, Inc.*, 982 F.2d 1086 (1992). In this case, the Leadership Council in Chicago suspected that the defendants (agents of Matchmaker Real Estate Sales Center, Inc.,) were engaging in the illegal practice of racial steering. Therefore, the Leadership Council conducted a series of five test intermittently from July of 1987 until June of 1988.

The “testers,” black and white individuals, posed as homeseekers looking for properties on the southwest side of Chicago and nearby suburban areas. The Leadership Council ensured they met various financial qualifications (i.e. income and down payment availability) and had varying housing needs (i.e. family size and preference). During the

test black testers were only showed homes in the black areas of town, Chicago Lawn and Gabe Park. The white testers received computer lists of the homes available in the suburban areas.

The CEO and sole shareholder of Matchmaker Real Estate Sales Center, Inc., Erwin Ernst, had written office policies ensuring that agents complied with all fair housing laws and attended additional training courses sponsored by the local real estate board.

However, during the bench trial, the magistrate judge held that Erwin Ernst and Matchmaker Real Estate Sales Center were vicariously liable for the actions of his agents even though he was unaware of any discriminatory conduct.

The judge relied on the following to support this finding:

A principal cannot free itself of liability by delegating to an agent the duty not to discriminate. *Green v. Century 21*, 740 F.2d 460, 465 (6th Cir. 1984)

Ernst also argued that the agents were considered “independent contractors” via the employment agreement. The judge threw out the argument that agents were independent contractors because the agents worked in Matchmaker’s office under Ernst’s day-to-day control and supervision, and followed multiple office policies while conducting real estate transactions.

The magistrate judge held that the agents violated the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fair Housing Act. Additionally, the judge agreed to hold Ernst and Matchmaker Real Estate Sales Center, vicariously liable for the unlawful behavior of its agents.

In addition, the Court stated:

As a matter of well-settled agency law, a principal may be held liable for the discriminatory acts of his agent if such acts are within the scope of the agent’s apparent authority, even if the principal neither authorized nor ratified the acts. *Coates v. Betchel*, 811 F.2d 1045, 1051 (7th Cir. 1987).

Also, all defendants were jointly and severally liable for punitive and compensatory damages, and a monetary award for frustration of purpose.

The following cases also support the Court’s opinion that an employer is vicarious liable for the acts of their agents or employees while they are acting within the course and scope of employment:

- *Walker v. Crigler*, 976 F.2d 900 (CA4 1992) (owner of rental property liable for the discriminatory acts of the property manager)

- *Marr v. Rife*, 503 F.2d 735 (CA6 1974) (real estate agency's owner liable for the discriminatory acts of his agency's salespersons)



If I violate fair housing laws, can I lose my broker license?

A violation of the fair housing law is also violation of the N.C. Gen. Stat. §93A-6(a)(10) and (15) and Commission rule 58A .1601.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The federal government has a housing program titled *Housing Choice Voucher Program*. This program allows low-income families, disabled individuals, and the elderly to secure:

- decent,
- safe, and
- sanitary

housing within a private market.

The recipient of the voucher has the opportunity to choose housing that meets their needs as long as the housing provider participates in the program.

The *Housing Choice Voucher Program* is administered at the local level through public housing agencies in each state. According to HUD, a housing subsidy is paid to the housing provider directly by the public housing agency on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

Unfortunately, some housing providers are now using housing vouchers as an automatic disqualifier for prospective tenants. This practice of automatic disqualification may be in violation of fair housing laws, as it could be an example of disparate impact.

Under FHA, *disparate impact* is defined as:

- a doctrine, policy or practice that is neutral on its face
- but disproportionately harms people of a protected class.

For instance, if a housing provider disqualifies a tenant based solely on the usage of a housing voucher and a majority of the prospective tenants who use them are within a certain protected class, disparate impact may occur.

To prevent the possibility of disparate impact, housing providers should avoid automatic disqualifiers, such as housing vouchers. Instead, they should employ tenant screening criteria that consider multiple factors and that can be applied fairly and equitably to everyone regardless of their race, sex, color, national origin, religion, familial status, or disability.

Disparate impact in housing and its discriminatory effects on protected classes will be explored in more detail in the *2021-2022 Update Course*.

ANSWERS TO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For Discussion on page 1

1. Betty hires Ray, a broker, to assist her with locating a tenant for her basement apartment. Betty informs Ray that the tenant is not allowed to have a pet. Ray places an advertisement on social media and indicates that pets are not allowed for this rental. Ray receives an application from an individual with a service animal and reviews it with Betty. Even though the prospective tenant meets all the qualification requirements, Betty tells Ray she will not rent the apartment to the tenant because of the animal. Ray informs Betty that she is in violation of the Fair Housing Act and State fair housing laws.

Is Ray correct?

Answer: Yes, Ray is correct. It is a violation of FHA, and State Fair Housing laws for the owner to fail to respond to a request for an accommodation. In addition, Ray may be in violation of FHA and the NCREC Laws and rules if he continues to represent Betty while she unlawfully discriminates against a protected class member.

2. John owns a residential house and decides to use it as a rental property. In his advertisement, John notes that “no pets” will be allowed in the property. He receives several applications and evaluates each based on employment, credit worthiness, and criminal history. He selects a tenant and notifies the individual that the application was approved. One week after signing the lease agreement, the new tenant emails John and asks for an accommodation for his assistance animal, a pig. John denies the request, stating that 1) the pig is not domesticated and may damage the property, and 2) the tenant did not request the accommodation prior to signing the lease.

Can John legally deny the accommodation request because it was submitted after the application?

Answer: No. An individual may request an accommodation at any time. John must consider the request even though it was made after the application was approved.

3. Explain the difference between a service animal and an assistance animal.

Answer: The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a service animal as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or mental disability.

*FHA defines an assistance animal as **animals (i.e. bird, cat, hamster, etc.)** that work, perform tasks, provide assistance, or provide emotional support for a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity or bodily function.*

Section 2

Contracts



1. Mark, a buyer's agent, submits an offer on behalf of his clients for \$27,000. The listing agent reviews the offer with his seller. The seller marks out \$27,000, writes in \$37,000, initials the change, and signs all pages.

Was a contract created? Why or why not? _____

2. Mae, a buyer's agent with ABC Realty, submits an offer on behalf of her buyer-client to Tammy, a seller's agent with XYZ Realty. The offer includes a \$1000 due diligence fee (DDF) and a \$2000 initial earnest money deposit (EMD). Tammy presents the offer to her seller-client, and the seller signs the offer as-is, without making any changes. Tammy calls Mae to let her know the seller has signed the contract. Tammy reminds Mae that the DDF and EMD checks must be delivered to Tammy's office by the end of the day.

Are the parties under contract? Yes / No

If YES, when was the contract formed? _____

If NO, what is required for contract formation? _____

3. Sam, a buyer's agent, submits an offer on behalf of his buyer-client to Malik, the listing agent. Malik presents the offer to his seller-client. The seller agrees to all terms except the due diligence fee. The seller wants to increase the fee from \$2500 to \$5000. Malik calls Sam to discuss the DDF change, and Sam tells him the buyer will agree to the increase. Malik adjusts the amount of the DDF on the Offer to Purchase form, and the seller initials the change and signs all pages. Malik forwards the paperwork to Sam.

A few hours later, Malik calls Sam again and tells him the seller is rescinding the offer, because the seller has accepted another offer.

Did Malik's and Sam's clients form a contract? Why or why not?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- define offer and acceptance;
- list methods of communicating acceptance;
- explain the difference between a due diligence fee and earnest money deposit;
- explain whether a due diligence fee or earnest money deposit is required for a valid contract; and
- describe a broker's fiduciary duties related to multiple offers and contract preparation.

TERMINOLOGY

- **Offer:** A promise (that is definite in terms) by an offeror calling for a promise or an action by an offeree.
- **Offeree:** A party to whom an offer is made.
- **Offeror:** A party making an offer.
- **Acceptance:** A promise by offeree to be bound by the terms of an offer.
- **Contract:** A deliberate agreement between two or more competent parties supported by legal consideration to perform or abstain from some act.
- **Due Diligence Fee:** *Standard Form 2-T* defines due diligence fee as a negotiated amount, if any, paid by Buyer to Seller with the contract that gives the Buyer the right to terminate the contract for any reason or no reason during the Due Diligence Period.
- **Earnest Money Deposit:** An amount of money deposited by the Buyer to the Seller that is evidence of good faith.

CONTRACT BASICS

A contract is

- a deliberate agreement,
- between two or more competent parties,
- supported by legal consideration,
- to perform or abstain from performing some act.

Under contract law, any agreement between two or more parties must meet certain requirements to be legally valid. The essential elements of a contract are:

- **consideration**, meaning something of value passing between the parties that supports their agreement;
- **lawful objective** (purpose) and a means of accomplishing that objective;
- **mutual assent**, meaning a “meeting of the minds” where all parties understand and agree to all material terms of their negotiated agreement; and
- **legal contractual capacity of the parties**, meaning all parties to the agreement must be legally capable of entering into a contract.



Additionally, the NC Statute of Frauds dictates that contracts for the sale or lease* of real property must be IN WRITING to be enforceable.

*Leases exceeding three years.

THE OFFER

Under basic contract law, an offer:

- is a promise by an offeror,
- to enter into a contract on certain terms.

An offer is made **BY** an offeror **TO** an offeree.



Rule 58A .0112, Offers and Sales Contracts, states a broker acting as an agent in a real estate transaction shall not use a preprinted offer or sales contract form unless the form describes or specifically requires certain information. Additionally, this rule specifies provisions that should not be included in the preprinted offer or sales contract.



Does an offer to purchase real estate have to be in writing to be enforceable?

YES. The NC Statute of Frauds requires an offer (and any resulting contract) for the purchase of real estate to be ***IN WRITING*** and:

- identify the parties to the contract by individual legal name;
- identify the subject matter of the contract;
- contain all material terms and conditions; and
- be signed by the offeror (party making the offer).

ACCEPTANCE = CONTRACT FORMATION

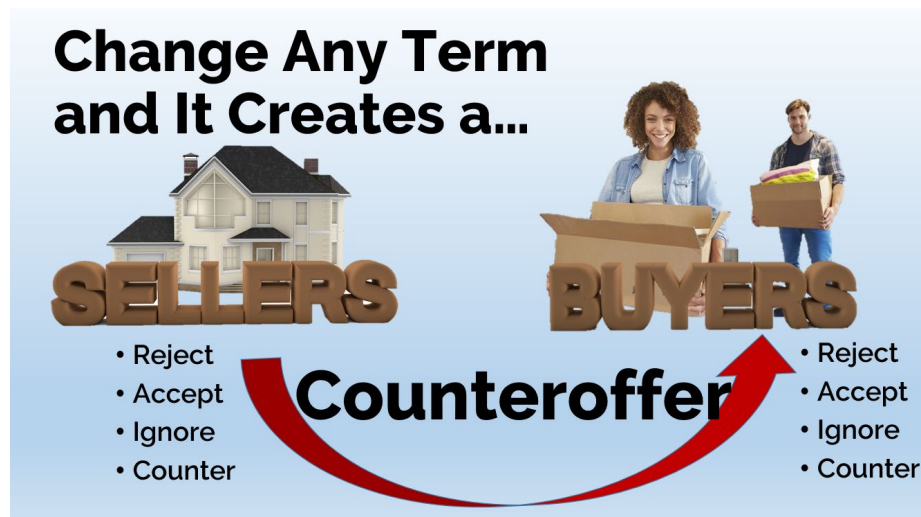
Upon receipt of an offer, an offeree may choose to:

- 1) reject the offer outright;
- 2) accept the offer as tendered without any modifications;
- 3) alter or change some of the terms and return it to the original offeror; or
- 4) neither accept nor reject the offer and engage in oral negotiations with the offeror concerning terms the offeree would consider more favorable.

Any Change in Offer Terms = Counteroffer

Once an offeree changes any term in an offer, the original offer is rejected and a COUNTEROFFER is created.

A counteroffer is basically a brand new offer. Once an offeree submits a counteroffer, that former offeree becomes the offeror. The initial offer was rejected, so it is no longer in existence. Should the parties wish to return to the terms of the initial offer, they would have to create a new offer.



Acceptance

Acceptance occurs when an offeree...

- 1) signs an offer without making any changes, and
- 2) communicates that the offer has been signed to the offeror.

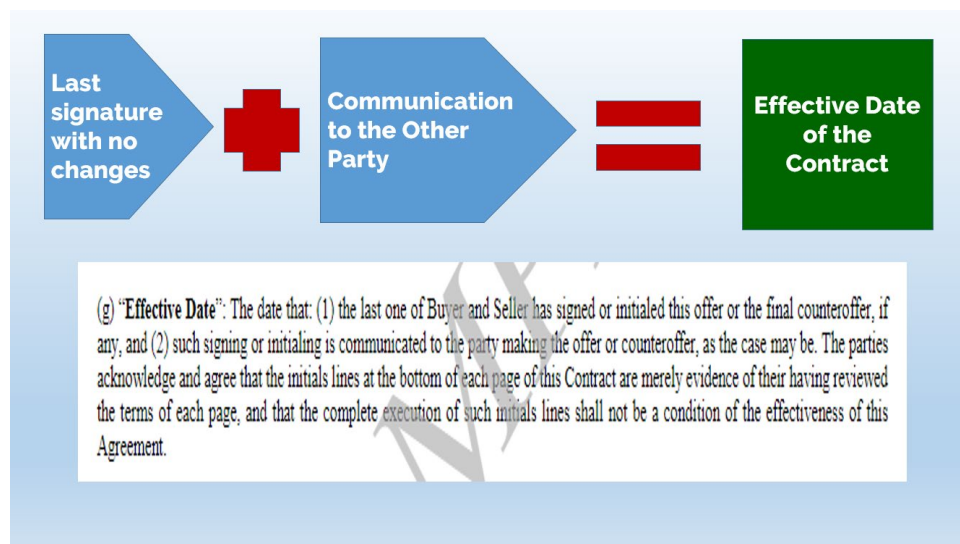
Acceptance is not complete until the last offeree has actually signed the offer and that fact is communicated to the last offeror or his/her agent. Once the offeree's written acceptance has been communicated to the last offeror, then the parties have an enforceable contract.

Until acceptance is communicated to the last offeror or his/her agent, that offeror may still withdraw his/her offer even though it has been signed by the offeree.

Effective Date = Date of Acceptance

Standard Form 2T - Offer to Purchase and Contract defines Effective Date as the date that:

1. the last one of Buyer and Seller has signed or initialed this offer or the final counteroffer, if any, and
2. such signing or initialing is communicated to the party making the offer or counteroffer, as the case may be.



1. A buyer's agent submits an offer to Holly, a listing agent, at a cooperating firm. Holly sends the offer via email to the seller and reviews it. The seller agrees to the terms, signs the offer, and scans and emails it back to the listing agent.
Was a contract created? Yes / No
2. Thomie, a dual agent, represents Jay in purchasing a home listed by his firm. Jay and the seller provide written authority for Thomie to act as a dual agent. Thomie assists Jay with preparing an offer. Thomie then presents the offer to the seller, and the seller signs it.
Was a contract created? Yes / No

Communicating Acceptance

Under contract law, acceptance of an offer may be communicated in a variety of ways such as:

- oral communication;
- hand delivery;
- mail (“snail mail” or other services, such as FedEx or UPS); or
- electronic communication such as email, text, or fax.

If the contract is “silent” about the method(s) of communication, whatever method the party customarily uses will be considered reasonable. Reasonable communication is determined by the Courts to be the usual way in which parties handled the transaction and the intent of the parties.



Communication to a party that the offer will be signed or the parties accept the offer without evidence of a signed offer does not create an enforceable contract.

WHAT ABOUT TEXT MESSAGING?

Disclaimer: The following case mentioned in this section is not a NC or Federal court ruling. Therefore, it does not have jurisdiction in NC. However, most brokers utilize electronic communication in brokerage transactions; therefore, this case provides valuable knowledge and a warning regarding the usage of text messages.

Real estate transactions must be in writing to comply with the Statute of Frauds. In *St. John’s Holding, LLC v. Two Electronics, LLC*, NO 16 MIS 000090RBF (2016), the Court stated that during the negotiations, the parties’ agents extensively used electronic communication (i.e. email, text) and phone to communicate.

Therefore, the issue before the Court was whether text messaging sufficiently satisfied the Statute of Frauds. The Court analyzed the following:

1. whether text messaging can be considered a “writing” under the Statute of Frauds;
2. whether *alleged writing* contains sufficiently complete terms and an intent to be bound by those terms;
3. whether the text message is signed; and
4. whether there is an offer and acceptance.

In this case, the Court found negotiations and exchanges between the parties contained sufficient terms to create a binding contract between the Buyer and Seller. The multiple text messages evidenced:

- that the subject matter of the agreement contained all material terms; and
- was authenticated by the sellers' agent signature at the end of the text message which evidenced the intent for the parties to be bound.

On appeal, the Court reversed the lower court's disposition and held:

- the seller-agent lacked implied authority to bind the parties; but
- text messages are considered writings under the Statute of Frauds.

So, the moral of the story is: If text messaging is normally used between parties, the Courts may consider them "writings" sufficient enough if they contain:

- all material terms;
- a signature;
- intent to bind the parties; and
- memorialize the offer and acceptance.

In conclusion, if brokers are communicating via text messaging, it is plausible that an acceptance of an offer can be communicated via text messaging as long as the offer has been signed by the respective party. Court cases like *St. John Holdings, LLC v. Two Electronics, LLC*, NO 16 MIS 000090 RBF (2016), reminds brokers that the law will continually adapt to modern technology.

Mailbox Rule

Though not frequently used in today's electronic age, the "mailbox rule" does still apply in some situations. According to the mailbox rule, acceptance of an offer is communicated by means of dropping the signed offer in the mail to the offeror (or offeror's broker).

Acceptance occurs at the time the item is dropped into the mailbox. This rule operates only as a method of communicating acceptance of an offer. It does not pertain to rejection of offers or to counteroffers. Rejections and counteroffers are only effective upon receipt by the addressee and not at the time of mailing.

Questions for Review



How does acceptance occur?

Acceptance occurs when an offeree signs an offer without making any changes and communicates to the offeror that the offer has been signed.



How will I be notified of the other party's acceptance of my offer?

An individual will be notified about the acceptance in the manner in which they specified in the offer (i.e. in writing, personal delivery, orally, or electronic means) or, when the contract does not specify a means of communication, by a reasonable method.



Communication to a principal's broker is the same as communicating directly to the principal. Remember that a broker stands in the place of the principal, at least for communication of acceptance purposes.

Additional Information about Offer and Acceptance

To assist consumers in understanding offers and acceptance, the Commission publishes the "Questions and Answers on Offer and Acceptance" brochure. The brochure is provided on the Commission's website at

<https://www.ncrec.gov/Brochures/Print/OfferandAcceptance.pdf>

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A DUE DILIGENCE FEE (DDF) AND AN EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT (EMD)?

Due Diligence Fee (DDF)

The due diligence fee is defined in the Standard Form 2T, Offer to Purchase and Contract, as:

...a negotiated amount, if any, paid by Buyer to Seller with this Contract for Buyer's right to terminate the contract for any reason or no reason during the Due Diligence Period.

The amount of the DDF may be influenced by such matters as the market for the property, number of days on the market, personal circumstances of buyer and seller, and the length of the "Due Diligence Period."

Is a DDF required?

No. A DDF is not required to create a valid contract.

To whom does the buyer pay the DDF?

The buyer pays the DDF directly to the seller, generally at the time the contract is executed. The amount of the DDF is credited to buyer at closing against the purchase price unless the contract is otherwise terminated.

If the contract is terminated, which party gets to keep the DDF?

Answer: The seller. Per paragraph 12 in Form 2T: the DDF is non-refundable, except in the event of a material breach of the contract by the seller or if the property is destroyed prior to closing.

Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)

An EMD is a negotiated amount of money deposited by the buyer with an escrow agent to evidence the buyer's good faith.

Is an EMD required?

No. An EMD is not required to create a valid contract.

To whom does the buyer pay the EMD?

The buyer pays the EMD to the escrow agent identified in the contract. Often, the escrow agent is a real estate company or an attorney or a title company.

The *Standard Form 2T, Offer to Purchase and Contract* states:

...the initial earnest money deposit, the additional earnest money deposit, and any other earnest monies paid or required to be paid in connection with this transaction, collectively the "Earnest Money Deposit", shall be deposited and held in escrow by Escrow Agent until Closing, at which time it will be credited to Buyer, or until this Contract is otherwise terminated.

In other words, all earnest monies are to be held by the named escrow agent and credited to buyer at closing against the purchase price unless the contract is otherwise terminated.

If the buyer terminates the contract, which party gets to keep the EMD?

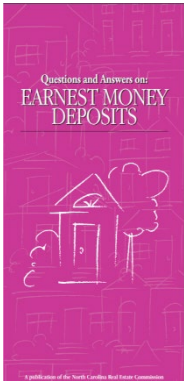
It depends on WHEN the buyer terminates.

According to Form 2-T, all earnest money deposits will be refunded to the buyer IF the buyer terminates prior to the expiration of the Due Diligence Period (DDP). If the buyer terminates AFTER the expiration of the DDP, the EMD will be retained by the seller.

If the seller terminates the contract, which party gets to keep the EMD?

If the seller breaches the contract, then Form 2-T dictates that all EMDs are to be refunded to the buyer upon buyer's request, but "... shall not affect any other remedies available to Buyer for such breach."

Additional Information about EMDs



To assist consumers in understanding EMDs, the Commission publishes the “Questions and Answers on Earnest Money Deposits.”

This brochure is provided on the Commission’s website at <https://www.ncrec.gov/Brochures/EarnestMoney.pdf>.

WHAT IF THE CONTRACT INCLUDES A DDF OR AN EMD BUT THE BUYER DOESN’T DELIVER THE FUNDS RIGHT AWAY? DO WE HAVE A CONTRACT?

In order to create a valid real estate sales contract, there must be a written offer, an acceptance of the offer, and communication of the acceptance to the last offeror. Neither a DDF nor an EMD is required for a valid contract.

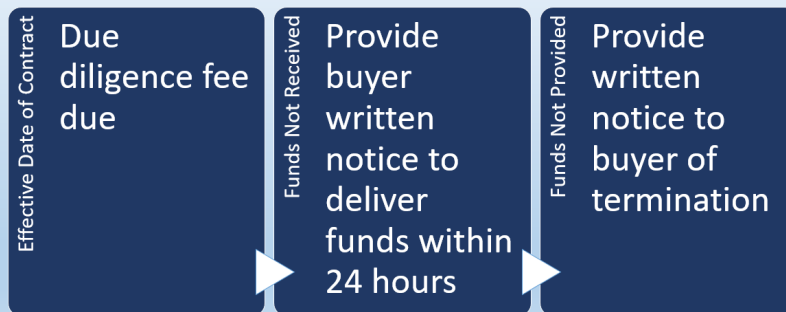
If the contract requires the remittance of a DDF and/or EMD, and the buyer fails to timely submit the required funds with the contract or by the specified due date, a valid contract still exists. However, the buyer may be in breach depending upon the provisions agreed upon by the parties.

Standard Form 2T, Offer to Purchase and Contract, includes a provision that provides the Sellers a remedy if the Buyer fails to deliver the DDF and/or EMD or if the bank dishonors the funds. The provision states

Should Buyer fail to deliver either the Due Diligence Fee or any Initial Earnest Money Deposit by their due dates, or should any check or other funds paid by Buyer be dishonored, for any reason, by the institution upon which the payment is drawn, Buyer shall have one (1) banking day after written notice to deliver cash, official bank check, wire transfer or electronic transfer to the payee. In the event Buyer does not timely deliver the required funds, Seller shall have the right to terminate this Contract upon written notice to Buyer.

The provision provides Sellers with a remedy to terminate the contract after notifying the Buyer. Therefore, it is up to the Sellers to decide whether they wish to continue with the contract even if the Buyer fails to remit funds after given written notice. Standard Form 2T indicates that a valid contract exists absent a due diligence fee(s) or remittance of insufficient due diligence fee(s).

The Contractual Process Outlined in the Offer to Purchase & Contract



Brokers should advise their clients (i.e. Buyers and Sellers) on the contract provisions and the consequences of failing to comply with those terms, such as a breach or termination of the contract.

PRESENTING OFFERS

Under the law of agency, a seller's agent (listing agent) has a duty to communicate (present) all offers on a listed property to the seller as soon as possible and to disclose to the seller all information in the agent's possession that might affect the seller's decision to accept an offer.

In addition, Real Estate Commission Rule 58A .0106 dictates

"...every broker shall deliver a copy of any written agency agreement, contract, offer, lease, rental agreement, option, or other related transaction document to their customer or client within three days of the broker's receipt of the executed document."

It is important to note that this Commission rule applies to all agents involved in a transaction regardless of whom they represent or from whom they will receive compensation.

The three-day provision specified in Rule 58A .0106(c) is included to allow for situations where the seller is not immediately available, and represents an outside time limit within which offers must always be presented.

In cases where the seller is available, all offers, the likelihood of future offers, and information that may affect the seller's decision, should be presented as soon as possible and delivered to the client via electronically, face-to-face, or via postal mail. Even if a contract is pending on the property, all offers should still be submitted to the sellers.



License Law and Commission rules do not allow brokers to accept or reject an offer on behalf of their client. For example, a seller's agent has no authority to reject an offer on behalf of the seller, even if the offer is clearly disadvantageous to the seller. Instead, the broker must present all offers and disclose the advantages/disadvantages of the offer to the seller.

Multiple Offers

If a broker receives more than one offer on a subject property, the broker is considered to have multiple offers that must be presented to the seller as soon as possible but no later than three days after receipt according to Rule 58A .0106(c).



Should the broker submit offers to the seller in a certain order?

No. If a broker receives multiple offers on a listed property at about the same time, the broker should not present one offer to the seller and withhold a second offer until the seller makes a decision on the first offer. It does not matter which offer was reviewed first, or was the lowest; all offers should be presented at the same time.



Is it a material fact that there are multiple offers?

No. The existence of multiple offers is not a material fact that must be disclosed to other brokers and/or their principals. A listing broker must get the seller's consent to disclose that the owner has received or is considering more than one offer. However, if the owner provides consent, the broker has a duty to disseminate information to everyone fairly, equally, and honestly.



When can a broker disclose confidential terms, such as price and financing, with competing buyers?

Commission Rule 58A .0115, states a broker shall NOT disclose the price or other material terms contained in a party's offer to purchase, sell, lease, rent, or to option real property to a competing party without the express authority of the offering party.

In other words, you must have the permission of the BUYER to disclose the terms of their offer to other buyers. It is not sufficient to have the permission of the seller.

Best Practice: Brokers should document receipt of all offers upon submission and immediately deliver them to the seller for consideration.

REVIEWING OFFERS AND CONTRACTS

A real estate broker must have an active, current license in order to:

- assist and advise clients on the completion of contract offers and counteroffers;
- use preprinted forms; and
- communicate offers and acceptances.

Brokers owe Skill, Care, and Diligence to Clients

Agency law requires that a real estate broker exercise a high degree of skill, care, and diligence in the conduct of the agent's duties. Agents who do not perform with the required degree of skill, care, and diligence, or are guilty of negligence or misconduct, not only are liable to the principal for any damages the principal may sustain, but may also forfeit any claim to compensation.

A broker exhibiting skill, care, and diligence, assists clients by:

- competently and accurately completing approved preprinted sales contract forms, and
- understanding general terminology and contract provisions.

Brokers are expected to know when it is appropriate to use a particular contract form and to recognize situations where sellers and buyers should be referred to an attorney to have a suitable contract drafted.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



Are brokers in violation of License Law and Commission rules if they fail to review contract provisions with a client?

Reviewing and explaining the provisions of offers and contracts to clients are part of a broker's responsibility for proper skill, care, and diligence. However, brokers are reminded to refer their clients to an attorney for an in-depth explanation of legal concepts to prevent the practice of law.

N.C. Gen. Stat. §93A-6(a)(8) authorizes the Commission to discipline a licensee who is found to be "... unworthy or incompetent to act as a real estate broker in a manner as to endanger the interest of the public."

A real estate broker who:

- completes a sales contract improperly;
- uses forms that are not legally adequate; or
- fails to adequately explain the contract provisions and protect the interests of their clients

may be deemed to be in violation of License Law and Commission rules.



My company transmits all transaction documents to clients and customers using an electronic management system. When clients and customers receive documents, the software shows them where to insert their initials and signatures. Am I still expected to explain the forms and contracts?

YES! Brokers must review contract provisions with their clients regardless of whether they are using printed copies or an electronic platform. Brokers may violate License Law and Commission rules if they utilize an electronic program for document management and fail to review the provisions with their clients before they sign. Brokers should ensure clients are knowledgeable about the provisions of offers, contracts, and other forms before the clients affix their initials or signatures.

Further, as a “fiduciary” for a client, the broker is obligated to act in the client’s best interests, placing the client’s interests before any self-interest. For example, a broker or firm may prefer to use electronic documents. However, if a client is uncomfortable with the technology, or prefers to receive printed copies of executed documents, the broker should provide information and documentation in a way that suits the client’s needs.

From NCR Form 580-T, revised 7/2020

1.(f) “Broker(s)” shall mean:

RE Specialists (“Listing Agency”),
Adam Smith, CCIM (“Listing Agent” - License # 101010_)

Acting as: ☒ Seller’s Agent; ☐ Dual Agent

And

The Property Firm (“Selling Agency”),
Lisa Jones, SIOR (“Selling Agent”- License #_)

Acting as: ☐ Buyer’s Agent; ☐ Seller’s (Sub)Agent; ☐ Dual Agent

1.(g) “ Seller’s Notice Address” shall be as follows:

Chandler Real Estate LLC
101 Main Street , Charlotte, NC 28200

e-mail address: Cindy@CindyChandler.com fax number: none

except as same may be changed pursuant to Section 12.

1.(h) “ Buyer’s Notice Address” shall be as follows:

Dunklin Hemp, Inc.
2020 Hemp Way, Matthews, NC 28299

e-mail address: Garth@hempisboss.com fax number: 704-TRY-HEMP

except as same may be changed pursuant to Section 12.

(From 580-T 7/2020)

Section 12. Notices: Unless otherwise provided herein, all notices and other communications which may be or are required to be given or made by any party to the other in connection herewith shall be in writing (which shall include electronic mail) and shall be deemed to have been properly given and received (i) on the date delivered in person or (ii) the date deposited in the United States mail, registered or certified, return receipt requested, to the addresses set out in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer, or at such other addresses as specified by written notice delivered in accordance herewith, (iii) at such time as the sender performs the final act to send such transmission, in a form capable of being processed by the receiving party's system, to any electronic mail address or facsimile number, if any, provided in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer or (iv) on the date deposited with a recognized overnight delivery service, addressed to the addresses set out in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer, or at such other addresses as specified by written notice delivered in accordance herewith. If a notice is sent by more than one method, it will be deemed received upon the earlier of the dates of receipt pursuant to this Section.

Section 14. Enforceability: This Agreement shall become a contract when signed by both Buyer and Seller and such signing is communicated to both parties; it being expressly agreed that notice given in accordance with Section 12 is not required for effective communication for the purposes of this Section 14. The parties acknowledge and agree that: (i) the initials lines at the bottom of each page of this Agreement are merely evidence of their having reviewed the terms of each page, and (ii) the complete execution of such initials lines shall not be a condition of the effectiveness of this Agreement. This Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the parties, their heirs, successors and assigns and their personal representatives.



Questions for Discussion

Adam Smith with RE Specialists is the listing agent for Chandler Real Estate LLC. The point person for Chandler Real Estate is Cindy Chandler, CEO at 101 Main Street, Charlotte NC. cindy@cindyhandler.com Her cell is 704-577-1234

Lisa Jones with The Property Firm is the buyer agent for Dunklin Hemp Inc. The point person is the owner, Garth Dunklin. His address is 2020 Hemp Way in Matthews NC. Email is Garth @ hempiboss.com. His cell # is 704-968-1000

Query #1.

Lisa sends an offer to Chandler Real Estate LLC electronically to Adam Smith. Adam delivers it to Cindy Chandler who immediately signs it and returns it to Adam. Has a contract been formed yet?

Ans: No, there has been no communication to the other party.

Query #2

Using the facts in #1, what if Cindy Chandler texts Garth that she has accepted it? Has the contract been formed?

Ans: Yes

Query #3

Using the facts in #1 & #2, assume a contract has been formed and Garth has decided to terminate the contract. He texts Cindy to tell her. Is the contract terminated?

Ans: No

Query #4

Using the same facts can Garth just send the termination form to Adam Smith, the listing agent?

Ans: No



AGREEMENT FOR PURCHASE AND SALE
OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY

THIS AGREEMENT, including any and all addenda attached hereto ("Agreement"), is by and between

a(n) _____ ("Buyer"), and
(individual or State of formation and type of entity)

a (n) _____ ("Seller").
(individual or State of formation and type of entity)

(NOTE: If the Buyer or Seller is an entity, in order to form a binding agreement and complete a transaction, the entities listed as Buyer or Seller in this Agreement should be validly formed and in good standing with the Secretary of State in the State of formation of the entity.)

FOR AND IN CONSIDERATION OF THE MUTUAL PROMISES SET FORTH HEREIN AND OTHER GOOD AND VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, THE RECEIPT AND SUFFICIENCY OF WHICH ARE HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGED, THE PARTIES HERETO AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Terms and Definitions: The terms listed below shall have the respective meaning given them as set forth adjacent to each term.

(a) "**Property**": (Address) _____

Plat Reference: Lot(s) _____, Block or Section _____, as shown on Plat Book or Slide _____ at Page(s) _____, _____ County, consisting of _____ acres.

☐ If this box is checked, "Property" shall mean that property described on **Exhibit A** attached hereto and incorporated herewith by reference,

(For information purposes: (i) the tax parcel number of the Property is: _____; and, (ii) some or all of the Property, consisting of approximately _____ acres, is described in Deed Book _____, Page No. _____, _____ County.)

together with all buildings and improvements thereon and all fixtures and appurtenances thereto and all personal property, if any, itemized on **Exhibit A**.

\$ _____ (b) "**Purchase Price**" shall mean the sum of _____ Dollars,

payable on the following terms:

\$ _____ (i) "**Earnest Money**" shall mean _____ Dollars
or terms as follows: _____

The Earnest Money shall be deposited in escrow with _____ (name of person/entity with whom deposited- "Escrow Agent") within five (5) calendar days of the Contract Date, to be applied as part payment of the Purchase Price of the Property at Closing, or disbursed as agreed upon under the provisions of Section 10 herein. Should Buyer fail to deliver the Earnest Money by the date required hereunder, or should any check or other funds paid by Buyer be dishonored, for any reason, by the institution upon which

Page 1 of 9



This form jointly approved by:
North Carolina Bar Association
North Carolina Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

STANDARD FORM 580-T
Revised 7/2020
© 7/2020

Buyer Initials _____ Seller Initials _____

the payment is drawn, Buyer shall have one (1) banking day after written notice of such dishonor to deliver cash, official bank check, wire transfer or electronic transfer to the Escrow Agent. If Buyer fails to deliver the required funds within one (1) banking day after written notice, then Seller may terminate this Agreement by written notice to Buyer at any time thereafter, provided Seller has not then received acknowledgement by Escrow Agent of its receipt of funds from Buyer. If the Escrow Agent has not delivered to the Seller the acknowledgement of Earnest Money on the last page of this Agreement by the calendar day following the date the Earnest Money is required to be delivered hereunder, it shall be presumed that the Earnest Money was not delivered by the required time (unless, upon the written request of Seller, Escrow Agent can provide proof of its receipt of the Earnest Money by the required time). Buyer and Seller consent to the disclosure by the Escrow Agent, to the parties to this Agreement, the Broker(s) and any Buyer lender, of any material facts pertaining to the Earnest Money.

☐ **ANY EARNEST MONEY DEPOSITED BY BUYER IN A TRUST ACCOUNT MAY BE PLACED IN AN INTEREST BEARING TRUST ACCOUNT, AND:** *(check only ONE box)*

☐ **ANY INTEREST EARNED THEREON SHALL BE APPLIED AS PART PAYMENT OF THE PURCHASE PRICE OF THE PROPERTY AT CLOSING, OR DISBURSED AS AGREED UPON UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 10 HEREIN.** (Buyer's Taxpayer Identification Number is: _____)

☐ **ANY INTEREST EARNED THEREON SHALL BELONG TO THE ACCOUNT HOLDER IN CONSIDERATION OF THE EXPENSES INCURRED BY MAINTAINING SUCH ACCOUNT AND RECORDS ASSOCIATED THEREWITH.**

\$ _____ (ii) **Delivery of a promissory note** secured by a deed of trust, said promissory note in the amount of _____ Dollars being payable over a term of _____ years, with an amortization period of _____ years, payable in monthly installments of principal, together with accrued interest on the outstanding principal balance at the rate of _____ percent (_____%) per annum in the amount of \$ _____, with the first principal payment beginning on the first day of the month next succeeding the date of Closing, or such other terms as may be set forth on **Exhibit B**. At any time, the promissory note may be prepaid in whole or in part without penalty and without further interest on the amounts prepaid from the date of such prepayment. **(NOTE: In the event of Buyer's subsequent default upon a promissory note and deed of trust given hereunder, Seller's remedies may be limited to foreclosure of the Property. If the deed of trust given hereunder is subordinated to senior financing, the material terms of such financing must be set forth on Exhibit B. If such senior financing is subsequently foreclosed, the Seller may have no remedy to recover under the note.)**

\$ _____ (iii) **Assumption** of that unpaid obligation of Seller secured by a deed of trust on the Property, such obligation having an outstanding principal balance of \$ _____ and evidenced by a note bearing interest at the rate of _____ percent (_____%) per annum, and a current payment amount of \$ _____.

\$ _____ (iv) **Cash, balance of Purchase Price**, at Closing in the amount of _____ Dollars.

Buyer, at Buyer's expense, shall be entitled to pursue qualification for and approval of any loan Buyer intends to obtain in connection with the transaction contemplated by this Agreement. **(Note: Buyer's obligations under this Agreement are not conditioned upon obtaining or closing any loan. Therefore, Buyer is advised to consult with Buyer's lender prior to signing this offer to assure that the Examination Period allows sufficient time for Buyer's lender to provide Buyer sufficient information to decide whether to proceed with or terminate the transaction.)**

(c) **"Closing"** shall mean the date of completion of the process detailed in Section 11 of this Agreement. Closing shall occur on or before _____ or _____.

(d) **"Contract Date"** means the date this Agreement has been fully executed by both Buyer and Seller.

Buyer shall pay recording costs, costs of any title search, title insurance, survey, the cost of any inspections or investigations undertaken by Buyer under this Agreement, charges required by an owners' association declaration to be paid by Buyer for Buyer's future use and enjoyment of the Property, including, without limitation, working capital contributions, membership fees, or charges for Buyer's use of the common elements and/or services provided to Buyer, any costs or charges for determining restrictive covenant compliance, and the following:

Each party shall pay its own attorney's fees.

Section 4. Deliveries: Seller agrees to use best efforts to deliver to Buyer, as soon as reasonably possible after the Contract Date, copies of all material information relevant to the Property in the possession of Seller, including but not limited to: title insurance policies (and copies of any documents referenced therein), surveys, soil test reports, environmental surveys or reports, site plans, civil drawings, building plans, maintenance records and copies of all presently effective warranties or service contracts related to the Property. Seller authorizes (1) any attorney presently or previously representing Seller to release and disclose any title insurance policy in such attorney's file to Buyer and both Buyer's and Seller's agents and attorneys; and (2) the Property's title insurer or its agent to release and disclose all materials in the Property's title insurer's (or title insurer's agent's) file to Buyer and both Buyer's and Seller's agents and attorneys. If Buyer does not consummate the Closing for any reason other than Seller default, then Buyer shall return to Seller all hard copy materials delivered by Seller to Buyer pursuant to this Section 4 (or Section 7, if applicable), if any, and shall, upon Seller's request, following release of the Earnest Money, provide to Seller copies of (subject to the ownership and copyright interests of the preparer thereof) any and all studies, reports, surveys and other information relating directly to the Property prepared by or at the request of Buyer, its employees and agents, without any warranty or representation by Buyer as to the contents, accuracy or correctness thereof. Notwithstanding the above provisions regarding delivery and return of information and documentation, should there exist a separate non-disclosure, confidentiality, or similar agreement between Buyer and Seller, the terms of which conflict with this provision insofar as delivery and return of information and documentation, then the terms of such non-disclosure, confidentiality, or similar agreement shall control as to the delivery and return of information and documentation.

Section 5. Evidence of Title: Seller agrees to convey fee simple insurable title to the Property without exception for mechanics' liens, free and clear of all liens, encumbrances and defects of title other than: (a) zoning ordinances affecting the Property, (b) Leases (as defined in Section 7, if applicable) and (c) specific instruments on the public record at the Contract Date agreed to by Buyer (not objected to by Buyer prior to the end of the Examination Period), which specific instruments shall be enumerated in the deed referenced in Section 11 (items 5(a), 5(b) and 5(c) being collectively "Permitted Exceptions"); provided that Seller shall be required to satisfy, at or prior to Closing, any encumbrances that may be satisfied by the payment of a fixed sum of money, such as deeds of trust, mortgages or statutory liens. Seller shall not enter into or record any instrument that affects the Property (or any personal property listed on **Exhibit A**) after the Contract Date without the prior written consent of Buyer, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld, conditioned or delayed.

Section 6. Conditions: This Agreement and the rights and obligations of the parties under this Agreement are hereby made expressly conditioned upon fulfillment (or waiver by Buyer, whether explicit or implied) of the following conditions:

(a) **Qualification for Assumption:** The obligations of Buyer under this Agreement are conditioned upon Buyer being able to assume the existing loan described in Section 1(b)(iii) above. If such assumption requires the lender's approval, Buyer agrees to use its best efforts to secure such approval and to advise Seller immediately upon receipt of the lender's decision. Approval must be granted on or before _____. On or before this date, Buyer has the right to terminate this Agreement for failure to be able to assume the loan described above by delivering to Seller written notice of termination by the above date, ***time being of the essence***. If Buyer delivers such notice, this Agreement shall be null and void, and the Earnest Money shall be refunded to Buyer. If Buyer fails to deliver such notice, then Buyer will be deemed to have waived this condition. Unless provided otherwise in Section 3 hereof, Buyer shall pay all fees and costs associated with any such assumption, including any assumption fee charged by the lender. At or before Closing, Seller shall assign to Buyer all interest of Seller in any current reserves or escrows held by the lender, any property management company and/or Seller, including, but not limited to: any tenant improvement reserves, leasing commission reserves, security deposits and operating or capital reserves for which Seller shall be credited at Closing.

(b) **Title Examination:** After the Contract Date, Buyer shall, at Buyer's expense, cause a title examination to be made of the Property before the end of the Examination Period. In the event that such title examination shall show that Seller's title is not fee simple insurable, subject only to Permitted Exceptions, then Buyer shall promptly notify Seller in writing of all such title defects and exceptions, in no case later than the end of the Examination Period, and Seller shall have thirty (30) days to cure said noticed defects. If Seller does not cure the defects or objections within thirty (30) days of notice thereof, then Buyer may terminate this Agreement and receive a return of Earnest Money (notwithstanding that the Examination Period may have expired). If Buyer is to purchase title insurance, the insuring company must be licensed to do business in the state in which the Property is located. Title to the Property must be insurable at regular rates, subject only to standard exceptions and Permitted Exceptions.

(c) **Same Condition:** If the Property is not in substantially the same condition at Closing as of the date of the offer, reasonable wear and tear excepted, then the Buyer may (i) terminate this Agreement and receive a return of the Earnest Money or (ii) proceed to Closing whereupon Buyer shall be entitled to receive, in addition to the Property, any of the Seller's insurance proceeds payable on account of the damage or destruction applicable to the Property.

(d) **Inspections:** Buyer, its agents or representatives, at Buyer's expense and at reasonable times during normal business hours, shall have the right to enter upon the Property for the purpose of inspecting, examining, conducting timber cruises, and surveying the Property; provided, however, that Buyer shall not conduct any invasive testing of any nature without the prior express written approval of Seller as to each specific invasive test intended to be conducted by Buyer. Buyer shall conduct all such on-site inspections, examinations, testing, timber cruises and surveying of the Property in a good and workmanlike manner, at Buyer's expense, shall repair any damage to the Property caused by Buyer's entry and on-site inspections and shall conduct same in a manner that does not unreasonably interfere with Seller's or any tenant's use and enjoyment of the Property. In that respect, Buyer shall make reasonable efforts to undertake on-site inspections outside of the hours Seller's or any tenant's business is open to the public. Buyer shall provide Seller or any tenant (as applicable) reasonable advance notice of and Buyer shall cause its agents or representatives and third party service providers (e.g. inspectors, surveyors, etc.) to give reasonable advance notice of any entry onto the Property. Buyer shall be obligated to observe and comply with any terms of any tenant lease which conditions access to such tenant's space at the Property. Upon Seller's request, Buyer shall provide to Seller evidence of general liability insurance. Buyer shall also have a right to review and inspect all contracts or other agreements affecting or related directly to the Property and shall be entitled to review such books and records of Seller that relate directly to the operation and maintenance of the Property, provided, however, that Buyer shall not disclose any information regarding this Property (or any tenant therein) unless required by law, and the same shall be regarded as confidential, to any person, except to its attorneys, accountants, lenders and other professional advisors, in which case Buyer shall obtain their agreement to maintain such confidentiality. Buyer assumes all responsibility for the acts of itself and its agents or representatives in exercising its rights under this Section 6(d) and agrees to indemnify and hold Seller harmless from any damages resulting therefrom. This indemnification obligation of Buyer shall survive the Closing or earlier termination of this Agreement. Except as provided in Section 6(b) above, Buyer shall have from the Contract Date through the end of the Examination Period to perform the above inspections, examinations and testing. **IF BUYER CHOOSES NOT TO PURCHASE THE PROPERTY, FOR ANY REASON OR NO REASON, AND PROVIDES WRITTEN NOTICE TO SELLER THEREOF PRIOR TO THE EXPIRATION OF THE EXAMINATION PERIOD, THEN THIS AGREEMENT SHALL TERMINATE, AND BUYER SHALL RECEIVE A RETURN OF THE EARNEST MONEY.**

Section 7. Leases (Check one of the following, as applicable):

☐ If this box is checked, Seller affirmatively represents and warrants that there are no Leases (as hereinafter defined) affecting the Property.

☐ If this box is checked, Seller discloses that there are one or more leases affecting the Property ("Leases"), and the following provisions are hereby made a part of this Agreement.

(a) A list of all Leases shall be set forth on **Exhibit B**. Seller represents and warrants that, as of the Contract Date, there are no other Leases, oral or written, recorded or not, nor any subleases affecting the Property, except as set forth on **Exhibit B**;

(b) Seller shall deliver copies of any Leases to Buyer pursuant to Section 4 as if the Leases were listed therein;

(c) Seller represents and warrants that, as of the Contract Date, there are no current defaults (or any existing situation which, with the passage of time, or the giving of notice, or both, or at the election of either landlord or tenant, could constitute a default) either by Seller, as landlord, or by any tenant under any Lease ("Lease Default"). In the event there is any Lease Default as of the Contract Date, Seller agrees to provide Buyer with a detailed description of the situation in accordance with Section 4. Seller agrees not to commit a Lease Default as Landlord after the Contract Date; and agrees further to notify Buyer immediately in the event a Lease Default arises or is claimed, asserted or threatened to be asserted by either Seller or a tenant under the Lease.

(d) In addition to the conditions provided in Section 6 of this Agreement, this Agreement and the rights and obligations of the parties under this Agreement are hereby made expressly conditioned upon the assignment of Seller's interest in any Lease to Buyer in form and content acceptable to Buyer (with tenant's written consent and acknowledgement, if required under the Lease). Seller agrees to deliver an assignment of any Lease at or before Closing, with any security deposits held by Seller under any Leases to be transferred or credited to Buyer at or before Closing. The assignment shall provide: (i) that Seller shall defend, indemnify and hold Buyer harmless from claims, losses, damages and liabilities (including, without limitation, court costs and attorneys' fees) asserted against or incurred by Buyer which are caused by or the result of any default by Seller under any Lease prior to the date of Closing, and (ii) that Buyer shall defend, indemnify and hold Seller harmless from claims, losses, damages and liabilities (including, without

limitation, court costs and attorneys' fees) asserted against or incurred by Seller which are caused by or the result of any default by Buyer under any Lease after the date of Closing.

(e) Seller also agrees to work diligently to obtain any tenant signatures on any estoppel certificates in such form as Buyer may reasonably request and to work diligently to obtain any subordination, nondisturbance and attornment agreements in such form as Buyer may reasonably request.

Section 8. Environmental: Seller represents and warrants that it has no actual knowledge of the presence or disposal, except as in accordance with applicable law, within the buildings or on the Property of hazardous or toxic waste or substances, which are defined as those substances, materials, and wastes, including, but not limited to: those substances, materials and wastes listed in the United States Department of Transportation Hazardous Materials Table (49 CFR Part 172.101) or by the Environmental Protection Agency as hazardous substances (40 CFR Part 302.4) and amendments thereto, or such substances, materials and wastes, which are or become regulated under any applicable local, state or federal law, including, without limitation, any material, waste or substance which is (i) petroleum, (ii) asbestos, (iii) polychlorinated biphenyls, (iv) designated as a Hazardous Substance pursuant to Section 311 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C. §1321) or listed pursuant to Section 307 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C. §1317), (v) defined as a hazardous waste pursuant to Section 1004 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (42 U.S.C. §6903) or (vi) defined as a hazardous substance pursuant to Section 101 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. §9601). Seller has no actual knowledge of any contamination of the Property from such substances as may have been disposed of or stored on neighboring tracts.

Section 9. Risk of Loss/Damage/Repair: Until Closing, the risk of loss or damage to the Property, except as otherwise provided herein, shall be borne by Seller. Except as to maintaining the Property in its same condition, Seller shall have no responsibility for the repair of the Property, including any improvements, unless the parties hereto agree in writing.

Section 10. Earnest Money Disbursement: In the event that any condition hereto is not satisfied, then the Earnest Money shall be refunded to Buyer. In the event of breach of this Agreement by Seller, the Earnest Money shall be refunded to Buyer upon Buyer's request, but such return shall not affect any other remedies available to Buyer for such breach. In the event of breach of this Agreement by Buyer, the Earnest Money shall be paid to Seller as liquidated damages and as Seller's sole and exclusive remedy for such breach, but without limiting Seller's rights under Section 6(d) or Section 22 of this Agreement. It is acknowledged by the parties that payment of the Earnest Money to Seller in the event of a breach of this Agreement by Buyer is compensatory and not punitive, such amount being a reasonable estimation of the actual loss that Seller would incur as a result of such breach. The payment of the Earnest Money to Seller shall not constitute a penalty or forfeiture but actual compensation for Seller's anticipated loss, both parties acknowledging the difficulty determining Seller's actual damages for such breach.

NOTE: In the event of a dispute between Seller and Buyer over the disposition of the Earnest Money held in escrow, a licensed real estate broker is required by state law (and Escrow Agent, if not a broker, hereby agrees) to retain the Earnest Money in the Escrow Agent's trust or escrow account until Escrow Agent has obtained a written release from the parties consenting to its disposition or until disbursement is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. Alternatively, if a broker or an attorney licensed to practice law in North Carolina is holding the Earnest Money, the broker or attorney may deposit the disputed monies with the appropriate clerk of court in accordance with the provisions of N.C.G.S. §93A- 12.

Seller and Buyer hereby agree and acknowledge that the Escrow Agent assumes no liability in connection with the holding of the Earnest Money pursuant hereto except for negligence or willful misconduct of Escrow Agent. Escrow Agent shall not be responsible for the validity, correctness or genuineness of any document or notice referred to under this Agreement. Seller and Buyer hereby agree to indemnify, protect, save and hold harmless Escrow Agent and its successors, assigns and agents pursuant to this Agreement, from any and all liabilities, obligations, losses, damages, claims, actions, suits, costs or expenses (including attorney fees) of whatsoever kind or nature imposed on, incurred by or asserted against Escrow Agent which in any way relate to or arise out of the execution and delivery of this Agreement and any action taken hereunder; provided, however, that Seller and Buyer shall have no such obligation to indemnify, save and hold harmless Escrow Agent for any liability incurred by, imposed upon or established against it as a result of Escrow Agent's negligence or willful misconduct.

Section 11. Closing: At or before Closing, Seller shall deliver to Buyer a special warranty deed unless otherwise specified on **Exhibit B** and other documents customarily executed or delivered by a seller in similar transactions, including without limitation, a bill of sale for any personalty listed on **Exhibit A**, an owner's affidavit, lien waiver forms (and such other lien related documentation as shall permit the Property to be conveyed free and clear of any claim for mechanics' liens) and a non-foreign status affidavit (pursuant to the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act), and Buyer shall cause to be delivered the funds necessary to pay to Seller the Purchase Price. The Closing shall be conducted by Buyer's attorney or handled in such other manner as the parties hereto may mutually agree in writing. Possession shall be delivered at Closing, unless otherwise agreed herein. The Purchase Price and other funds to be disbursed pursuant to this Agreement shall not be disbursed until the Buyer's attorney's (or other designated settlement agent's) receipt of authorization to disburse all necessary funds.

Section 12. Notices: Unless otherwise provided herein, all notices and other communications which may be or are required to be given or made by any party to the other in connection herewith shall be in writing (which shall include electronic mail) and shall be deemed to have been properly given and received (i) on the date delivered in person or (ii) the date deposited in the United States mail, registered or certified, return receipt requested, to the addresses set out in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer, or at such other addresses as specified by written notice delivered in accordance herewith, (iii) at such time as the sender performs the final act to send such transmission, in a form capable of being processed by the receiving party's system, to any electronic mail address or facsimile number, if any, provided in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer or (iv) on the date deposited with a recognized overnight delivery service, addressed to the addresses set out in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer, or at such other addresses as specified by written notice delivered in accordance herewith. If a notice is sent by more than one method, it will be deemed received upon the earlier of the dates of receipt pursuant to this Section.

Section 13. Counterparts; Entire Agreement: This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, which taken together, shall constitute one and the same original document. Copies of original signature pages of this Agreement may be exchanged via facsimile or e-mail, and any such copies shall constitute originals. This Agreement constitutes the sole and entire agreement among the parties hereto and no modification of this Agreement shall be binding unless in writing and signed by all parties hereto. The invalidity of one or more provisions of this Agreement shall not affect the validity of any other provisions hereof and this Agreement shall be construed and enforced as if such invalid provisions were not included.

Section 14. Enforceability: This Agreement shall become a contract when signed by both Buyer and Seller and such signing is communicated to both parties; it being expressly agreed that notice given in accordance with Section 12 is not required for effective communication for the purposes of this Section 14. The parties acknowledge and agree that: (i) the initials lines at the bottom of each page of this Agreement are merely evidence of their having reviewed the terms of each page, and (ii) the complete execution of such initials lines shall not be a condition of the effectiveness of this Agreement. This Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the parties, their heirs, successors and assigns and their personal representatives.

Section 15. Adverse Information and Compliance with Laws:

(a) **Seller Knowledge/Assessments:** Seller has no actual knowledge of (i) condemnation(s) affecting or contemplated with respect to the Property; (ii) actions, suits or proceedings pending or threatened against the Property; (iii) changes contemplated in any applicable laws, ordinances or restrictions affecting the Property; or (iv) governmental special assessments, either pending or confirmed, for sidewalk, paving, water, sewer, or other improvements on or adjoining the Property, and no pending or confirmed owners' association special assessments, except as follows (Insert "None" or the identification of any matters relating to (i) through (iv) above, if any):

Note: For purposes of this Agreement: (i) a "special assessment" is defined as a charge against the Property by a governmental authority in addition to ad valorem taxes and recurring governmental service fees levied with such taxes, or by an owners' association in addition to any regular assessment (dues), either of which may be a lien against the Property; a special assessment may be either pending or confirmed; (ii) a "confirmed" special assessment is defined as an assessment that has been approved by a governmental agency or an owners' association for the purpose(s) stated, whether, at the time of Closing, it is payable in a lump sum or future installments; (iii) a "pending" special assessment is defined as an assessment that is under formal consideration by a governmental agency or an owners' association but which has not been approved prior to Closing. Seller shall pay, in full at Closing, all confirmed governmental or association special assessments, provided that the amount thereof can be reasonably determined or estimated. The payment of such determined or estimated amount shall be the final payment between Buyer and Seller as to any confirmed special assessments. If the amount of any special assessment cannot be reasonably determined or estimated, the special assessment shall be deemed a pending special assessment. Buyer shall take title subject to all pending special assessments disclosed by Seller herein, if any.

(b) **Compliance:** To Seller's actual knowledge, (i) Seller has complied with all applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, statutes, rules and restrictions pertaining to or affecting the Property; (ii) performance of the Agreement will not result in the breach of, constitute any default under or result in the imposition of any lien or encumbrance upon the Property under any agreement or other instrument to which Seller is a party or by which Seller or the Property is bound; and (iii) there are no legal actions, suits or other legal or administrative proceedings pending or threatened against the Property, and Seller is not aware of any facts which might result in any such action, suit or other proceeding.

(c) **Owners' Association:** If the Property is subject to regulation by an owners' association, Seller shall deliver the following information to Buyer pursuant to Section 4 as if the same were listed therein (or Seller shall state that Seller does not have same in their possession or that such item is not applicable): (i) the name of the owners' association; (ii) the amount of regular assessments

(dues); (iii) the name, address and telephone number of the president of the owners' association or of the association manager or management company; (iv) the owners' association website address; (v) the Seller's statement of account; (vi) the master insurance policy showing the coverage provided and the deductible amount; (vii) copies of any Declaration and/or Restrictive Covenants; (viii) the Rules and Regulations, (ix) the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the owners' association; (x) the current financial statement and budget of the owners' association; (xi) the parking restrictions and information; and (xii) the architectural guidelines. Seller authorizes and directs any owners' association, any management company of the owners' association, any insurance company and any attorney who has previously represented the Seller to release to Buyer, Buyer's agents, representative, closing attorney or lender true and accurate copies of the foregoing items affecting the Property, including any amendments thereto.

Section 16. Survival of Representations and Warranties: All representations, warranties, covenants and agreements made by the parties hereto shall survive the Closing and delivery of the deed. Seller shall, at or within six (6) months after the Closing, and without further consideration, execute, acknowledge and deliver to Buyer such other documents and instruments, and take such other action as Buyer may reasonably request or as may be necessary to more effectively transfer to Buyer the Property described herein in accordance with this Agreement.

Section 17. Applicable Law: This Agreement shall be construed under the laws of the state in which the Property is located. This form has only been approved for use in North Carolina.

Section 18. Assignment: This Agreement is freely assignable unless otherwise expressly provided on **Exhibit B**.

Section 19. Tax-Deferred Exchange: In the event Buyer or Seller desires to effect a tax-deferred exchange in connection with the conveyance of the Property, Buyer and Seller agree to cooperate in effecting such exchange; provided, however, that the exchanging party shall be responsible for all additional costs associated with such exchange, and provided further that a non-exchanging party shall not assume any additional liability with respect to such tax-deferred exchange. Seller and Buyer shall execute such additional documents, at no cost to the non-exchanging party, as shall be required to give effect to this provision.

Section 20. Memorandum of Contract: Upon request by either party, the parties hereto shall execute a memorandum of contract in recordable form setting forth such provisions hereof (other than the Purchase Price and other sums due) as either party may wish to incorporate. Such memorandum of contract shall contain a statement that it automatically terminates and the Property is released from any effect thereby as of a specific date to be stated in the memorandum (which specific date shall be no later than the date of Closing). The cost of recording such memorandum of contract shall be borne by the party requesting execution of same.

Section 21. Authority: Each signatory to this Agreement represents and warrants that he or she has full authority to sign this Agreement and such instruments as may be necessary to effectuate any transaction contemplated by this Agreement on behalf of the party for whom he or she signs and that his or her signature binds such party.

Section 22. Brokers: Except as expressly provided herein, Buyer and Seller agree to indemnify and hold each other harmless from any and all claims of brokers, consultants or real estate agents by, through or under the indemnifying party for fees or commissions arising out of the sale of the Property to Buyer. Buyer and Seller represent and warrant to each other that: (i) except as to the Brokers designated under Section 1(f) of this Agreement, they have not employed nor engaged any brokers, consultants or real estate agents to be involved in this transaction and (ii) that the compensation of the Brokers is established by and shall be governed by separate agreements entered into as amongst the Brokers, the Buyer and/or the Seller.

Section 23. Attorneys Fees: If legal proceedings are instituted to enforce any provision of this Agreement, the prevailing party in the proceeding shall be entitled to recover from the non-prevailing party reasonable attorneys fees and court costs incurred in connection with the proceeding.

☐ **EIFS/SYNTHETIC STUCCO:** If the adjacent box is checked, Seller discloses that the Property has been clad previously (either in whole or in part) with an "exterior insulating and finishing system" commonly known as "EIFS" or "synthetic stucco". Seller makes no representations or warranties regarding such system and Buyer is advised to make its own independent determinations with respect to conditions related to or occasioned by the existence of such materials at the Property.

THE NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, INC. AND THE NORTH CAROLINA BAR ASSOCIATION MAKE NO REPRESENTATION AS TO THE LEGAL VALIDITY OR ADEQUACY OF ANY PROVISION OF THIS FORM IN ANY SPECIFIC TRANSACTION. IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS FORM OR FEEL THAT IT DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR YOUR LEGAL NEEDS, YOU SHOULD CONSULT A NORTH CAROLINA REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY BEFORE YOU SIGN IT.

BUYER:**Individual**

Date: _____

Date: _____

Business Entity

(Name of Entity)

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

SELLER:**Individual**

Date: _____

Date: _____

Business Entity

(Name of Entity)

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

WIRE FRAUD WARNING

To Buyers: Before sending any wire, you should call the closing agent's office to verify the instructions. If you receive wiring instructions for a different bank, branch location, account name or account number, they should be presumed fraudulent. Do not send any funds and contact the closing agent's office immediately.

To Sellers: If your proceeds will be wired, it is recommended that you provide wiring instructions at closing in writing in the presence of the closing agent. If you are unable to attend closing, you may be required to send an original notarized directive to the closing agent's office containing the wiring instructions. This directive may be sent with the deed, lien waiver and tax forms if those documents are being prepared for you by the closing agent. At a minimum, you should call the closing agent's office to provide the wire instructions. The wire instructions should be verified over the telephone via a call to you initiated by the closing agent's office to ensure that they are not from a fraudulent source.

Whether you are a buyer or a seller, you should call the closing agent's office at a number that is independently obtained. To ensure that your contact is legitimate, you should not rely on a phone number in an email from the closing agent's office, your real estate agent or anyone else.

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of the Earnest Money set forth herein and agrees to hold said Earnest Money in accordance with the terms hereof.

(Name of Escrow Agent)

Date: _____

By: _____

Escrow Agent's contact/notice information is as follows:

e-mail address: _____ fax number: _____

except as same may be changed pursuant to Section 12.



AGREEMENT FOR PURCHASE AND SALE OF LAND

THIS AGREEMENT, including any and all addenda attached hereto ("Agreement"), is by and between

a(n) _____ ("Buyer"), and
(individual or State of formation and type of entity)

a (n) _____ ("Seller").
(individual or State of formation and type of entity)

(NOTE: If the Buyer or Seller is an entity, in order to form a binding agreement and complete a transaction, the entities listed as Buyer or Seller in this Agreement should be validly formed and in good standing with the Secretary of State in the State of formation of the entity.)

FOR AND IN CONSIDERATION OF THE MUTUAL PROMISES SET FORTH HEREIN AND OTHER GOOD AND VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, THE RECEIPT AND SUFFICIENCY OF WHICH ARE HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGED, THE PARTIES HERETO AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Terms and Definitions: The terms listed below shall have the respective meaning given them as set forth adjacent to each term.

(a) **"Property":** (Address) _____

Plat Reference: Lot(s) _____, Block or Section _____, as shown on Plat Book or Slide
_____ at Page(s) _____, _____ County, consisting of _____ acres.

☐ If this box is checked, "Property" shall mean that property described on **Exhibit A** attached hereto and incorporated herewith by reference,

(For information purposes: (i) the tax parcel number of the Property is: _____; and,
(ii) some or all of the Property, consisting of approximately _____ acres, is described in Deed Book _____,
Page No. _____, _____ County.)

together with all buildings and improvements thereon and all fixtures and appurtenances thereto.

\$ _____ (b) **"Purchase Price"** shall mean the sum of _____ Dollars,

or, if this box is checked ☐ , Purchase Price shall mean the sum of \$ _____ per gross acre ("Price Per Acre") as determined by a survey obtained by Buyer prior to the expiration of the Examination Period ("Survey"). Buyer shall provide a copy of the Survey to Seller not later than the expiration of the Examination Period. The purchase price shall be determined by multiplying the Price Per Acre by the number of gross acres as determined by the Survey. Adjustments to the amounts due under Sections 1(b)(ii) – 1(b)(iii) shall be made, as applicable, to reflect any adjustment in the Purchase Price in accordance with this provision. The Purchase Price shall be payable on the following terms:

\$ _____ (i) **"Earnest Money"** shall mean _____ Dollars
or terms as follows: _____

The Earnest Money shall be deposited in escrow with



This form jointly approved by:
North Carolina Bar Association
North Carolina Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

STANDARD FORM 580L-T
Adopted 7/2020
© 7/2020

Buyer Initials _____ Seller Initials _____

_____ (name of person/entity with whom deposited- "Escrow Agent") within five (5) calendar days of the Contract Date, to be applied as part payment of the Purchase Price of the Property at Closing, or disbursed as agreed upon under the provisions of Section 10 herein. Should Buyer fail to deliver the Earnest Money by the date required hereunder, or should any check or other funds paid by Buyer be dishonored, for any reason, by the institution upon which the payment is drawn, Buyer shall have one (1) banking day after written notice of such dishonor to deliver cash, official bank check, wire transfer or electronic transfer to the Escrow Agent. If Buyer fails to deliver the required funds within one (1) banking day after written notice, then Seller may terminate this Agreement by written notice to Buyer at any time thereafter, provided Seller has not then received acknowledgement by Escrow Agent of its receipt of funds from Buyer. If the Escrow Agent has not delivered to the Seller the acknowledgement of Earnest Money on the last page of this Agreement by the calendar day following the date the Earnest Money is required to be delivered hereunder, it shall be presumed that the Earnest Money was not delivered by the required time (unless, upon the written request of Seller, Escrow Agent can provide proof of its receipt of the Earnest Money by the required time). Buyer and Seller consent to the disclosure by the Escrow Agent, to the parties to this Agreement, the Broker(s) and any Buyer lender, of any material facts pertaining to the Earnest Money.

☐ **ANY EARNEST MONEY DEPOSITED BY BUYER IN A TRUST ACCOUNT MAY BE PLACED IN AN INTEREST BEARING TRUST ACCOUNT, AND:** *(check only ONE box)*

☐ **ANY INTEREST EARNED THEREON SHALL BE APPLIED AS PART PAYMENT OF THE PURCHASE PRICE OF THE PROPERTY AT CLOSING, OR DISBURSED AS AGREED UPON UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 10 HEREIN.** (Buyer's Taxpayer Identification Number is: _____)

☐ **ANY INTEREST EARNED THEREON SHALL BELONG TO THE ACCOUNT HOLDER IN CONSIDERATION OF THE EXPENSES INCURRED BY MAINTAINING SUCH ACCOUNT AND RECORDS ASSOCIATED THEREWITH.**

\$ _____ (ii) **Delivery of a promissory note** secured by a deed of trust, said promissory note in the amount of _____ Dollars being payable over a term of _____ years, with an amortization period of _____ years, payable in monthly installments of principal, together with accrued interest on the outstanding principal balance at the rate of _____ percent (_____%) per annum in the amount of \$ _____, with the first principal payment beginning on the first day of the month next succeeding the date of Closing, or such other terms as may be set forth on **Exhibit B**. At any time, the promissory note may be prepaid in whole or in part without penalty and without further interest on the amounts prepaid from the date of such prepayment. **(NOTE: In the event of Buyer's subsequent default upon a promissory note and deed of trust given hereunder, Seller's remedies may be limited to foreclosure of the Property. If the deed of trust given hereunder is subordinated to senior financing, the material terms of such financing must be set forth on Exhibit B. If such senior financing is subsequently foreclosed, the Seller may have no remedy to recover under the note.)**

\$ _____ (iii) **Cash**, balance of Purchase Price, at Closing in the amount of _____ Dollars.

Buyer, at Buyer's expense, shall be entitled to pursue qualification for and approval of any loan Buyer intends to obtain in connection with the transaction contemplated by this Agreement. **(Note: Buyer's obligations under this Agreement are not conditioned upon obtaining or closing any loan. Therefore, Buyer is advised to consult with Buyer's lender prior to signing this offer to assure that the Examination Period allows sufficient time for Buyer's lender to provide Buyer sufficient information to decide whether to proceed with or terminate the transaction.)**

(c) **"Closing"** shall mean the date of completion of the process detailed in Section 11 of this Agreement. Closing shall occur on or before _____ or _____.

- (d) **“Contract Date”** means the date this Agreement has been fully executed by both Buyer and Seller.
- (e) **“Examination Period”** shall mean the period beginning on the first day after the Contract Date and extending through 5:00pm (based upon time at the locale of the Property) on _____.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE AS TO THE EXAMINATION PERIOD.

- (f) **“Broker(s)”** shall mean: _____ (“Listing Agency”),
_____ (“Listing Agent” – License # _____)
Acting as: ☐ Seller’s Agent; ☐ Dual Agent
and _____ (“Selling Agency”),
_____ (“Selling Agent”- License # _____)
Acting as: ☐ Buyer’s Agent; ☐ Seller’s (Sub)Agent; ☐ Dual Agent

- (g) **“Seller’s Notice Address”** shall be as follows:

e-mail address: _____ fax number: _____
except as same may be changed pursuant to Section 12.

- (h) **“Buyer’s Notice Address”** shall be as follows:

e-mail address: _____ fax number: _____
except as same may be changed pursuant to Section 12.

- ☐ (i) If this block is marked, additional terms of this Agreement are set forth on **Exhibit B** attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. (**Note: Under North Carolina law, real estate agents are not permitted to draft conditions or contingencies to this Agreement.**)
- ☐ (j) If this block is marked, additional terms of this Agreement are set forth on the Additional Provisions Addendum (Form 581-T) attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
- ☐ (k) If this block is marked, additional terms of this Agreement are set forth on the Back Up Agreement Addendum (Form 581A-T) attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2. Sale of Property and Payment of Purchase Price: Seller agrees to sell and Buyer agrees to buy the Property for the Purchase Price.

Section 3. Proration of Expenses and Payment of Costs: Seller and Buyer agree that all property taxes (on a calendar year basis), leases, rents, mortgage payments and utilities or any other assumed liabilities as detailed on attached **Exhibit B**, if any, shall be prorated as of the date of Closing. Seller shall pay for preparation of a deed and all other documents necessary to perform Seller’s obligations under this Agreement, excise tax (revenue stamps), and other conveyance fees or taxes required by law, any fees required for confirming Seller’s account payment information on owners’ association dues or assessments for payment or proration; any fees imposed by an owners’ association and/or a management company as agent of the owners’ association in connection with the transaction contemplated by this Agreement other than those fees required to be paid by Buyer in this Section 3 below, and the following:

Buyer shall pay recording costs, costs of any title search, title insurance, survey, the cost of any inspections or investigations undertaken by Buyer under this Agreement, charges required by an owners' association declaration to be paid by Buyer for Buyer's future use and enjoyment of the Property, including, without limitation, working capital contributions, membership fees, or charges for Buyer's use of the common elements and/or services provided to Buyer, any costs or charges for determining restrictive covenant compliance, and the following:

Each party shall pay its own attorney's fees.

Deferred/Rollback Taxes: Buyer ☐ intends to continue ☐ does not intend to continue the existing present use valuation property tax deferral(s) relating to the Property. In the event the Buyer intends to continue the existing present use valuation property tax deferral(s) relating to the Property, Buyer shall be responsible for making all necessary applications for continuation of the existing present use valuation property tax deferral(s) relating to the Property and shall be responsible for payment of any deferred/rollback taxes applicable to the Property.

If Buyer does not intend to continue the existing present use valuation property tax deferral(s) relating to the Property, ☐ Seller ☐ Buyer shall be responsible for payment of any deferred/rollback taxes applicable to the Property.

Section 4. Deliveries: Seller agrees to use best efforts to deliver to Buyer, as soon as reasonably possible after the Contract Date, copies of all material information relevant to the Property in the possession of Seller, including but not limited to: information regarding matters detailed on Form 502- Land Information Worksheet, title insurance policies (and copies of any documents referenced therein), surveys, soil test reports, environmental surveys or reports, site plans, civil drawings, building plans, maintenance records and copies of all presently effective warranties or service contracts related to the Property. Seller authorizes (1) any attorney presently or previously representing Seller to release and disclose any title insurance policy in such attorney's file to Buyer and both Buyer's and Seller's agents and attorneys; and (2) the Property's title insurer or its agent to release and disclose all materials in the Property's title insurer's (or title insurer's agent's) file to Buyer and both Buyer's and Seller's agents and attorneys. If Buyer does not consummate the Closing for any reason other than Seller default, then Buyer shall return to Seller all hard copy materials delivered by Seller to Buyer pursuant to this Section 4 (or Section 7, if applicable), if any, and shall, upon Seller's request, following release of the Earnest Money, provide to Seller copies of (subject to the ownership and copyright interests of the preparer thereof) any and all studies, reports, surveys and other information relating directly to the Property prepared by or at the request of Buyer, its employees and agents, without any warranty or representation by Buyer as to the contents, accuracy or correctness thereof. Notwithstanding the above provisions regarding delivery and return of information and documentation, should there exist a separate non-disclosure, confidentiality, or similar agreement between Buyer and Seller, the terms of which conflict with this provision insofar as delivery and return of information and documentation, then the terms of such non-disclosure, confidentiality, or similar agreement shall control as to the delivery and return of information and documentation.

Section 5. Evidence of Title: Seller agrees to convey fee simple insurable title to the Property without exception for mechanics' liens, free and clear of all liens, encumbrances and defects of title other than: (a) zoning ordinances affecting the Property, (b) Leases (as defined in Section 7, if applicable) and (c) specific instruments on the public record at the Contract Date agreed to by Buyer (not objected to by Buyer prior to the end of the Examination Period), which specific instruments shall be enumerated in the deed referenced in Section 11 (items 5(a), 5(b) and 5(c) being collectively "Permitted Exceptions"); provided that Seller shall be required to satisfy, at or prior to Closing, any encumbrances that may be satisfied by the payment of a fixed sum of money, such as deeds of trust, mortgages or statutory liens. Seller shall not enter into or record any instrument that affects the Property after the Contract Date without the prior written consent of Buyer, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld, conditioned or delayed.

Section 6. Conditions: This Agreement and the rights and obligations of the parties under this Agreement are hereby made expressly conditioned upon fulfillment (or waiver by Buyer, whether explicit or implied) of the following conditions:

(a) **Title Examination:** After the Contract Date, Buyer shall, at Buyer's expense, cause a title examination to be made of the Property before the end of the Examination Period. In the event that such title examination shall show that Seller's title is not fee simple insurable, subject only to Permitted Exceptions, then Buyer shall promptly notify Seller in writing of all such title defects and exceptions, in no case later than the end of the Examination Period, and Seller shall have thirty (30) days to cure said noticed defects. If Seller does not cure the defects or objections within thirty (30) days of notice thereof, then Buyer may terminate this Agreement and receive a return of Earnest Money (notwithstanding that the Examination Period may have expired). If Buyer is to purchase title insurance, the insuring company must be licensed to do business in the state in which the Property is located. Title to the Property must be insurable at regular rates, subject only to standard exceptions and Permitted Exceptions.

(b) **Same Condition:** If the Property is not in substantially the same condition at Closing as of the date of the offer, reasonable wear and tear excepted, then the Buyer may (i) terminate this Agreement and receive a return of the Earnest Money or (ii) proceed to Closing whereupon Buyer shall be entitled to receive, in addition to the Property, any of the Seller's insurance proceeds

payable on account of the damage or destruction applicable to the Property.

(c) **Inspections:** Buyer, its agents or representatives, at Buyer's expense and at reasonable times during normal business hours, shall have the right to enter upon the Property for the purpose of investigating matters such as those detailed on Form 502- Land Information Worksheet, conducting timber cruises, and examining and surveying the Property; provided, however, that Buyer shall not conduct any invasive testing of any nature without the prior express written approval of Seller as to each specific invasive test intended to be conducted by Buyer. Buyer shall conduct all such on-site inspections, examinations, testing, timber cruises and surveying of the Property in a good and workmanlike manner, at Buyer's expense, shall repair any damage to the Property caused by Buyer's entry and on-site inspections and shall conduct same in a manner that does not unreasonably interfere with Seller's or any tenant's use and enjoyment of the Property. In that respect, Buyer shall make reasonable efforts to undertake on-site inspections outside of the hours Seller's or any tenant's business is open to the public. Buyer shall provide Seller or any tenant (as applicable) reasonable advance notice of and Buyer shall cause its agents or representatives and third party service providers (e.g. inspectors, surveyors, etc.) to give reasonable advance notice of any entry onto the Property. Buyer shall be obligated to observe and comply with any terms of any tenant lease which conditions access to such tenant's space at the Property. Upon Seller's request, Buyer shall provide to Seller evidence of general liability insurance. Buyer shall also have a right to review and inspect all contracts or other agreements affecting or related directly to the Property and shall be entitled to review such books and records of Seller that relate directly to the operation and maintenance of the Property, provided, however, that Buyer shall not disclose any information regarding this Property (or any tenant therein) unless required by law, and the same shall be regarded as confidential, to any person, except to its attorneys, accountants, lenders and other professional advisors, in which case Buyer shall obtain their agreement to maintain such confidentiality. Buyer assumes all responsibility for the acts of itself and its agents or representatives in exercising its rights under this Section 6(c) and agrees to indemnify and hold Seller harmless from any damages resulting therefrom. This indemnification obligation of Buyer shall survive the Closing or earlier termination of this Agreement. Except as provided in Section 6(a) above, Buyer shall have from the Contract Date through the end of the Examination Period to perform the above inspections, examinations and testing. **IF BUYER CHOOSES NOT TO PURCHASE THE PROPERTY, FOR ANY REASON OR NO REASON, AND PROVIDES WRITTEN NOTICE TO SELLER THEREOF PRIOR TO THE EXPIRATION OF THE EXAMINATION PERIOD, THEN THIS AGREEMENT SHALL TERMINATE, AND BUYER SHALL RECEIVE A RETURN OF THE EARNEST MONEY.**

Section 7. Leases (Check one of the following, as applicable):

☐ If this box is checked, Seller affirmatively represents and warrants that there are no Leases (as hereinafter defined) affecting the Property.

☐ If this box is checked, Seller discloses that there are one or more leases affecting the Property ("Leases"), and the following provisions are hereby made a part of this Agreement.

(a) A list of all Leases shall be set forth on **Exhibit B**. Seller represents and warrants that, as of the Contract Date, there are no other Leases, oral or written, recorded or not, nor any subleases affecting the Property, except as set forth on **Exhibit B**;

(b) Seller shall deliver copies of any Leases to Buyer pursuant to Section 3 as if the Leases were listed therein;

(c) Seller represents and warrants that, as of the Contract Date, there are no current defaults (or any existing situation which, with the passage of time, or the giving of notice, or both, or at the election of either landlord or tenant could constitute a default) either by Seller, as landlord, or by any tenant under any Lease ("Lease Default"). In the event there is any Lease Default as of the Contract Date, Seller agrees to provide Buyer with a detailed description of the situation in accordance with Section 3. Seller agrees not to commit a Lease Default as Landlord after the Contract Date; and agrees further to notify Buyer immediately in the event a Lease Default arises or is claimed, asserted or threatened to be asserted by either Seller or a tenant under the Lease.

(d) During the Examination Period, Buyer and Seller shall cooperate in good faith to determine if any Lease shall be terminated prior to Closing or shall continue after Closing. As to any Lease determined to continue after Closing, Seller shall deliver an assignment of Seller's interest in such Lease to Buyer in form and content acceptable to Buyer (with tenant's written consent and acknowledgement, if required under the Lease). Seller agrees to deliver such assignment of Lease at or before Closing, with any security deposits held by Seller under any Leases to be transferred or credited to Buyer at or before Closing. The assignment shall provide: (i) that Seller shall defend, indemnify and hold Buyer harmless from claims, losses, damages and liabilities (including, without limitation, court costs and attorneys' fees) asserted against or incurred by Buyer which are caused by or the result of any default by Seller under any Lease prior to the date of Closing, and (ii) that Buyer shall defend, indemnify and hold Seller harmless from claims, losses, damages and liabilities (including, without limitation, court costs and attorneys' fees) asserted against or incurred by Seller which are caused by or the result of any default by Buyer under any Lease after the date of Closing.

(e) Seller also agrees to work diligently to obtain any tenant signatures on any estoppel certificates in such form as Buyer may reasonably request and to work diligently to obtain any subordination, nondisturbance and attornment agreements in such form as

Buyer may reasonably request.

Section 8. Environmental/Physical Aspects of Property: Seller represents and warrants that it has no actual knowledge of the presence or disposal, except as in accordance with applicable law, within any structures on the Property or on the Property of hazardous or toxic waste or substances, which are defined as those substances, materials, and wastes, including, but not limited to: those substances, materials and wastes listed in the United States Department of Transportation Hazardous Materials Table (49 CFR Part 172.101) or by the Environmental Protection Agency as hazardous substances (40 CFR Part 302.4) and amendments thereto, or such substances, materials and wastes, which are or become regulated under any applicable local, state or federal law, including, without limitation, any material, waste or substance which is (i) petroleum, (ii) asbestos, (iii) polychlorinated biphenyls, (iv) designated as a Hazardous Substance pursuant to Section 311 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C. §1321) or listed pursuant to Section 307 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C. §1317), (v) defined as a hazardous waste pursuant to Section 1004 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (42 U.S.C. §6903) or (vi) defined as a hazardous substance pursuant to Section 101 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. §9601). Seller has no actual knowledge of any contamination of the Property from such substances as may have been disposed of or stored on neighboring tracts.

Section 9. Risk of Loss/Damage/Repair: Until Closing, the risk of loss or damage to the Property, except as otherwise provided herein, shall be borne by Seller. Except as to maintaining the Property in its same condition, Seller shall have no responsibility for the repair of the Property, including any improvements, unless the parties hereto agree in writing.

Section 10. Earnest Money Disbursement: In the event that any condition hereto is not satisfied, then the Earnest Money shall be refunded to Buyer. In the event of breach of this Agreement by Seller, the Earnest Money shall be refunded to Buyer upon Buyer's request, but such return shall not affect any other remedies available to Buyer for such breach. In the event of breach of this Agreement by Buyer, the Earnest Money shall be paid to Seller as liquidated damages and as Seller's sole and exclusive remedy for such breach, but without limiting Seller's rights under Section 6(c) or Section 22 of this Agreement. It is acknowledged by the parties that payment of the Earnest Money to Seller in the event of a breach of this Agreement by Buyer is compensatory and not punitive, such amount being a reasonable estimation of the actual loss that Seller would incur as a result of such breach. The payment of the Earnest Money to Seller shall not constitute a penalty or forfeiture but actual compensation for Seller's anticipated loss, both parties acknowledging the difficulty determining Seller's actual damages for such breach.

NOTE: In the event of a dispute between Seller and Buyer over the disposition of the Earnest Money held in escrow, a licensed real estate broker is required by state law (and Escrow Agent, if not a broker, hereby agrees) to retain the Earnest Money in the Escrow Agent's trust or escrow account until Escrow Agent has obtained a written release from the parties consenting to its disposition or until disbursement is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. Alternatively, if a broker or an attorney licensed to practice law in North Carolina is holding the Earnest Money, the broker or attorney may deposit the disputed monies with the appropriate clerk of court in accordance with the provisions of N.C.G.S. §93A- 12.

Seller and Buyer hereby agree and acknowledge that the Escrow Agent assumes no liability in connection with the holding of the Earnest Money pursuant hereto except for negligence or willful misconduct of Escrow Agent. Escrow Agent shall not be responsible for the validity, correctness or genuineness of any document or notice referred to under this Agreement. Seller and Buyer hereby agree to indemnify, protect, save and hold harmless Escrow Agent and its successors, assigns and agents pursuant to this Agreement, from any and all liabilities, obligations, losses, damages, claims, actions, suits, costs or expenses (including attorney fees) of whatsoever kind or nature imposed on, incurred by or asserted against Escrow Agent which in any way relate to or arise out of the execution and delivery of this Agreement and any action taken hereunder; provided, however, that Seller and Buyer shall have no such obligation to indemnify, save and hold harmless Escrow Agent for any liability incurred by, imposed upon or established against it as a result of Escrow Agent's negligence or willful misconduct.

Section 11. Closing: At or before Closing, Seller shall deliver to Buyer a special warranty deed unless otherwise specified on **Exhibit B** and other documents customarily executed or delivered by a seller in similar transactions, including without limitation, an owner's affidavit, lien waiver forms (and such other lien related documentation as shall permit the Property to be conveyed free and clear of any claim for mechanics' liens) and a non-foreign status affidavit (pursuant to the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act), and Buyer shall cause to be delivered the funds necessary to pay to Seller the Purchase Price. The Closing shall be conducted by Buyer's attorney or handled in such other manner as the parties hereto may mutually agree in writing. Possession shall be delivered at Closing, unless otherwise agreed herein. The Purchase Price and other funds to be disbursed pursuant to this Agreement shall not be disbursed until the Buyer's attorney's (or other designated settlement agent's) receipt of authorization to disburse all necessary funds.

Section 12. Notices: Unless otherwise provided herein, all notices and other communications which may be or are required to be given or made by any party to the other in connection herewith shall be in writing (which shall include electronic mail) and shall be deemed to have been properly given and received (i) on the date delivered in person or (ii) the date deposited in the United States mail, registered or certified, return receipt requested, to the addresses set out in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer, or at such other addresses as specified by written notice delivered in accordance herewith, (iii) at such time as the sender performs the final act to send such transmission, in a form capable of being processed by the receiving party's system, to any

electronic mail address or facsimile number, if any, provided in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer or (iv) on the date deposited with a recognized overnight delivery service, addressed to the addresses set out in Section 1(g) as to Seller, and in Section 1(h) as to Buyer, or at such other addresses as specified by written notice delivered in accordance herewith. If a notice is sent by more than one method, it will be deemed received upon the earlier of the dates of receipt pursuant to this Section.

Section 13. Counterparts; Entire Agreement: This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, which taken together, shall constitute one and the same original document. Copies of original signature pages of this Agreement may be exchanged via facsimile or e-mail, and any such copies shall constitute originals. This Agreement constitutes the sole and entire agreement among the parties hereto and no modification of this Agreement shall be binding unless in writing and signed by all parties hereto. The invalidity of one or more provisions of this Agreement shall not affect the validity of any other provisions hereof and this Agreement shall be construed and enforced as if such invalid provisions were not included.

Section 14. Enforceability: This Agreement shall become a contract when signed by both Buyer and Seller and such signing is communicated to both parties; it being expressly agreed that notice given in accordance with Section 12 is not required for effective communication for the purposes of this Section 14. The parties acknowledge and agree that: (i) the initials lines at the bottom of each page of this Agreement are merely evidence of their having reviewed the terms of each page, and (ii) the complete execution of such initials lines shall not be a condition of the effectiveness of this Agreement. This Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the parties, their heirs, successors and assigns and their personal representatives.

Section 15. Adverse Information and Compliance with Laws:

(a) **Seller Knowledge/Assessments:** Seller has no actual knowledge of (i) condemnation(s) affecting or contemplated with respect to the Property; (ii) actions, suits or proceedings pending or threatened against the Property; (iii) changes contemplated in any applicable laws, ordinances or restrictions affecting the Property; (iv) governmental special assessments, either pending or confirmed, for sidewalk, paving, water, sewer, or other improvements on or adjoining the Property, and no pending or confirmed owners' association special assessments or (v) any caves, mineshafts, tunnels, fissures, open or abandoned wells, gravesites, pet cemeteries, animal burial pits or landfill operations (past or present) located at the Property, except as follows (Insert "None" or the identification of any matters relating to (i) through (v) above, if any):

Note: For purposes of this Agreement: (i) a "special assessment" is defined as a charge against the Property by a governmental authority in addition to ad valorem taxes and recurring governmental service fees levied with such taxes, or by an owners' association in addition to any regular assessment (dues), either of which may be a lien against the Property; a special assessment may be either pending or confirmed; (ii) a "confirmed" special assessment is defined as an assessment that has been approved by a governmental agency or an owners' association for the purpose(s) stated, whether, at the time of Closing, it is payable in a lump sum or future installments; (iii) a "pending" special assessment is defined as an assessment that is under formal consideration by a governmental agency or an owners' association but which has not been approved prior to Closing. Seller shall pay, in full at Closing, all confirmed governmental or association special assessments, provided that the amount thereof can be reasonably determined or estimated. The payment of such determined or estimated amount shall be the final payment between Buyer and Seller as to any confirmed special assessments. If the amount of any special assessment cannot be reasonably determined or estimated, the special assessment shall be deemed a pending special assessment. Buyer shall take title subject to all pending special assessments disclosed by Seller herein, if any.

(b) **Compliance:** To Seller's actual knowledge, (i) Seller has complied with all applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, statutes, rules and restrictions pertaining to or affecting the Property; (ii) performance of the Agreement will not result in the breach of, constitute any default under or result in the imposition of any lien or encumbrance upon the Property under any agreement or other instrument to which Seller is a party or by which Seller or the Property is bound; and (iii) there are no legal actions, suits or other legal or administrative proceedings pending or threatened against the Property, and Seller is not aware of any facts which might result in any such action, suit or other proceeding.

(c) **Owners' Association:** If the Property is subject to regulation by an owners' association, Seller shall deliver the following information to Buyer pursuant to Section 4 as if the same were listed therein (or Seller shall state that Seller does not have same in their possession or that such item is not applicable): (i) the name of the owners' association; (ii) the amount of regular assessments (dues); (iii) the name, address and telephone number of the president of the owners' association or of the association manager or management company; (iv) the owners' association website address; (v) the Seller's statement of account; (vi) the master insurance policy showing the coverage provided and the deductible amount; (vii) copies of any Declaration and/or Restrictive Covenants; (viii) the Rules and Regulations, (ix) the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the owners' association; (x) the current financial statement and budget of the owners' association; (xi) the parking restrictions and information; and (xii) the architectural guidelines. Seller authorizes and directs any owners' association, any management company of the owners' association, any insurance company and any attorney who has previously represented the Seller to release to Buyer, Buyer's agents, representative, closing attorney or lender true

and accurate copies of the foregoing items affecting the Property, including any amendments thereto.

Section 16. Survival of Representations and Warranties: All representations, warranties, covenants and agreements made by the parties hereto shall survive the Closing and delivery of the deed. Seller shall, at or within six (6) months after the Closing, and without further consideration, execute, acknowledge and deliver to Buyer such other documents and instruments, and take such other action as Buyer may reasonably request or as may be necessary to more effectively transfer to Buyer the Property described herein in accordance with this Agreement.

Section 17. Applicable Law: This Agreement shall be construed under the laws of the state in which the Property is located. This form has only been approved for use in North Carolina.

Section 18. Assignment: This Agreement is freely assignable unless otherwise expressly provided on **Exhibit B**.

Section 19. Tax-Deferred Exchange: In the event Buyer or Seller desires to effect a tax-deferred exchange in connection with the conveyance of the Property, Buyer and Seller agree to cooperate in effecting such exchange; provided, however, that the exchanging party shall be responsible for all additional costs associated with such exchange, and provided further, that a non-exchanging party shall not assume any additional liability with respect to such tax-deferred exchange. Seller and Buyer shall execute such additional documents, at no cost to the non-exchanging party, as shall be required to give effect to this provision.

Section 20. Memorandum of Contract: Upon request by either party, the parties hereto shall execute a memorandum of contract in recordable form setting forth such provisions hereof (other than the Purchase Price and other sums due) as either party may wish to incorporate. Such memorandum of contract shall contain a statement that it automatically terminates and the Property is released from any effect thereby as of a specific date to be stated in the memorandum (which specific date shall be no later than the date of Closing). The cost of recording such memorandum of contract shall be borne by the party requesting execution of same.

Section 21. Authority: Each signatory to this Agreement represents and warrants that he or she has full authority to sign this Agreement and such instruments as may be necessary to effectuate any transaction contemplated by this Agreement on behalf of the party for whom he or she signs and that his or her signature binds such party.

Section 22. Brokers: Except as expressly provided herein, Buyer and Seller agree to indemnify and hold each other harmless from any and all claims of brokers, consultants or real estate agents by, through or under the indemnifying party for fees or commissions arising out of the sale of the Property to Buyer. Buyer and Seller represent and warrant to each other that: (i) except as to the Brokers designated under Section 1(f) of this Agreement, they have not employed nor engaged any brokers, consultants or real estate agents to be involved in this transaction and (ii) that the compensation of the Brokers is established by and shall be governed by separate agreements entered into as amongst the Brokers, the Buyer and/or the Seller.

Section 23. Attorneys Fees: If legal proceedings are instituted to enforce any provision of this Agreement, the prevailing party in the proceeding shall be entitled to recover from the non-prevailing party reasonable attorneys fees and court costs incurred in connection with the proceeding.

THE NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, INC. AND THE NORTH CAROLINA BAR ASSOCIATION MAKE NO REPRESENTATION AS TO THE LEGAL VALIDITY OR ADEQUACY OF ANY PROVISION OF THIS FORM IN ANY SPECIFIC TRANSACTION. IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS FORM OR FEEL THAT IT DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR YOUR LEGAL NEEDS, YOU SHOULD CONSULT A NORTH CAROLINA REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY BEFORE YOU SIGN IT.

BUYER:

SELLER:

Individual

Individual

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Business Entity

(Name of Entity)
By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

Business Entity

(Name of Entity)
By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

WIRE FRAUD WARNING

To Buyers: Before sending any wire, you should call the closing agent's office to verify the instructions. If you receive wiring instructions for a different bank, branch location, account name or account number, they should be presumed fraudulent. Do not send any funds and contact the closing agent's office immediately.

To Sellers: If your proceeds will be wired, it is recommended that you provide wiring instructions at closing in writing in the presence of the closing agent. If you are unable to attend closing, you may be required to send an original notarized directive to the closing agent's office containing the wiring instructions. This directive may be sent with the deed, lien waiver and tax forms if those documents are being prepared for you by the closing agent. At a minimum, you should call the closing agent's office to provide the wire instructions. The wire instructions should be verified over the telephone via a call to you initiated by the closing agent's office to ensure that they are not from a fraudulent source.

Whether you are a buyer or a seller, you should call the closing agent's office at a number that is independently obtained. To ensure that your contact is legitimate, you should not rely on a phone number in an email from the closing agent's office, your real estate agent or anyone else.

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of the Earnest Money set forth herein and agrees to hold said Earnest Money in accordance with the terms hereof.

(Name of Escrow Agent)
Date: _____ By: _____

Escrow Agent's contact/notice information is as follows:

e-mail address: _____ fax number: _____

except as same may be changed pursuant to Section 12.

What Changed in 2020

(since July 2019 Forms Revisions - to be effective 7/1/2020)

	Form No.	Form Name
1.	502	Land Information Worksheet
2.	575	Agency Agreement Renewal and/or Amendment
3.	580-T	Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Real Property (form name change)
4.	580L-T	Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land (NEW FORM - pending 2020 NCR and NCBA final approval)
5.	581-T	Additional Provisions Addendum
6.	581A-T	Back Up Agreement Addendum (pending 2020 NCBA approval as joint form)
7.	583-T	Agreement to Amend Contract-Notice of Assignment (form name change-joint NCBA approval 2017)
8.	586-T	Unilateral Termination By Buyer (pending 2020 NCBA approval as joint form)
9.	587-T	Notice of Offer Rejection (pending 2020 NCBA approval as joint form)
10.	588-T	Notice of Revocation of Offer (NEW FORM - pending 2020 NCR and NCBA final approval)
11.	592-T	Commercial Lease Agreement (Single Tenant Facility)
12.	593-T	Commercial Lease Agreement (Multi-Tenant Facility)

RCA-NCR Forms Changes

Form 502- Land Information Worksheet

In light of the creation of Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land, this form was revised to add a note at the top which makes reference to the new land form and notes that Deliveries under that agreement and due diligence under that agreement will cover matters addressed by the form.

Form 575- Agency Agreement Renewal and/or Amendment

This form was revised to add “if applicable” as to the reference to a specific property address. This change was made in light of the instances, such as in a buyer or tenant agency agreement, where a specific property address reference may not be applicable.

Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land (NEW FORM)

(Jointly Approved form with North Carolina Bar Association)

Brokers had made several comments to the Committee that brokers and attorneys were improperly using the residential vacant lot form (Form 12-T) for transactions involving purchases of acres of land. It was noted that the title and survey provisions of the vacant lot form are not very robust and that other provisions of the agreement are really inapplicable given the form contemplates a residential lot purchase. An informal survey of commercial structure members in North Carolina indicated a clear desire for a land specific commercial agreement. The Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land is purposefully similar in content to the revised Form 580-T Agreement for Purchase and Sale of

Improved Property (many brokers had used the Form 580-T with an attorney addendum for land deals), but has specific provisions which deal in more detail with matters such as: (i) the possibility of a per acre purchase price, (ii) rollback taxes, (iii) cross references to the Form 502- Land Information Worksheet, (iv) addressing leases differently in contemplation of the fact certain leases might be terminated prior to closing, (v) modifying the representations of seller to add matters common to land transactions such as cemeteries and landfills, and (vi) removing the EFIS disclosure.

Form 580-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Real Property (form name change)
(Jointly Approved form with North Carolina Bar Association)

The title of this form was changed, to add the word “Improved” before real property, to evidence the intended use of the form and to distinguish it from the Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land.

Brokers and attorneys have noted an increased incidence of: (i) entities who are parties to a contract being administratively dissolved or revenue suspended, or (ii) entities being named as a party (particularly buyers), which entities have not been formed/do not exist (meaning formation of a valid contract is not possible). In an attempt to heighten awareness that entity status and formation is an important consideration in establishing a contract, a note regarding these matters was added under the initial paragraph which identifies the parties.

Section 1(b)(i) was revised to provide that the Earnest Money is to be deposited within five (5) calendar days of the Contract Date (replacing “promptly”). The provision was also revised to provide a process for addressing Earnest Money deposits that are not timely delivered or checks for Earnest Money which are dishonored.

Section 1(b)(ii) was deleted because the loan contingency has been removed and Section 6(a) which permitted a seller to demand proof of such loan (and terminate if not receive) has also been removed. A provision noting that the buyer can obtain a loan, with a note that makes clear there is no loan contingency, was added at the end of Section 1.

Section 1(k) was added as an option to be used where Form 581A-T- Back Up Agreement Addendum may be attached. Since that form is now proposed to be jointly approved (it was not before), it is now appropriate to reference the form in this jointly approved form.

Section 3 on prorations was modified to expressly address and allocate fees charged in connection with acquiring information from owners associations.

Section 4 was revised to: (i) require a buyer return to seller only hard copy materials delivered to buyer (no need to return items provided digitally), (ii) to clarify language that the buyer’s obligation to turn over its reports is conditioned upon return of the Earnest Money, and (iii) to make it clear that if there is separate non-disclosure or confidentiality agreement between buyer and seller which deals with matters in this Section, that separate agreement will control as to delivery and return of information and documentation.

Section 6(a) dealing with a new loan was deleted as noted above.

Section 7(e) regarding estoppel certificates was revised to reflect the fact that tenants, not sellers, sign estoppel certificates and to clarify that a seller must diligently pursue execution of reasonable forms of estoppel certificates and subordination, non-disturbance and attornment agreements requested by buyer.

Section 12 was revised to provide that e-mail notice is deemed received when the sender performs the final act of sending it in a form capable of being processed by the receiving party's system. The prior language made the e-mail effective upon a read receipt. Given that parties can reject issuance of a read receipt, the old language permitted a party to effectively nullify e-mail notice.

Section 15 was revised to address owner association assessments and to clarify language on the allocation of assessments. A new subsection (c) was added to obligate sellers to provide certain owners association documentation as deliveries pursuant to Section 4 of the agreement and to authorize the buyer and their representatives to obtain such information directly if the seller does not deliver the information.

A wire fraud warning was added beneath the signature lines on the agreement. As well, notice information for the Escrow Agent was added to the Escrow Agent receipt, to facilitate the notices regarding the Earnest Money called for in the new language of Section 1(b)(i).

Other changes to the form were technical corrections and grammatical changes.

Form 581A-T- Back Up Agreement Addendum

(Jointly Approved form with North Carolina Bar Association)

This form was revised to permit it to be used with either the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property or the Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land (previously the form only addressed the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property). Changes were made to the footer and disclaimer to address the fact that this form is now a jointly approved form.

Form 581-T- Additional Provisions Addendum

(Jointly Approved form with North Carolina Bar Association)

This form was revised to permit it to be used with either the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property or the Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land (previously the form only addressed the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property). The Acquisition and Development Loan option was removed because it was tied to the loan contingency which is no longer in the form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land or the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property. Comments from brokers and attorneys indicated that Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property is frequently used in connection with business purchases (where the business is owned by an entity different than the one which owns the land), so a provision was added which, where this provision is selected, make the real estate agreement and the identified business asset purchase agreement cross contingent.

Form 583-T- Agreement to Amend Contract-Notice of Assignment (form name change)

(Jointly Approved form with North Carolina Bar Association)

This form was revised to permit it to be used with either the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property or the Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land (previously the form only addressed the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property).

It was noted that the Examination Period and Closing dates are sometimes moved up, as opposed to being extended (the form previously contemplated only extensions). The form has been revised to

permit replacement of either or both of the Examination Period and Closing provisions, so that they can be adjusted in whatever manner the parties desire.

Many brokers had requested a simple assignment of contract form because it is so common for contracts to be assigned. The Real Estate Commission was wary of a stand-alone form because they have had extensive experience with assignments being misused in improper transactions. Accordingly, it was determined to add a notice of assignment provision to this form (together with the existence and good standing note that has been added to the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property and the Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land). A note was also added to remind sellers, if they are doing 1031 exchanges, that they should seek professional advice if consideration is received for Examination Period or Closing changes.

In light of the new ability to shorten or extend the Examination Period or Closing and the addition of the assignment provision, the name of the form was revised to reflect its purposes.

Form 586-T- Unilateral Termination By Buyer

(Jointly Approved form with North Carolina Bar Association)

This form was revised to permit it to be used with either the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property or the Form 580L-T- Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Land (previously the form only addressed the Form 580-T-Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Property). Changes were made to the footer and disclaimer to address the fact that this form is now a jointly approved form.

Form 587-T- Notice of Offer Rejection

(Jointly Approved form with North Carolina Bar Association)

Changes were made to the footer and disclaimer to address the fact that this form is now a jointly approved form.

Form 588-T- Notice of Revocation of Offer (NEW FORM)

(Jointly Approved form with North Carolina Bar Association)

In light of the existing Form 587-T-Notice of Offer rejection form, the Ad Hoc Group suggested that a revocation of offer form might be appropriate to provide a simple tool that would permit parties to clearly revoke an offer (so there would be no question as to the status of the offer). This form was developed to serve that purpose.

Form 592-T- Commercial Lease Agreement (Single Tenant Facility)

Section 9- Brokers had made comments that the option providing that reimbursement is not applicable should not be at the end of the Section, but more properly should be at the start of the Section. So, the check box option to provide that the Tenant has no reimbursement responsibility to Landlord for taxes and insurance was moved from the end of the Section to the front of the Section and the wording adjusted slightly to reflect the new location.

Section 12- Several comments had been received from brokers that the HVAC options were unclear, particularly as to the application of the per event expense cap and the annual expense cap and how those caps worked together. The provision was re-written to be more detailed and clear.

Form 593-T- Commercial Lease Agreement (Multi-Tenant Facility)

Exhibit references- Brokers had noted that there were some references to Exhibit B in the form which appeared to be intended to reference Exhibit C. Those incorrect references were corrected.

Section 9- Brokers had made comments that the option providing that reimbursement is not applicable should not be at the end of the Section, but more properly should be at the start of the Section. So, the check box option to provide that the Tenant has no reimbursement responsibility to Landlord for taxes, insurance, and property operating expenses was moved from the end of the Section to the front of the Section and the wording adjusted slightly to reflect the new location.

Section 12- Several comments had been received from brokers that the HVAC options were unclear, particularly as to the application of the per event expense cap and the annual expense cap and how those caps worked together. The provision was re-written to be more detailed and clear.

ANSWER TO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For Discussion on page 28

1. Mark, a buyer's agent, submits an offer on behalf of his clients for \$27,000. The listing agent reviews the offer with his seller. The seller marks out \$27,000, writes in \$37,000, initials the change, and signs all pages.

Was a contract created? Why or why not?

No, because the seller rejected the buyer's offer and created a counteroffer by changing the price.

2. Mae, a buyer's agent with ABC Realty, submits an offer on behalf of her buyer-client to Tammy, a seller's agent with XYZ Realty. The offer includes a \$1000 due diligence fee (DDF) and a \$2000 initial earnest money deposit (EMD). Tammy presents the offer to her seller-client, and the seller signs the offer as-is, without making any changes. Tammy calls Mae to let her know the seller has signed contract. Tammy reminds Mae that the DDF and EMD checks must be delivered to Tammy's office by the end of the day.

Are the parties under contract? YES

If YES, when was the contract formed? *When Tammy called Mae to let her know the seller had signed without making any changes to the buyer's offer. Delivery of DDF and EMD are not required for contract formation.*

If NO, what is required for contract formation? *An offer must be signed without making any changes and the signed acceptance is communicated to the offeror or their agent.*

3. Sam, a buyer's agent, submits an offer on behalf of his buyer-client to Malik, the listing agent. Malik presents the offer to his seller-client. The seller agrees to all terms except the due diligence fee. The seller wants to increase the fee from \$2500 to \$5000. Malik calls Sam to discuss the DDF change, and Sam tells him the buyer will agree to the increase. Malik adjusts the amount of the DDF on the Offer to Purchase form, and the seller initials the change and signs all pages. Malik forwards the paperwork to Sam.

A few hours later, Malik calls Sam again and tells him the seller is rescinding the offer, because the seller has accepted another offer.

Did Malik's and Sam's clients form a contract? Why or why not?

No, because the original offer was rejected when the seller changed the amount of the DDF. To form a contract, the buyer would have had to sign the counteroffer, and the buyer's agent would have had to communicate to the listing agent that the buyer had signed.

For Discussion on page 33

1. A buyer's agent submits an offer to Holly, a listing agent, at a cooperating firm. Holly sends the offer via email to the seller and reviews it. The seller agrees to the terms, signs the offer, and scans and emails it back to the listing agent.

Was a contract created?

No, because the fact that the seller signed the contract was not communicated to the buyer or the buyer's agent.

2. Thomie, a dual agent, represents Jay in purchasing a home listed by his firm. Jay and the seller provide written authority for Thomie to act as a dual agent. Thomie assists Jay with preparing an offer. Thomie then physically presents the offer to the seller, and watches as the seller signs it.

Was a contract created?

Yes, because Thomie is a dual agent, representing both the buyer and the seller. When the seller signed the offer in front of Thomie, communication of acceptance to the buyer occurred.

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Section 3

Cybersecurity



1. Kristi, a broker with ABC Realty, is updating documentation in a transaction file while at a local coffee shop. Kristi uses the public Wi-Fi and sends her client a reminder via email to sign the engagement letter for the closing attorney's office. Because Kristi has worked with the attorney previously, she has a copy of the attorney's wiring instructions, so she attaches a copy of the wiring instructions in the email to her client.

What did Kristi do wrong? _____

2. Sandra, a broker with Houz Realty, uses her smartphone to access transaction files and client information. One day while Sandra is searching for listings, a text message pops up, with a link to set up delivery preferences for a package. Sandra does not remember ordering a package, but she clicks on the link anyway.

Has Sandra compromised the information of her clients?

3. Joe, a BIC with Farm Realty, answers a call one day. He receives an unfamiliar call from Tom, who claims to be a representative with the firm's cloud storage provider, Documents R' Us. Tom informs Joe of a new upgrade, and during the conversation Joe states that the firm is not paying for an additional service. Tom convinces Joe that the upgrade is needed and free. Joe then provides his email address, receives an email with a link, and clicks on it.

What, if anything, has Joe done wrong?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- describe common types of cybersecurity attacks in real estate transactions;
- list best practices for brokers to prevent wire fraud, and
- describe fraudulent activities that have become more prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TERMINOLOGY

The following definitions are provided by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

- **Cybersecurity:** The art of protecting network, devices, and data from unauthorized access or criminal use and the practice of ensuring confidentiality and integrity, and availability of information.
- **Malware:** Software designed to steal sensitive information, and/or gain access to private computer systems.
- **Ransomware:** A type of malicious software or malware designed to deny access to a computer system or data until a ransom is paid.

**The division
of the
Department
of Justice /
FBI that
tracks and
investigates
computer
crime is IC3**



TYPES OF CYBERSECURITY ATTACKS

Business Email Compromise/Email Account Compromise (*BEC/EAC*)

According to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (hereafter known as IC3), business email compromise/email account compromise (hereafter known as BEC/EAC) is a sophisticated scam that targets both businesses and individuals who perform legitimate transfer-of-funds requests.

Following is a common fact scenario for BEC/EAC scams in real estate transactions:

1. Unbeknownst to the account holder, the email account of an individual in the transaction is hacked (broker, attorney, mortgage representative, buyer, or seller).
2. The hacker monitors email communications for transaction details such as closing costs, property location, and/or funds to be wired.
3. The hacker creates and sends a “spoof” email with instructions for the wire transfer on behalf of the attorney or broker to the buyer or seller. The hacker’s email address and the style of the email closely resembles that of the original account holder, so the recipient is unlikely to realize it is not an authentic communication.

Also, it is important to note that this scam is not always associated with a transfer of funds request. Business emails can also be compromised to gain access to an employees’ Personal Identifiable Information or Wage and Tax Statement (W-2) forms according to IC3.

Case Analysis: A Business Email Compromise

- The buyers entered into a contract to buy a property for \$180,000 and did not intend to obtain mortgage financing to purchase the property. The buyers indicated their closing date would be in two weeks.
- A hacker obtained the name of an employee at the closing attorney’s office and created a fake email address for the employee.
- The email contained a misspelled word and utilized a public email account (e.g. samm@gmail.com).
- The hacker sent an email masquerading as the attorney’s employee to the buyer’s agent asking for the buyer’s email address.
- The buyer’s agent responded to the hacker with the email address of the buyers and asked to reschedule the closing for ten calendar days later.
- The hacker responded to the buyer’s agent and confirmed the new closing date and asked when they would receive the down payment from the buyers.
- The buyer’s agent forwarded the email to the buyers. The email did not include any wire fraud verbiage or warning.

- The hacker sent an email directly to the buyers asking if they received the new wiring instructions and for them to wire the funds to escrow immediately.
- The buyers responded to the email from the hacker inquiring about the new instructions.
- The hacker responded to the email with an attachment that included the new wiring instructions and the amount to be escrowed of \$175,854.30.
- The buyers made two wire transfers to the account specified in the hacker's wiring instructions.
- The wire fraud was not discovered until a couple of weeks later when recovery of the money was not possible.

Based upon the facts, what could the buyer's agent have done differently to better protect the buyers?

Is there anything that the buyers could have done differently?



Brokers should continuously remind clients about wire fraud and potential scams even though wire fraud information is included in various contract forms.

Cloud Storage Attacks

How do you store transaction files and documents for brokerage activities? Do you store this information in a cloud? As brokers conduct more real estate transactions virtually, the importance of ensuring the security of transaction files and personal data may require additional safety protocols.

Therefore, cloud data storage providers allow brokers and brokerage firms to secure their data, collaborate more effectively with others, and access information with convenience from a variety of locations. However, cloud storage providers are susceptible to cyber-attacks just like any other individual or business. According to Virtua, a data protection solutions company, hackers may attack cloud storage providers by retrieving the passwords of users or the security tokens of the computer.

Brokers who use the “cloud” for storage should implement the following practices to minimize the likelihood of a cyber-attack on their cloud storage:

- create a unique password with a mixture of letters, special characters, and numbers (e.g. 20 or more characters represent a strong password);

- change the password frequently;
- clear caches regularly;
- refrain from saving passwords on your computer;
- disable automatic synchronization of data; and
- encrypt files.

Although cloud providers have a responsibility to safeguard the information of its customers, brokers are obligated to secure transaction files as well. If there is a breach which leads to a potential loss suffered by a client, a broker may be held liable.

Malware

According to the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (hereafter known as CISA), malware is software that disrupts service, steals sensitive information and gains access to private computer systems. The most commonly used malware is spyware or Trojans. Hackers utilize this type of software to retrieve financial information, personal information (e.g. social security number, credit card number), and client data.

Historically, malware has been delivered via phishing emails. Phishing emails are used by hackers to trick you into giving them personal, confidential information. According to the Federal Trade Commission, the emails resemble emails from trusted sources; however, they usually:

- have incorrect grammar, punctuation;
- indicate a problem with your account;
- insist that you take immediate action to verify an account;
- include a fake invoice;
- offer free merchandise or a coupon; or
- inform you to click on a link to make a payment.

Ransomware

According to CISA, ransomware is a type of malicious software or malware designed to deny access to a computer system or data until a ransom is paid. It is usually disseminated in a link within an email or disguised as an attachment. Once the link or attachment is clicked, the device and/or network is infected with ransomware.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (hereafter known as the FBI), states that cybercriminals are becoming more sophisticated and are sending legitimate websites with malicious codes or phishing emails.

Once the infection occurs, the malware encrypts the files, attached drives, and other computers on the network. This attack will lead to inaccessible data and a request for a ransom payment in exchange for a decryption key to retrieve lost data.

The FBI does not support paying a ransom due to the probability that a decryption key may not be received. Some of the following tips are recommended by the FBI to prevent ransomware attacks:

- educate employees on ransomware attacks;
- install anti-virus and anti-malware software; and
- back up data regularly.

Crypto-Jacking

Have you ever noticed that your computer is performing poorly, for example, operating slowly or overheating for no reason? If so, your computer may be infected with malware that runs unknowingly in the background. An example of this type of malware attack is crypto-jacking.

Crypto-jacking is a popular alternative to ransomware attacks because hackers can make more money with less risk of exposure. Crypto-jacking occurs when:

- victims receive a legitimate looking email that encourages them to click on a link; or
- hackers inject a code on a website.

Whatever method hackers use to distribute the code, once the code is enabled, it runs in the background on the victim's computer while it is in use. The hacker uses the victim's computer only as a hub to perform illegal activities and does not steal any of the victim's information. Therefore, this type of cyber-attack will not be obvious. A pop-up window will not appear nor will files be held hostage or lost. An individual who has been a victim of crypto-jacking will experience a computer that operates differently and more slowly.

Brokers can protect the operating systems of their computers by:

- scanning for malware;
- monitoring computer usage;
- using ad blockers to block malicious codes in online advertisements;
- closing out browsers after each use; and
- not clicking on ads or links without verification.

Smishing

Brokers communicate with a multitude of individuals daily who never become their clients or parties in a transaction. Therefore, brokers should exercise extreme caution when receiving text messages, links, or attachments from unknown sources.

One type of scam that brokers could experience is smishing. Smishing is similar to phishing scams that are sent via email. It involves links or attachments being sent via text and occurs when hackers use mobile devices such as tablets and phones, to gain access to confidential information.

Tech Support Scams

On a daily basis, brokers are filtering through emails, text messages, and answering phone calls. This activity makes brokers susceptible to tech support scams.

Tech support scams are conducted by scammers who call and pretend to be a computer technician from a well-known company. The scammers indicate that a problem has been found with your computer and often ask for remote access to run a fictitious diagnostic test. Additionally, the scammers insist on receiving payment to fix a problem that does not exist.

Also, the scammers may use pop-up windows that indicate an error has occurred with your operating system or antivirus software. A telephone number is usually included in the pop-up and individuals are instructed to call the number to receive technical assistance.

Brokers should be aware that legitimate technical support companies will not display a pop-up warning asking you to contact them about potential viruses or security problems.

In an effort to prevent technical support scams, brokers should:

- keep security software up-to-date;
- contact a trusted computer technician;
- not allow anyone control of their computer;
- not click links or attachments; and
- not provide their bank or credit card information over the telephone.

BEST TIPS FOR PREVENTING WIRE FRAUD

Cybersecurity attacks and wire fraud are prevalent in brokerage transactions due to the nature of the business. The following are best practices as indicated by Old Republic Title, a title insurance company, for preventing wire fraud:

- secure devices and accounts (authenticate, encrypt, use strong passwords);
- be vigilant about educating brokers and clients about cybersecurity and wire transfer protocols;
- utilize cashier checks (cashier checks can be verified with the bank prior to funding);
- know the company's wire fraud policies and procedures;
- read all emails cautiously and slowly (analyze requests, check and verify sender's email address, use forward instead of reply);
- be suspicious of changes to wiring instructions; and
- remind clients to review wire fraud disclaimers.

The North Carolina Bar Association has provided guidance to attorneys that is also beneficial to brokers. They recommend the following to prevent fake wiring instruction scams:

- don't allow changes in disbursement methods to be made via email;
- confirm all wiring instructions with a phone call to a trusted number and initiate the call;
- confirm email addresses and encrypt all sensitive information; and
- require multiple people to review wiring instructions before sending wire transfers.

The North Carolina Bar Association's video can be accessed by clicking here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgl_QX1oK6E&feature=youtu.be&utm_source=Wiring+Instructions+Alert&utm_campaign=WiringInstructionsAlert&utm_medium=email

Additionally, the National Association of Realtors® provides a plethora of resources to ensure that brokers are equipped with the knowledge to prevent wire fraud and to educate their clients of its prevalence as well.

A wire fraud video developed by the National Association of Realtors® can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amPQEO1n1rM>

COVID-19 and FRAUD

On April 8, 2020, the United States Department of Homeland Security (hereafter known as DHS), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the United Kingdom's National Cyber Security Centre (hereafter known as NSCC) issued an alert entitled, COVID-19 Exploited by Malicious Cyber Actors, AA20-099A.

The alert provides information regarding the types of cyberattacks that have occurred due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Cyber criminals are conducting COVID-19 related scams by sending phishing emails and malware that use COVID-19 as a common theme. Additionally, due to the increase in curiosity that has occurred due to the pandemic, hackers are able to use social engineering to gain access to data, devices, and personal information.

Brokers should be aware of the following attacks specifically related to COVID-19:

- phishing emails that include an email subject line referencing COVID-19;
- smishing messages that request demographic information to receive governmental support or financial assistance; and
- exploitation of VPN's (Virtual Private Network) and remote access desktop programs by sending malicious files via email.

The NSCC has identified four red flags that can assist a broker in determining whether an email is phishing. The red flags are an email that:

- has an authoritative tone commanding an action;
- has an urgency with a timeline to complete the requested action;
- provokes emotions such as anxiety or nervousness if the action is not completed in a timely manner; or
- indicates that a product is scarce or in short supply.

Brokers have adapted their brokerage services to meet the needs of clients by offering virtual showings, teleconferences, and assisting them with scheduling virtual settlement conferences. On March 30, 2020, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued a press release entitled, FBI Warns of Teleconferencing and Online Classroom Hijacking during COVID-19 Pandemic.

The press release provided the following tips to prevent the hijacking of online meetings:

- create passwords for meetings and use a “virtual” waiting room to control the admittance of guests;
- do not share meeting room links on unrestricted, public social media posts;
- ensure screen sharing options are disabled and provide for “Host Only”;
- ensure that current versions of the teleconferencing tools are employed;
- and

- implement telework policies that specify requirements for physical and information security.

Real estate transactions are still occurring during this pandemic and cybercriminals are still hacking business email accounts, sending phishing emails, and smishing messages to obtain confidential information for financial gain.

Old Republic Title has created a wire fraud prevention drill that can be used by any party in a real estate transaction to help prevent fraudulent activity especially during times of crisis such as COVID-19. The drill consists of three important steps:

STOP: Upon receiving a call with potential wiring instructions, hang up and tell the caller you will verify the information. If you receive an email or text message with wiring instructions, do not reply.

CALL: In an effort to make sure that the request you receive is legitimate, call a trusted, approved telephone number used in the past to contact individuals involved in the transaction or on the contract. Refrain from using telephone numbers given over the phone, in an email or text sent to you.

VERIFY: After calling the trusted number, speak with the person that allegedly called, emailed, or texted you to verify that the changes to the instructions are legitimate.



Brokers have a duty to receive education on the prevention of wire fraud and inform their clients of potential threats.

ANSWERS TO DISCUSSION QUESTION

For Discussion Page 49:

1. Kristi, a broker with ABC Realty, is updating documentation in a transaction file while at a local coffee shop. Kristi uses the public Wi-Fi and sends her client a reminder via email to sign the engagement letter for the closing attorney's office. Because Kristi has worked with the attorney previously, she has a copy of the attorney's wiring instructions, so she attaches a copy of the wiring instructions in the email to her client.

What did Kristi do wrong?

Answer: Kristi should not use a public Wi-Fi to send personal, confidential information to clients. In addition, Kristi should not send wiring instructions to her client. Wiring instructions and protocols should be communicated directly to the client by the attorney's office and not via the broker.

2. Sandra, a broker with Houz Realty, uses her smartphone to access transaction files and client information. One day while Sandra is searching for listings, a text message pops up, with a link to set up delivery preferences for a package. Sandra does not remember ordering a package, but she clicks on the link anyway.

Has Sandra compromised the information of her clients?

Answer: Probably. Sandra should not click on links from unverified sources due to the potential of being hacked and client data being lost or stolen.

3. Joe, a BIC with Farm Realty, answers a call one day. He receives an unfamiliar call from Tom, who claims to be a representative with the firm's cloud storage provider, Documents R' Us. Tom informs Joe of a new upgrade, and during the conversation Joe states that the firm is not paying for an additional service. Tom convinces Joe that the upgrade is needed and free. Joe then provides his email address, receives an email with a link, and clicks on it.

What, if anything, has Joe done wrong?

Answer: Yes, Joe should not have given his email address to an unverified individual/company. Also, Joe should have verified the information from the representative by calling the company before providing his email address. In addition, Joe should not have clicked on any links from an unverified source.

Case Analysis on pages 51-52:

Based upon the facts, what could the buyer's agent have done differently to better protect the buyers?

The buyer's agent should have called the attorney's office to question / verify the change in instructions. Also, the buyer's agent should have provided the buyers some information / education regarding potential risks of and best practices for wire transfers.

What could the buyers have done differently?

The buyer's agent should have called the broker and/or attorney's office to question / verify the change in instructions.

Section 4

Law & Rules Updates



1. Lisa, a BIC, opens a trust account for her real estate office at a local bank.

Must Lisa take the Commission's trust account course? Yes / No

If so, when must she take the course? _____

2. Chandra, a Prelicensing student, tells her instructor that she had a criminal conviction in her past and asks if it will prevent her from being granted a real estate license. Her instructor tells her she can petition the Commission for a decision about the conviction prior to completing the Pre course and/or prior to taking the license examination.

Is Chandra's instructor correct? Yes / No

3. TRUE or FALSE? Pre and Postlicensing courses may now be taken in an online, self-paced environment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you should be able to describe updates to License Law and Commission rules that were effective on July 1, 2020.

OVERVIEW

The Commission revised several rules with an effective date of July 1, 2020, in Chapters 58A and 58H. The changes that directly impact brokers will be summarized in this section. Also, all revised rules can be viewed on the Commission's website.

COMMISSION RULE CHANGES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2020

Rule 58A .0110: Broker-In-Charge (BIC)

Commission Rule 58A .0110 dictates the duties and responsibilities of the BIC. One of the BIC's primary responsibilities, per 58A .0110(g)(3), is "maintaining the trust or escrow account of the firm and the records pertaining thereto."



By law, when must a BIC have a trust account?

N.C.G.S. 93A-6(a)(12) dictates that

- all funds of another person or entity which relate to or concern that person's or entity's interest or investment in real property
- that are received by [a licensee] as a real estate licensee acting in that capacity
- MUST be maintained and deposited in a trust or escrow account in a bank as provided by 93A-6(g).

In other words, the BIC MUST open and properly maintain a trust account if the BIC or any affiliated brokers within the BIC's office collect or otherwise handle the "funds of another person or entity" when acting in the capacity of a broker.

If an active practicing broker does not collect or otherwise handle the funds of others, no trust account is required. Also, a broker who is inactive or otherwise not using his/her real estate license is not required to open or maintain a trust account.



What are examples of "funds of another person or entity" that would prompt the need for a trust or escrow account?

Per N.C.G.S. 93A-6(a)(12), "trust money" is defined as money belonging to others received by a real estate broker who is acting as an agent in a real estate transaction. The most common examples of trust money are:

- Earnest money deposits
- Down payments
- Tenant security deposits
- Rents
- Homeowner Association dues and assessments
- Money received from buyers for final settlements

In the case of resort and other rentals, trust money also includes:

- Advance reservation deposits
- State (and local, if applicable) sales taxes on the gross receipts from such rentals



If a BIC opens a trust account, must that BIC take any special education?

Yes!

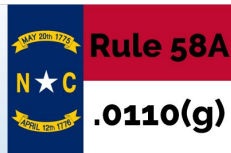
As of July 1, 2020, subsection (g)(9) of rule 58A .0110 dictates that a designated BIC shall “complete the Commission’s Basic Trust Account Procedures Course within 120 days of opening a trust account in accordance with G.S. 93A-6(g).”

The Commission’s Basic Trust Account Procedures Course provides instruction on the laws, rules and trust account guidelines as they pertain to trust accounting. The course is offered only by the Commission and is available in classroom and distance instruction formats.

To register for the course, go to the Commission’s homepage (ncrec.gov), click on the *Education* menu, and select *Course Registration*.

If a BIC Opens a Trust Account

- **Mandatory** Basic Trust Account Procedures Course
- Taught by the Commission
- Within 120 days of opening the trust account



Rule 58A .0302: License Application and Fee

Commission Rule 58A .0302 dictates the fees and requirements for broker and firm license applications.

As of July 1, 2020, if an application is incomplete, and the Commission requests the additional information, the applicant must provide such information / documentation within 45 days of the request. If an applicant fails to submit the documentation within 45 days, the application will be cancelled. Prior to July 1, 2020, the timeframe was 90 days.

Rule 58A .0305: Petition for Predetermination

House Bill 770 was passed by the NC General Assembly in June 2019 and was signed into law by Governor Cooper on July 8, 2019. The law required occupational licensing boards in North Carolina to institute a process by October 1, 2019, by which:

an individual with a criminal history may petition a board at any time, including before an individual starts or completes any mandatory education or training requirements, for a predetermination of whether the individual's criminal history will likely disqualify the individual from obtaining a license.

To meet the October 1 deadline, the Commission initiated a temporary rulemaking process in August 2019. Temporary Rule 58A .0305 became effective on October 1, 2019. It became effective as a permanent rule on July 1, 2020.

Rule 58A .0305 enables an individual to file a Petition for Predetermination to determine whether their criminal history will preclude them from receiving a real estate license.

The Petition for Predetermination is available on the Commission's website. The fee to submit a petition is \$45. Per 58A .0305(b), the petitioner must provide:

1. legal name;
2. mailing, physical, and email address;
3. social security number;
4. date of birth;
5. telephone number;
6. places of residence for the past seven years;
7. employment history since the date the crime was committed;
8. criminal record report prepared no more than 60 days prior to the date of the petition;
9. written statement describing the circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime(s);
10. written statement of any rehabilitation efforts, if applicable;
11. rehabilitative drug or alcohol treatments, if applicable;
12. certificate of relief granted pursuant to G.S. 15A-173.2, if applicable;
13. affidavits or written documents, including character references, that the petitioner intends to submit for review;
14. certification; and
15. signature.

The Commission is required to provide a determination within 45 days of receipt of a petition and the determination is binding for the Commission. In other words, if the Commission determines today that an individual's criminal history will not prevent that individual from obtaining a license, the Commission must honor the decision whether that individual files an application today or 30 years from today.

It is important to note that Petition for Predetermination is only related to criminal history. At the time of license application, an individual must disclose any/all criminal convictions, civil judgments or liens, and disciplinary actions by a professional licensing agency. Therefore, it is possible that an applicant who had previously filed a Petition for Predetermination and had been approved by the Commission under the petition, may still be required to undergo a character review - and even be denied a license - based on civil judgments or liens and disciplinary actions.

Also, if the information surrounding a criminal conviction changes between the time of the petition and license application, or if the individual fails to disclose any convictions at the time of petition, the Commission's response to the Petition for Predetermination will no longer apply. In such case, a full character and fitness review will occur.

Rule 58A .0506: Provisional Broker to be Supervised by Broker-in-Charge

Commission rule 58A .0506 dictates that a provisional broker (PB) must be actively licensed and affiliated with a broker-in-charge (BIC) to engage in activities requiring a real estate license.

Prior to July 1, 2020, PBs were only allowed to be supervised by one BIC at a time. However, as of July 1, 2020, Rule 58A .0506 permits a PB to be supervised by no more than two BICs of two licensed affiliated firms, AS LONG AS the two firms are located in the same physical location and are acting as co-listing or co-selling agents in real estate transactions.

The effect of the rule is that PBs may now legally be affiliated with a licensed team that is operating under the umbrella of a larger firm, as long as the team is located in the same physical location as the umbrella firm. An in-depth discussion of this rule change is provided in the "PBs on a Team" section of the 2020-2021 BICUP course.

Rule 58A .1708: Equivalent Credit

Commission rule 58A .1708 dictates the conditions under which a broker may apply and receive "equivalent" CE credit.

While the types of courses and events that may qualify for equivalent credit have not changed, subsection (h) was added, as follows, to clarify when / how credit will be awarded:

Any equivalent continuing education credit awarded under this Rule shall be applied first to make up any continuing education deficiency for the previous license period and then to satisfy the continuing education requirement for the current license period; however, credit for an unapproved course or educational activity, other than teaching an approved elective course, that was completed during a previous license period shall not be applied to a subsequent license period.

To clarify, the new subsection dictates:

- 1) if a broker has a CE deficiency in the previous and current license periods, then the equivalent credit will first be applied to the previous year's deficiency; and
- 2) equivalent credit for a course or activity that was completed during a previous license period will not be applied to a later license period.

NOTE: This rule does not impact carry-over CE elective credit, which is dictated by Rule 58A .1707.

Rule 58A .1711 Continuing Education Required of Nonresident Brokers

Commission rule 58A .1711 dictates the conditions under which a nonresident* broker may satisfy NC's CE requirement.

* To be considered a nonresident for CE purposes, a broker may not have any NC address, meaning the broker does not have an NC business/office, residence, or mailing address.

As of July 1, 2020, nonresident NC brokers who wish to renew their licenses on active status may satisfy the continuing education requirement EITHER by

1. certifying that they hold an active license in another state at the time of license renewal; OR
2. complete the Commission-prescribed Update course plus one Commission-approved continuing education elective course, or complete two Commission-approved continuing education elective courses.

To clarify, the options are only available to nonresident brokers with active NC licenses who wish to renew those licenses on active status.

Nonresident brokers with inactive NC licenses who wish to activate their licenses are subject to the requirements of Commission Rule 58A .1703.

To assist those nonresident brokers who need to complete Postlicensing courses as a condition of license activation, subsection (b) has been added to Commission rule 58A .1711 as follows:

When a nonresident broker's license has been on inactive status for more than 2 years and the broker is satisfying the requirements of Rule .1703(c) of this Subchapter, if a distance education Postlicensing course is unavailable, a nonresident broker may apply for equivalent education credit for a Postlicensing course by submitting a written request that includes a course completion certificate or transcript evidencing the completion of an education program in another state that:

- (1) consisted of at least 30 hours of instruction;
- (2) was completed within six months prior to application, and
- (3) is parallel to the topics and timings described in the Commission's Postlicensing course syllabi.

Rule 58A .1904: Denial or Withdrawal of Postlicensing Education Credit

Commission Rule 58A .1904 dictates the conditions under the Commission may deny or revoke Postlicensing education credit. Previously, this rule limited the number of hours of Postlicensing education a PB could attend within a given 7-day period. As of July 1, 2020, no such limit exists. This restriction was eliminated because education rules in Subchapter H permit Postlicensing education courses to be delivered via various online formats as of July 1, 2020.

CHANGES IN SUBCHAPTER H RULES

Senate Bill 590 was ratified on August 1, 2019, and signed by Governor Roy Cooper on August 9, 2019. This legislative bill predicated two fundamental and important changes to License Law [Chapter 93A of NC's General Statutes], effective July 1, 2020, as follows:

- 1) In order to offer Prelicensing (Pre), Postlicensing (Post), and Continuing Education (CE) courses, a company (either sole proprietorship or entity) must be certified as an Education Provider.

Prior to July 1, 2020, a company had to be approved or licensed as a "School" to offer Pre/Post courses and/or had to be approved as a "Sponsor" to offer continuing education courses. The criteria and process for approval/licensure as a School was separate from the criteria and process for approval as a Sponsor. Plus, renewal of each approval or licensure was required each year.

As of July 1, 2020, these approval and renewal processes have been streamlined.

- 2) Pre, Post, and CE courses may be delivered online.

The Commission's rules dictating the delivery and instruction of education courses are found in Subchapter H. All rules in that Subchapter were revised as of July 1, 2020, to comply with SB 590. These rules are not discussed during the Update course. All rules in Subchapters A-H may be viewed on the Commission's website.

ANSWERS TO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For Discussion on Page 61:

1. Lisa, a BIC, opens a trust account for her real estate office at a local bank.

Must Lisa take the Commission's trust account course? *YES*

If so, when must she take the course? *WITHIN 120 DAYS OF OPENING THE ACCOUNT*

2. Chandra, a Prelicensing student, tells her Prelicensing instructor that she has a criminal conviction in her past and asks if it will prevent her from being granted a real estate license. Her instructor tells her she can petition the Commission for a decision about the conviction prior to completing the Pre course and/or prior to taking the license examination.

Is Chandra's instructor correct? *YES*

3. TRUE or FALSE? Pre and Postlicensing courses may now be taken in an online, self-paced environment. *TRUE*

Section 5

LICENSING & EDUCATION

DISCLAIMER: This Licensing & Education section reflects standard License Law and Commission rules. However, in response to the COVID-19 health crisis, the Commission approved extensions to various education deadlines during the 2019-20 license period. If you have questions about your education requirements and deadlines, contact the Commission's Education and Licensing Division at 919.875.3700 or LS@ncrec.gov.



1. Amin paid his renewal fee this year but did not take CE. Amin's parents want to sell their house.
 - a) Can he represent them in this transaction? _____
 - b) Would the answer to (a) change if Amin takes CE? _____
2. It's March 2021, and Debbie's license has been expired for nine months because she failed to renew it between May 15-June 30, 2020. What must Debbie do to reinstate her license and return it to active status?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

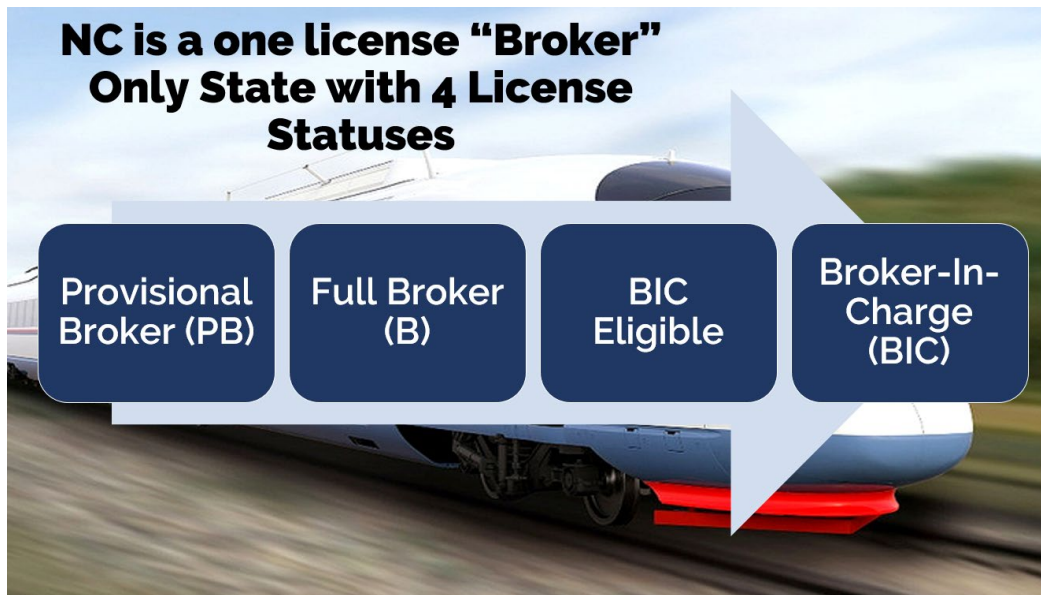
By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- define license categories and statuses;
- explain how to maintain a current and active license;
- describe how to attain *BIC Eligible* status;
- explain how to request or terminate BIC designation; and
- explain how to regain *BIC Eligible* status and BIC designation.

LICENSE CATEGORIES AND STATUSES

Category: Individual Broker License

North Carolina is a “broker only” state, meaning there are not separate salesperson and broker licenses. Instead, there are several categories of the individual broker license as follows:



Provisional Broker (PB) Status

- Entry-level license status.
- A PB must be under the supervision of a BIC to be on active status and legally provide brokerage services.
- A PB must complete the 90-hour Postlicensing education program within 18 months after initial licensure to maintain active license status.

Broker (B) Status

- Primary individual license status.
- A “full” broker can engage in brokerage:
 - as an affiliated agent of a real estate brokerage company (firm or sole proprietorship) under a (BIC),OR
 - independently as a sole proprietor or an entity. In such case, the broker must also be designated as a BIC.

BIC Eligible Status

This status is granted to a broker who has...

- satisfied the qualification requirements for BIC Eligible status;
- submitted a Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation form (REC 2.25); and
- successfully completed the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course within one year prior to or 120 days after submitting form REC 2.25.

Broker-in-Charge (BIC) Designation

- A broker with BIC Eligible status may be designated as broker-in-charge (BIC).
- Each real estate firm or sole proprietorship must have a different BIC for each office.
- A BIC is responsible for:
 - (1) assuring that all brokers employed at the office are maintaining active, current licenses and are maintaining up-to-date information in Commission records;
 - (2) notifying the Commission of firm name or address changes;
 - (3) advertising;
 - (4) maintaining trust/escrow account(s);
 - (5) retaining records;
 - (6) supervising affiliated provisional brokers;
 - (7) ensuring that all affiliated brokers are adhering to agency agreement and disclosure requirements; and
 - (8) notifying the Commission in writing that he or she is no longer serving as BIC of a particular office within 10 days following any such change.

Category: Firm License

- This license is issued to a business entity, such as a corporation, limited liability company, limited partnership, general partnership, association, or joint business venture.
- A sole proprietorship does NOT need a firm license because no entity has been created.

Category: Limited Nonresident Commercial License (LCB)

A limited nonresident commercial broker (LCB) license is a license issued to a person who:

- does NOT live in North Carolina (NC),
- has an active real estate broker or salesperson license in another state,
- wants to enter NC to engage in a commercial transaction, and
- must enter into a Declaration of Affiliation and a Brokerage Cooperation Agreement with a resident NC broker who will be responsible for supervising the nonresident.

This restricted license permits the nonresident to enter NC to engage only in “commercial real estate transactions” as defined in Commission Rule 58A .1802(1).

If the LCB obtains any home, business or delivery address in North Carolina, the individual must apply for and obtain a NC broker license in order to engage in brokerage.

CURRENT AND ACTIVE LICENSURE

To lawfully engage in brokerage activity, an individual or entity must have a **CURRENT** real estate broker license on **ACTIVE STATUS** at the time the broker provides the brokerage services.

Renewing a license every year allows the person or entity to keep the license. If the person/entity fails to timely renew the license, the person/entity no longer has a license. One may renew and keep a license for years without it being on active status, but those with licenses on inactive status may **NOT** engage in brokerage services during that period.

Current vs. Expired **INDIVIDUAL BROKER** Licenses



CURRENT license status means the broker timely renewed their license by paying the annual license renewal fee of \$45 and providing required information/disclosures during May 15-June 30.



EXPIRED license status means the broker failed to timely renew their license.

ALL LICENSES EXPIRE ON JUNE 30.

Brokers, firms, and LCBs must renew their licenses every year during May 15-June 30. A broker must have a Current license on Active status to legally engage in brokerage.

The \$45 renewal fee...

- must be paid online at the Commission's website, and
- must be received by the Commission by 11:59:59 pm on June 30.

There is no grace period. If your license expires on June 30, you may not engage in brokerage activities beginning July 1. You may not resume brokerage practice until your license has been reinstated and is back on "active" status.

Brokers who serve in the military and are on active deployment during the renewal period may be granted special consideration under federal law.

Reinstating an Expired Individual License (21 NCAC 58A .0505)

License expired up to 6 months:

Pay \$90 reinstatement fee online (www.ncrec.gov).

NOTE: To regain active status, a license activation form (REC 2.08) must also be submitted.

License expired more than 6 months and up to 2 years:

1. Successfully complete one 30-hour Postlicensing course within 6 months prior to submitting reinstatement application;
2. submit a reinstatement application with \$90 application fee and all required documentation, including criminal background report; and
3. submit license activation form (Rec 2.08).

-OR-

1. Submit a reinstatement application with \$90 application fee and all required documentation, including criminal background report;
2. pass National and State sections of license exam; and
3. submit license activation form (Rec 2.08).

License expired more than 2 years: START OVER AS IF NEVER LICENSED

1. Successfully complete 75-hour NC Broker Prelicensing course;
2. Submit a license application with \$100 original application fee and all required documentation, including criminal background report; and
3. Pass National and State sections of license exam.

For a detailed review of reinstatement requirements, please visit the “Reinstate your License” page on the Commission’s website. You may also contact the Commission’s Education & Licensing Division for specific instructions.

Current vs. Expired FIRM License

CURRENT firm license means the Qualifying Broker (QB) timely renewed the firm’s license by paying the annual license renewal fee of \$45 and providing required information/disclosures during May 15-June 30.

The QB (Qualifying Broker) must renew the firm’s license each year (as well as his/her individual broker license) and periodically verify with the North Carolina Secretary of State’s Office that the entity remains in good standing.

A firm that fails to renew its license by 11:59pm on June 30 will not have a license as of July 1.

Reinstating an Expired FIRM License (21 NCAC 58A .0505)

Firm license expired up to 6 months:

Pay \$90 reinstatement fee online (www.ncrec.gov).

NOTE: If the QB’s individual broker license is on active status, the firm’s license will be returned to active status as soon as the reinstatement fee is processed.

Firm license expired more than 6 months and up to 2 years:

Submit a firm reinstatement application with \$90 application fee and all required documentation.

Firm license expired more than 2 years:

Submit a firm license application with \$100 original application fee and all required documentation.

Active vs. Inactive INDIVIDUAL BROKER Licenses

To legally receive any income from brokerage activity, including referral fees, you must have an ACTIVE North Carolina license at the time you provide the brokerage service or make the referral.

To maintain active status, brokers* must both timely renew their licenses and complete the appropriate 8 hours of Continuing Education by June 10 each year.

*Provisional Brokers must also timely complete Postlicensing Education and be affiliated with a BIC to maintain active status.

Continuing Education (CE)

MINIMUM REQUIRED CE:

Provisional Brokers and non-BIC Eligible Brokers must take:	Brokers with BIC Eligible status/BIC Designation* must take:
GenUp (General Update) AND ONE Commission-approved Elective Between July 1 - June 10	BICUP (Broker-in-Charge Update) AND ONE Commission-approved Elective Between July 1 - June 10

*To determine whether you have BIC Eligible status and/or BIC designation, log into your license record on the Commission's website.

If you don't complete the correct CE courses by June 10, your license will be changed to "inactive" status on midnight on June 30. You must CEASE all brokerage activity immediately. You may not resume brokerage practice until your license is back on "active" status.



I took the Update in May but forgot to take an elective by June 10. Can I go online and take an elective on June 12?

Answer: No. NC brokers may not take courses for CE credit from June 11 through June 30, and providers of NC real estate CE courses are not allowed to offer CE during this period. This period is used as an administrative period, during which CE providers upload CE course results and the Commission updates its databases to determine which brokers will have active status as of July 1.



My license is Inactive because I didn't take CE. What do I need to do to reactivate it?

Answer: It depends on how long your license has been on inactive status.

Individual broker license on Inactive status with NO CE deficiency:

Submit the License Activation form (REC 2.08 - available online).

Individual broker license on Inactive status for LESS THAN 2 license years with a CE deficiency:

Complete the current year's CE requirement in full (i.e., take the General Update + 1 Commission-approved elective),

AND

take either 1 or 2 approved electives to make up for the number of hours you did not complete during the preceding license year;

AND THEN

submit the License Activation form (REC 2.08 - available online).

Individual broker license on Inactive status for MORE THAN 2 license years with a CE deficiency:

Successfully complete two 30-hour Postlicensing courses within 6 months prior to submitting activation form,

AND

complete the current year's CE requirement in full (i.e., take the General Update + 1 Commission-approved elective);

AND THEN

submit the License Activation form (REC 2.08 - available online).



The Commission doesn't automatically activate licenses.

A broker (or the BIC with whom the broker will be affiliated) must submit the License Activation form (REC 2.08) to notify the Commission of the broker's desire for Active status and of the office with which they will be affiliated and doing business.



Since entities don't take education, what determines whether a firm's license is on active or inactive status?

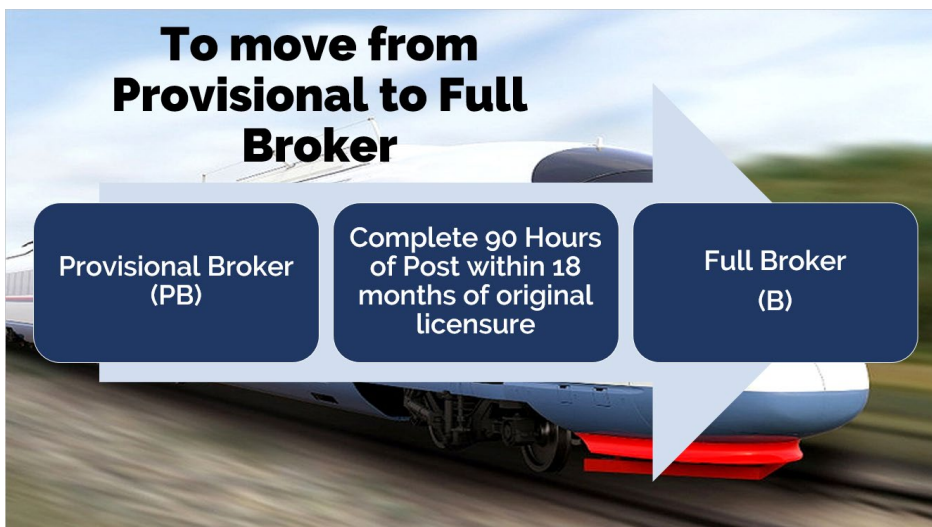
The firm must have a QB (Qualifying Broker) whose license is on active status. As long as the firm has an actively licensed QB, and the firm's license is timely renewed, the firm license will remain active.

If the QB's license expires or is inactive on July 1, the firm's license will also be inactive, meaning no brokers may engage in brokerage under the firm's umbrella. While losing a BIC only takes one office down, losing a QB takes the entire firm down.

In such case, the firm license cannot be activated until either the QB's license has returned to active status or the firm appoints a new actively-licensed QB. Note that even if the firm license is active, the firm cannot legally perform brokerage at any office location without a designated BIC.

Postlicensing Education

Beginning July 1, 2020, a PB must complete the 90-hour Postlicensing education program within 18 months after initial licensure to maintain active license status.





What are the Postlicensing courses?

Answer: Post 301-Broker Relationships & Responsibilities, Post 302-Contracts & Closing, and Post 303-NC Law, Rules, and Legal Concepts. Course syllabi are available on the Commission's website.



Do I have to take the Postlicensing courses in a certain order?

Answer: No. Postlicensing courses may be taken in any sequence. However, the Commission recommends that you follow the course number sequence (301, 302, & 303), as course materials were developed with that sequence in mind.



When do I have to complete the Postlicensing courses?

Answer: Beginning July 1, 2020, a PB will be required to complete the Postlicensing Education program within 18 months after initial licensure. In other words, all three Postlicensing courses - Post 301, Post 302, and Post 303 - must be completed within 18 months of the date of initial licensure in order for the PB to maintain active license status.



Can I get CE credit for Postlicensing courses?

Answer: No. Postlicensing courses do not provide CE credit.



Are there course exams in Postlicensing courses?

Answer: Yes, and you must pass the end-of-course examinations to successfully complete the courses.



What happens if I don't take the Postlicensing courses before the deadline?

Answer: If you do not take the courses before the 18-month deadline, your license will be placed on inactive status. You may NOT perform any brokerage activities or collect brokerage fees (including referral fees) while your license is Inactive. Refer to Rule 58A .1902.



Where can I take the Postlicensing courses?

Answer: The courses are offered by the same education providers that conduct the Prelicensing course. A list of approved certified education providers is available on the Commission's website.

SUMMARY: Maintaining a Current and Active License

Provisional Brokers	"Full" Brokers (non-BIC Eligible)	Brokers-in-Charge AND Brokers with BIC Eligible Status
<p>Renew license each year between May 15-June 30</p> <p>Complete GENUP + 1 Elective by June 10 each year (after first renewal)</p> <p>Complete three 30-hour Postlicensing courses within 18 months of licensure.</p> <p>Maintain affiliation with a BIC</p>	<p>Renew license each year between May 15-June 30</p> <p>Complete GENUP + 1 Elective by June 10 each year</p>	<p>Renew license each year between May 15-June 30</p> <p>Complete BICUP + 1 Elective by June 10 each year</p>



Tina has renewed her "full" broker license every year but hasn't taken any CE since 2017.

- What is the status of Tina's license? _____
- How many courses must Tina take to activate her license? _____
- Which courses must she take? _____
- Will Tina's license be "active" once she completes the course(s)? YES / NO
Why or Why not? _____
- Assume Tina was a BIC before her license changed to "inactive" status. Will that change the courses she should take now to reactivate? YES / NO
- When she reactivates, will she still be a BIC? YES / NO

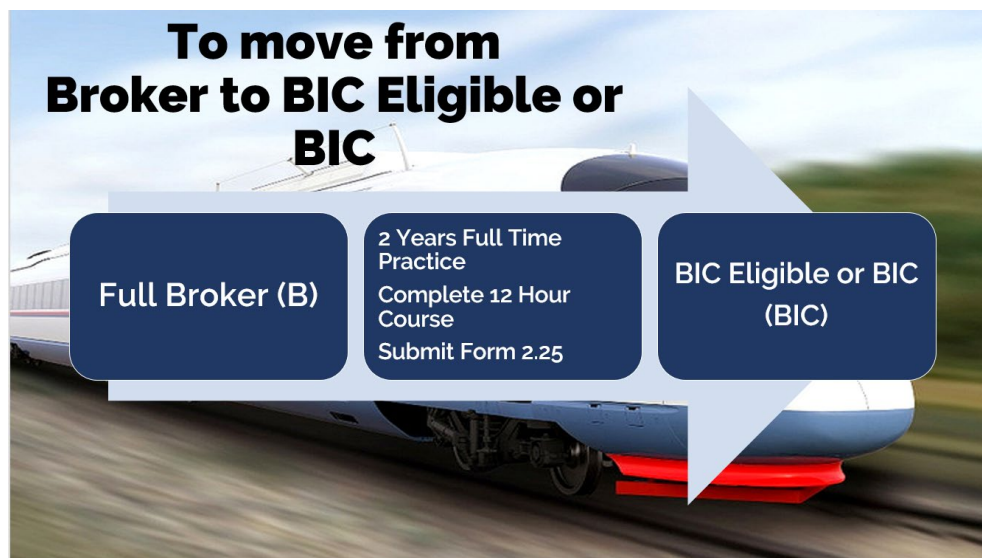
BIC ELIGIBLE STATUS AND BROKER-IN-CHARGE (BIC) DESIGNATION

As of July 1, 2018, in order for a broker to designate as a BIC for a sole proprietorship, real estate firm, or branch office, a broker must FIRST have BIC Eligible status.

Obtaining BIC Eligible Status

To qualify for and obtain BIC Eligible Status, a broker must:

1. hold a “full” broker license (not provisional) on active status;
AND
2. have acquired at least **2 years of full-time** or 4 years of part-time real estate **brokerage experience within the previous 5 years** or be a North Carolina licensed attorney with a practice that consisted primarily of handling real estate closings and related matters in North Carolina for 3 years immediately preceding application;
AND
3. submit the *Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation* form (REC 2.25);
AND
4. complete the Commission’s **12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course** no earlier than one year prior to and no later than 120 days after submission of form REC 2.25.





What is “full-time” brokerage experience?

Answer: The intent is that the individual’s primary occupation is real estate brokerage.

Accordingly, the rough formula is:

50 weeks/year at 40/hours per week = 2000 hours/year x 2 years = 4000 hours total.

Thus, if a broker has acquired 4000 hours of brokerage experience within a five year period, the broker may request BIC Eligible status.

Note: Merely taking the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course does NOT automatically make you BIC Eligible. You will not gain BIC Eligible status until you submit the Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation form (REC 2.25).



What will happen if I obtain BIC Eligible status, but I don’t complete the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge course within 120 days?

Answer: Your BIC Eligible status will be terminated, and it will not be re-granted until the course is completed.



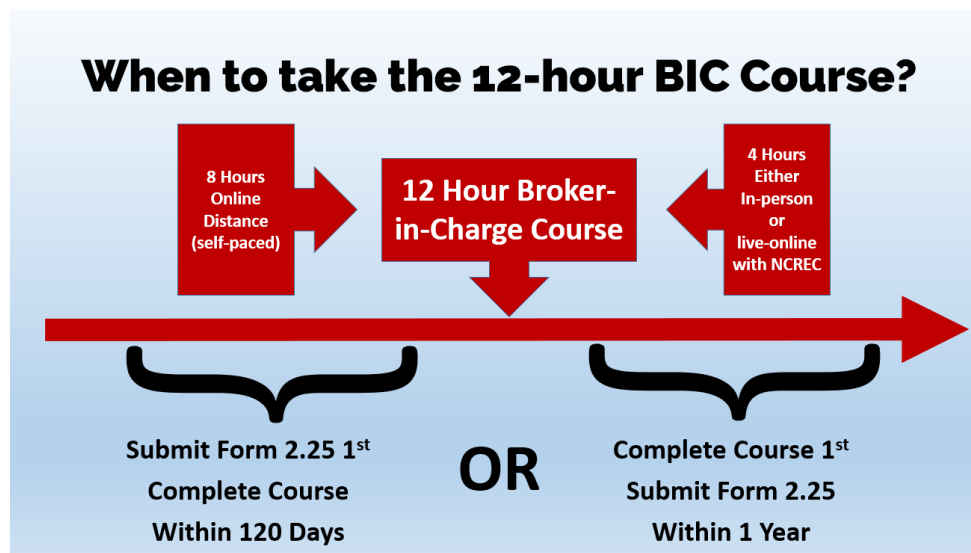
I am a nonresident. Do I have to take the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course?

Answer: Yes. The requirement to complete the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course applies to all brokers who wish to obtain BIC Eligible status.

12-Hour Broker-in-Charge Course

To obtain BIC Eligible status, a broker must complete the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course.

The course may be completed either within one year prior to application for BIC Eligible status or within 120 days after being granted the status.



The 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course is comprised of two segments, an 8-hour online prerequisite segment and a 4-hour live instruction (classroom or synchronous distance learning) segment. Brokers register on the Commission's website for both segments of the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course at the same time.

The 8-hour online segment is a required prerequisite for the 4-hour live segment. In addition, the 8-hour segment must be completed within 30 days of registration. A broker who has not completed the 8-hour segment will not be permitted entry into the 4-hour live segment.

Upon timely completion of the 8-hour segment, the broker must attend the 4-hour live segment. Both segments must be completed within the same 120-day period. Once the broker completes both segments of the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course, they will be awarded 4 hours of CE elective credit in the license year in which the course was completed.



How many days does a broker have to complete both sections of the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course after obtaining BIC Eligible status?

A broker has 120 days to complete the *12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course* after obtaining BIC Eligible Status. If a broker fails to complete both segments of the *12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course* within the 120 days of obtaining BIC Eligible status, BIC Eligible status (and BIC Designation) will be terminated. The broker will not be granted BIC Eligible status (and, in turn, BIC designation) until the course is completed.



How many days does a broker have to complete both sections of the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course after registration for the course?

A broker has 120 days to complete the *12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course* after registering for the course. If a broker fails to complete both segments of the *12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course* within the 120-day period following course registration, the broker will be required to register and pay for the course again and will be required to restart the course.



What happens if I fail to complete the first 8 hours of instruction within 30 days of registration?

If a broker fails to complete the 8- hour segment within 30 days of course registration, the broker will be required to register and pay for the course again and will be required to restart the course.



What happens if I complete the 8 hour segment but fail to complete the 4-hour segment within 120 days?

If a broker fails to complete both segments of the *12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course* within the 120-day period following course registration, the broker will be required to register and pay for the course again and will be required to restart the course.



How much CE elective credit will a broker receive upon successful completion of the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course?

A broker will receive 4 hours of elective credit upon successful completion of the *12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course*.



What year will the 4 hours of elective credit be applied in the broker's record?

The 4 hours of elective credit will be applied in the broker's record for the license year in which they completed the course.

Broker-in-Charge (BIC) Designation

Once a broker has obtained BIC Eligible status, the broker may step in and out of active BIC designation by submitting a request form.

As long as the broker maintains BIC Eligible status by timely renewing his/her license and completing the correct CE each year, the broker will not be required to repeat the 12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course.

Requesting Broker-in-Charge Designation:

Submit the *Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation* form (REC 2.25). You must indicate the firm or sole proprietorship for which you will be serving as BIC.

Terminating Broker-in-Charge Designation:

If another broker submits a *Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation* form to be designated as the BIC at your office, your BIC designation will be automatically terminated when the new BIC's form is processed.

However, if you wish to be removed as BIC immediately, you may submit a *Request for Termination of Affiliation* form (REC 2.22).



I am not BIC Eligible, but I need to be designated as BIC right away. Can I request BIC Eligible status and BIC designation at the same time?

Answer: Yes. The *Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation* form (REC 2.25) enables a broker to request both statuses at the same time.

Maintaining BIC Eligible Status and BIC Designation

A broker may maintain BIC Eligible status and BIC designation by:

- renewing his/her license between May 15-June 30 each year;
- AND
- completing the BICUP (Broker-in-Charge Update) course plus 1 Commission-approved elective by June 10 each year.



When do I have to begin taking the BICUP course?

Answer: Per Commission Rule 58A .0110(h):

A broker holding BIC Eligible status shall take the Broker-in-Charge Update Course during the license year of designation, unless the broker has satisfied the requirements of Rule .1702 of this Subchapter prior to designation.

Loss of BIC Eligible Status and BIC Designation

BIC Eligible status and BIC designation will be lost if:

- the broker's license is inactive, expired, surrendered, suspended, or revoked, OR
- the broker fails to take the BICUP course during any license year.



What happens to the licenses of affiliated brokers in an office if a BIC's license expires or goes inactive?

When a BIC's license expires or goes inactive on July 1, his/her office may not continue to provide brokerage services. The "full" brokers will still be on active status at the broker's home address since they will no longer be affiliated with the company, and all provisional brokers will be on inactive status since they do not have supervising BIC.



How can the office get back in business while the former BIC is expired or inactive?

It depends on whether the former BIC was acting only as BIC for an office or was both BIC for the office and QB for the entity.

If the former BIC was serving only as BIC...

The firm still has an active license, but brokerage services may NOT be legally provided at this office location without a designated BIC.

The QB may appoint a new broker to serve as BIC and direct that broker to submit a ***Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation form (REC 2.25)*** to the Commission. Once the form is processed, the newly designated BIC must file activation/affiliation forms (REC 2.08) to re-associate all full and provisional brokers with the office.

If the former BIC was both the BIC and the QB...

The firm's license will be on inactive status (assuming the firm's license was timely renewed) because it doesn't have a QB.

As long as the QB's license is expired or on inactive status the firm's license will also be on inactive status, meaning the company may NOT legally engage in brokerage anywhere in NC. The firm's license will remain on inactive status until EITHER the former QB activates his/her individual license OR the QB is replaced. To inform the Commission of a new QB, the ***Change in Qualifying Broker form (REC 2.20)*** must be submitted.

Then, the QB may appoint a broker to serve as BIC and direct that broker to submit a ***Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation form (REC 2.25)*** to the Commission. Once the form is processed, the newly designated BIC must file activation/affiliation forms (REC 2.08) to re-associate all full and provisional brokers with the office.

Regaining BIC Eligible Status and Broker-in-Charge Designation

A broker who attains but later loses BIC Eligible status must complete the following steps in the order indicated to regain the status.

1. Do whatever is necessary to return the broker license to active status, i.e., pay reinstatement fee and/or complete required education;

THEN

2. Submit the *License Activation form (REC 2.08)* to the Commission;

THEN

3. Complete the Commission's *12-hour Broker-in-Charge Course*,

AND THEN

4. Submit the *Request for BIC Eligible Status and/or BIC Designation form (REC 2.25)* requesting BIC Eligible status (and BIC designation if needed).

NOTE: You must meet the qualification requirements for BIC Eligible status as prescribed by Rule 58A .0110(e)(6)(b).

ANSWERS TO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For Discussion on page 69

1. Amin paid his renewal fee this year but did not take CE. Amin's parents want to sell their house.

Can he represent them in this transaction?

Answer: No. Amin's license is on Inactive status so he may not practice brokerage.

Would the answer to (a) change if Amin takes CE and cures his CE deficiency?

Answer: Yes, after he submits a License Activation & Broker Affiliation Form 2.08 to reactivate his license. His license must be on active status if he wishes to represent his parents in selling their house.

2. Debbie's license has been expired for nine months because she failed to renew between May 15-June 30, 2020. What must Debbie do to reinstate her license and return it to active status?

Answer:

- Complete one 30-hour Postlicensing course within 6 months prior to submitting reinstatement application);
- submit a reinstatement application with \$90 application fee and all required documentation, including criminal background report; and
- submit license activation form (REC 2.08)

OR

- submit reinstatement application with \$90 application fee and all required documentation, including criminal background report;
- pass National and State sections of license exam; and
- submit license activation form (REC 2.08)

For Discussion on page 78

Tina has renewed her "full" broker license every year but hasn't taken any CE since 2017.

- a) What is the status of Tina's license?

Answer: Inactive.

- b) How many courses must Tina take to activate her license?

Answer: 4 courses totaling 68 hours (two 30-hour Postlicensing courses PLUS GenUp PLUS an elective)

- c) Which courses must she take?

Answer: Two 30-hour Postlicensing courses PLUS current year's GenUp PLUS one Commission-approved elective.

- d) Will Tina's license be "active" once she completes the course(s)?

Answer: No, because she still needs to submit the License Activation form (REC 2.08).

- e) Assume Tina was a BIC before her license changed to “inactive” status. Will that change the courses she should take now to reactivate?

Answer: No, because she lost BIC Eligible status when her license became inactive.

- f) When she reactivates, will she still be BIC?

Answer: No. She still needs to take the 12-hour BIC Course and file form REC 2.25.

Note: At this point she may not have the requisite brokerage experience to qualify again to be a BIC.

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