

CONSUMER GUIDE: 5 HOME SELLING TIPS FOR PRIVACY AND SAFETY

When you hire an agent who is a REALTOR® to help sell your home, you're gaining a partner with the skills, connections, knowledge and expertise to showcase your home to its fullest potential. Your agent will create a plan for marketing your home; talk with you about listing it in the multiple listing service (MLS), a marketplace that helps you reach the largest possible pool of serious buyers and maximize the price for your home; and guide you through preparing your home for sale.

Your agent is also an invaluable ally in helping you ensure privacy and security by managing access during the marketing and transaction process. Why is that important? Photography and video are ubiquitous today. Everyone who enters your home during the sales process likely has a camera. In addition, your agent or a professional photographer will be capturing images and video to highlight your home's best features. With your permission, the listing (with imagery) will be shared on the MLS which provides it to brokerage websites and portals where buyers search.

To make sure you don't inadvertently share personal information with bad actors, here are five steps to take:

- 1. Stow personal items and photos.** Put away anything that reveals personal details, including family photos, visible calendars, mail, computer logins, or documents with sensitive information. Even diplomas, awards or books can give away more than you realize.
- 2. Secure your valuables.** Lock up jewelry, important documents, firearms and prescription medications. A small lockbox or safe is a worthwhile investment to provide peace of mind with visitors coming and going.
- 3. Discourage unapproved photography.** Although an agent generally accompanies buyers when they're in the home, it's possible for buyers to wander and take photos or videos. Ask your agent to include a "No Photography" note in the MLS, and place polite signage in your home to help deter this.
- 4. Use an electronic lockbox.** Most MLSs provide secure electronic lockboxes that limit access to real estate professionals who are licensees and participants in the MLS. Your agent can also use the lockbox to grant one-time access to vendors, such as home inspectors and repair people. Electronic lockboxes record exactly who enters your home and when. This is safer than a combination lock, in which the combination could be shared without your knowledge.
- 5. Request that interior photos be removed.** Once your property is sold, you may request the removal of interior images from the MLS. Most MLSs require a photo of the front of the property to remain for the record, but removing other images can help protect your privacy. State laws and MLS rules vary. After the sale closes, talk to your listing agent to see if you can have interior photos removed.

Special Note: Protecting your privacy during the appraisal and home inspection. Buyers and their agents aren't the only people entering a home for sale. In a typical sale, your home will be carefully reviewed and photographed by an [appraiser](#) or property data collector working on behalf of the buyer's lender and by a [home inspector](#) working on behalf of the buyer. Repair professionals may need access to your home, too. Creating a clean, neutral environment—following the steps above when anyone enters your home—can help maintain security while showcasing the true value and condition of your home.

Your real estate agent will help you navigate the sale of your home. An attorney can provide guidance on the laws in the state where you're purchasing. And remember: Agents who are REALTORS® are obligated under NAR's Code of Ethics to work in your best interest. Please visit [factsrealtor](https://www.factsrealtor.com) for more information and resources.