

Coronavirus: A Guide for REALTORS®

Updated March 26, 2020

The coronavirus pandemic continues to impact the real estate industry. Everything from managing brokerage operations, to marketing listings, and closing transactions, requires REALTORS® to adapt to these extraordinary circumstances. The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) understands that these unprecedented times are impacting our members' ability to conduct their businesses, and is providing this guidance because our members' success and ability to navigate these uncertain times is paramount.

To help members navigate the important issues surrounding COVID-19, NAR has prepared the following guidance:

- I. [General Guidance during COVID-19](#)
- II. [Open House Guidance during COVID-19](#)
- III. [Transaction Guidance during COVID-19](#)
- IV. [Shelter-in-Place Guidance during COVID-19](#)

This guidance will be updated as the situation continues to evolve, and will include the most current information and recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the White House. We encourage members to stay informed by regularly visiting the [CDC's website](#), and to refer to applicable local and state government and health authorities' restrictions and recommendations.

NAR is here to support you. We are stronger together, and thank you for your membership!



GENERAL GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19

Why is NAR issuing this guidance?

In response to the growing concerns about COVID-19, commonly referred to as coronavirus, NAR is providing this guidance to help REALTOR® associations respond to the coronavirus's impact on the real estate industry. As of March 16, 2020, the United States government has banned all travel from Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland into the United States for a period of thirty (30) days. The United States government has also closed the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico land borders to non-essential travel. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued Level 3 Travel Health Notice for Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Japan, Israel, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Korea, Thailand, and Turkey, and a Level 2 Travel Health Notice all other global travel. The situation is rapidly evolving. **[Be sure to refer to the CDC's website for up-to-date information about travel warnings](#)**, as well as **[information about the coronavirus' current impact in the United States](#)**. Daily updates about the coronavirus are also available from the **[World Health Organization](#)**.

What is Coronavirus?

COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that has infected more than 335,000 individuals in 190 countries and territories, causing the World Health Organization (WHO) to classify this outbreak as a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Anyone experiencing emergency signs such as difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or bluish lips or face should immediately seek medical attention.

What is the risk of exposure to coronavirus?

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease, diabetes or autoimmune disorders seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person and **the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus**. The CDC urges citizens to monitor your health and practice social distancing. Social distancing means staying out of crowded places, avoiding group gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible. **Visit the [CDC's website](#) for latest updates.**

How should brokerage staff or agent/licensee reports of COVID-19 be handled?

NAR has prepared a **[Sample Preparedness Plan for Circumstances Relating to COVID-19](#)** that any real estate brokerage may adapt and implement in your workplace.

What preventative measures may be taken to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading coronavirus?

The CDC urges individuals to take these measures to protect themselves and others:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Practice social distancing by staying out of crowded places, avoiding group gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Stay home if you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath or any other cold or flu-like symptom.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve.

Additionally, to help prevent the continued spread of coronavirus, on March 15, 2020, the CDC recommended that for the next 8 weeks, all in-person events consisting of 50 or more people, such as conferences and assemblies, be canceled, postponed or [modified to virtual events](#). On March 16, 2020, President Trump announced new guidelines, advising that individuals avoid groups of more than 10 people for the next 15 days. Avoiding these in-person gatherings is an effective measure that will reduce your risk of contracting or spreading coronavirus.

What unique issues does coronavirus present to the real estate industry?

When an infectious disease, such as coronavirus, is associated with a specific population or nationality, fear and anxiety may lead to social stigma and potential discrimination. REALTORS® must be mindful of their obligations under the Fair Housing Act, and be sure not to discriminate against any particular segment of the population. While the coronavirus outbreak began in Wuhan, China, that does not provide a basis for treating Chinese persons or persons of Asian descent differently.

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

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

I typically drive my clients to showings. May I refuse to drive potential clients to see homes?

Yes. However, be sure that any change to your business practices is applied equally to all clients. You may refuse to drive clients who show signs of illness or reveal recent travel to areas of increased risk of coronavirus, or you may instead decide to stop driving clients in your car altogether, and simply arrange to meet clients at a property. If you do continue to drive clients in your car, it is a good idea to frequently clean and disinfect surfaces like door handles and seat belt latches, and to ask clients to use hand sanitizer when getting in and out of the car.

What precautions should brokers consider taking in their offices?

Brokers should follow all local and state “shelter in place” orders that impact the closure of offices to the public. For offices that are allowed to remain open, Brokers should use their best judgment when formulating a plan. In addition to performing regular environmental cleaning with special attention paid to frequently touched surfaces, brokers should implement a mandatory “stay-home” policy for any staff member or agent exhibiting any sign of illness. Brokers may want to consider imposing a mandatory or maximum flexibility remote work policy for employees and instructing agents to stay out of the office. In addition, in the wake of the CDC’s recent guidance recommending that in-person events consisting of 50 or more people be cancelled or postponed, which was followed by President Trump’s announcement on March 16, 2020 recommending that individuals avoid groups of

more than 10 people for the next 15 days, brokers should take measures to hold virtual meetings when possible, and potentially postpone or cancel in-person meetings or events to take to limit close contact between individuals.

Be sure to monitor updates from the CDC, as well as your state and local health authorities for additional information and guidance on holding meetings or events. For travel considerations, review NAR's "[Coronavirus: A Guide for REALTOR® Associations](#)".

Finally, do not panic, stay informed, and use your best judgment. The situation is rapidly changing, so focus on putting policies and procedures in place to keep your employees and agents informed, safe, and to avoid business disruption in the event the situation worsens. The [CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) is a helpful resource.

OPEN HOUSE GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19

NAR's goal is to keep members informed about the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on the real estate industry, and to provide guidance on the many difficult decisions members are tackling on a daily basis. Consider how you may continue providing first-class services to clients, while also exemplifying REALTORS® as community leaders by demonstrating care for the health and well-being of clients, colleagues and the greater public welfare in reducing the risk of exposure to, and spread of, COVID-19.

May REALTORS® continue to hold open houses during the COVID-19 pandemic?

First, members should consult with their brokers, and consider how federal, state and local authorities' recommendations and actions, such as "shelter in place" mandates, impact the advisability, and even permissibility of open houses. Where open houses are permissible, NAR strongly encourages members to consider the advisability of continuing to hold open houses at this time, especially in light of the guidance and actions of federal, state and local authorities, including ["The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America"](#) recommending that gatherings of ten or more persons be avoided.

If a "Shelter In Place" Order is in effect in my geographic area, can a broker require its agents to stop holding open houses and conducting other in-person real estate activities?

Yes. Brokers can and should enforce existing Executive Orders with their independent contractor agents. Brokers and agents should be familiar with the details of the order, including whether real estate services are deemed essential services and how the order impacts the permissibility of continuing to conduct in-person real estate-related activities.

What if my client insists that I continue to hold open houses?

You are never required to put yourself at risk in servicing a client. Have an open and honest conversation with your client about your concerns with holding an open house at this time, including whether doing so would contradict current government recommendations or mandates, particularly in geographic areas with "shelter in place" mandates. If after discussing these issues, you and your client mutually agree to hold an open house, advise your client about necessary precautions to minimize exposure to, and the spread of, COVID-19.

What precautions should be taken if an open house is held?

In accordance with [guidance from the Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) and the President](#), ensure that less than ten people are touring the home at any given time, and consider only allowing one buyer group to tour the home at a time. Be sure that guests maintain social distancing of six or more feet apart, and require potential buyers to wash their hands or to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately upon entry and to remove shoes/cover footwear with booties. Also, be sure to check with your client before using any cleaning products, and recommend that your client disinfect their home after the open house, especially commonly touched areas like doorknobs and faucet handles.

May I ask individuals whether they are sick or have recently travelled before touring the home?

Yes, you are never required to put yourself at risk in servicing a client, and it is reasonable to ask whether they are currently sick or have recently travelled. To avoid fair housing concerns, be sure to direct such questions to all potential buyers on an equal basis.

What are alternative ways to market a property?

Now is a great time to leverage the many available alternative marketing opportunities. Let your clients know that you will continue to service them and can continue to market their home using an incredible array of available technology. Offer your clients three-dimensional interactive property scans (via Matterport, Cupix, EyeSpy360); host a virtual tour or help your seller conduct a live tour using Skype or Facebook; and use virtual staging to showcase a property.

Companies like [Kleard](#) offer on demand open houses, [Immoviewer](#) offers video tours, and [BombBomb](#) offers video check-ins. If you use any of this technology in your MLS listings, make sure that you have secured the proper permissions for the scans or videos before uploading to the MLS. Some companies are making their technologies even more accessible, including these NAR REACH Companies:

- [Immoviewer](#) has removed tour limits for members of their Association/MLS partners, like BeachesMLS in Florida and SmartMLS in Connecticut. Their tour platform provides a “Live Tour” feature that allows agents to share tour links with potential clients and control movement through the tour, or to give tour control to the consumer to create a virtual showing.
- [FloorPlanOnline](#) helps you hold virtual showings anytime through an easy to use point & click FloorPlan Tour with an exclusive 3D space designer or a more robust 360 WalkThrough Tour in select markets. Visit FloorPlanOnline for special discounts.

Are open houses continuing to be held across the country?

Yes, however, a recent NAR survey showed that a large percentage of REALTORS® have suspended holding open houses. In the “[2020 NAR Flash Survey: Economic Pulse](#)”, conducted March 16-17, 2020, 40% of members nationally reported they suspended holding open houses. In geographic areas experiencing a significant COVID-19 outbreak, that number increased to 45% of members. Members have reported temporarily ceasing open houses in order to restrict traffic into listed homes, to practice social distancing, and to ensure potential buyers are taking recommended precautions. Members also reported limiting home tours to serious buyers only, leveraging a variety of technology tools at their disposal to continue conducting business.

Have MLSs taken any action related to open houses?

A number of MLSs are promoting the use of virtual tours in open house fields, while some have disabled the use of open house fields all together. [Northwest Multiple Listing Service](#) recently disabled a participant’s ability to add, search or view public or broker open houses, and others have added warning messages advising of governmental restrictions on public gatherings.

TRANSACTION GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19

This is general guidance only. Members should consult their brokers, legal counsel, and government-provided public health information. In addition, check with your MLS for any changes to open house and showing fields, or other temporary rules in place due to local conditions.

In deciding how to address new issues that may come up in your day-to-day business, we urge you to find answers that will ensure first-class services to your clients, while also demonstrating care for the health and well-being of clients, agents, and the greater public welfare in reducing the risk of exposure to and spread of COVID-19.

LISTED PROPERTIES

My seller doesn't want any showings, what should I do?

A seller generally has control over how their property is shown and has agreed to certain marketing activity in the listing agreement. If the seller desires to prohibit in-person showings, get those instructions in writing and consider an addendum to your listing agreement to extend the listing.

Offer marketing alternatives such as virtual tours, or taking additional photographs to add to the listing. 3-D tours are another virtual alternative offered by Matterport, EyeSpy360, Cupix, and many others. (Remember to secure proper [copyright permissions](#) for any media you upload to the MLS.)

If the seller wants to cease all marketing efforts, talk to your MLS provider about a “temporarily off market” feature.

Should we continue to hold open houses during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Please read OPEN HOUSE GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19 for guidance on this issue.

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

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

May an agent require an individual complete a COVID-19 screening questionnaire before showing an individual a property?

Yes, it is reasonable to screen individuals for COVID-19 prior to showing an individual a property, but be sure to require all individuals to complete the questionnaire to avoid fair housing issues. Keep in mind that self-reporting may provide limited assurance, as some individuals with the virus are asymptomatic or do not realize they have symptoms. Therefore, even where a COVID-19 screening questionnaire is used, agents should be sure to take additional precautions, and continue to follow the CDC's recommendations, including social distancing (maintaining a distance of 6 feet or more between individuals), requiring guests to wash their hands or to use an alcohol-based sanitizer immediately upon entry, and removing shoes/covering with booties, to avoid exposure to, and spread of, COVID-19.

Are there any risks or potential liability to showing a property to a buyer virtually?

Buyers have purchased properties “sight unseen” for a variety of reasons long before this pandemic. Virtual, online video tours are tried-and-true alternatives to in-person showings. Others are allowing the seller’s agent to use a video-conferencing app like Skype or FaceTime to virtually show a property in real time.

Unlike an in-person showing, a buyer purchasing a property without physically visiting it is relying on photos, livestreaming, or online virtual tours. Therefore, it’s a good idea to include language in the purchase agreement that acknowledges that the buyer – not the listing broker, agent or seller – is responsible for personal verification, walk-throughs and professional inspections to confirm condition and that any given property is satisfactory.

The board of the condominium building where I have a listing just closed the building to visitors, including real estate agents showing properties. Can they do that?

These are unprecedented times, and we are hearing instances of homeowners associations restricting access to common areas. Authorization to implement such restrictions should be captured in the building’s Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs) document. If the homeowners association is so authorized and if your client’s unit is accessed via a common area (building lobby, elevator and/or hallway), then the homeowner association may have the right to restrict visitors. This is a good time to use all the technology available to you, including virtual tours, to continue to show the property.

I have an offer to present to my seller, but my client is self-isolating and does not want to meet in person. How can I present the offer?

You can present the offer virtually. Consider virtual options that allow you to see your client face-to-face while also sharing a document so you can explain the offer. Web conferencing services like Zoom (<http://www.zoom.us>) and GoToMeeting (<http://www.gotomeeting.com>) and many others have this capability.

Does the fact that someone had COVID-19 in the home create a stigmatized property? Does it need to be disclosed?

Generally speaking, state law will govern what is defined as a stigma on property, and what needs to be disclosed. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that the coronavirus survives on surfaces that are cleaned and disinfected per the [CDC’s recommended protocols](#).

PROPERTIES IN ESCROW

What additional terms should I add to a purchase agreement, in case there are delays due to coronavirus-related closures or government orders?

An extraordinary event, like an epidemic or government order, that could affect a transaction is sometimes addressed in a “force majeure” clause allowing a party to suspend or terminate performance when circumstances which the parties could not have anticipated, or which are beyond their control, make performance of the contract impossible or impracticable. Some, but not all, purchase agreements may have such a clause which can help guide the parties and the transaction to move forward or not.

A more specific addendum addressing potential coronavirus-related delays is a good idea. Many brokerages and REALTOR® associations have released addendum, which address coronavirus-related delays by extending the

closing date if necessary. These addenda address concerns such as: a lack of inspectors or appraisers; a party's inability to travel to sign documents; a party being subject to a mandatory quarantine; and closings of or delays in related government and business services such as closing of lenders and title/escrow companies. An addendum could also address the buyer's loss of income due to COVID-19 related circumstances, and what happens to the earnest money deposit should the parties ultimately agree to cancel the agreement.

Can my sellers cancel a purchase agreement because they don't want vendors/inspectors coming through the home?

It's not unreasonable for individuals to self-isolate in these unusual times due to their age or underlying health concerns. Every transaction and every purchase agreement is different. Sellers should consult legal counsel to determine their options for canceling and what penalties, if any, they could incur.

Alternatively, you could seek an extension of the buyer's due diligence period by a written addendum explaining the special circumstances. Check with your broker, or the state or local REALTOR® association for an addendum that addresses common coronavirus-related issues that may come up during a transaction.

My clients cannot travel to the U.S. due to travel restrictions; how can we close the transaction?

First, inform the other party's agent and title company about the situation. Consider execution via electronic closing if available in your state. If your client wants to move forward with the transaction but is unsure when they will be allowed into the U.S., then you and your legal counsel could draft an addendum extending the closing date. Or, if your clients are near a U.S. embassy or consulate, they may be able to execute the documents abroad. According to the U.S. Department of State, notarizing officers are available at any [U.S. embassy or consulate](#), and services are available to both U.S. and non-U.S. citizens. Check with the title company to discuss these options.

We are getting close to the closing date, but my clients are nervous about leaving their home to sign documents at the escrow company's office. Can I force them to attend the closing?

Different areas of the country are experiencing different restrictions on daily life, so first and foremost be sure to consult your local and state health departments for any such restrictions that might impact real estate closings. The escrow company may be able to provide guidance and assurances as well, in terms of steps they're taking to protect the parties to a transaction during a closing.

[Several states](#) have adopted remote notarization laws, and others have enacted remote notarization in emergency orders, so that may also be an option to move the transaction forward. Find out more about remote notarization in [this video](#) and see how remote notarization works [here](#).

Will mortgage approvals be delayed?

Possibly. Talk to the lender immediately about how the timing for mortgage approval will be impacted by the pandemic and specifically how they're addressing issues such as the high volume of refinancing applications, appraisers who may not be able to access properties due to local restrictions, and underwriting offices that may be short-staffed.

Will recording be delayed?

Possibly. Check with the escrow or title company and find out if the local recorder's office uses electronic recording, and if so, whether the title company is equipped to record the deed electronically. If government offices in your area are open and functioning, then the deed should be able to be recorded.

State and local REALTOR® associations are asking governments around the country to consider real estate-related services as "essential services" during any government shut downs. However, the parties should be prepared for a recorder's office to be short-staffed or closed due to coronavirus-related issues or government orders. In this instance, an addendum to the purchase agreement could be drafted to address the issue of a disruption to the final recording due to coronavirus-related issues or government orders. Such an addendum should address who will bear the cost of any "gap" title insurance between the closing and recording.

LEASED PROPERTIES

The tenants in my client's property do not want prospective tenants to view the property out of concerns for coronavirus. Can they prohibit that?

If the tenants are quarantined or self-isolating at the request of medical professionals due to having or being exposed to the coronavirus, it's in everyone's best interest to allow the 14-day quarantine period to end before showing the property.

If no such impediment exists, consult the terms of the lease and state law for any restrictions on showings. Generally speaking, the tenant does not have the ability to prevent showings. However, in this unique circumstance, there are some options to consider in the interest of everyone's safety. You could obtain a written statement from the prospective tenant that they have not traveled abroad in the last 14 days, and do not exhibit any symptoms. You could assure the tenant that all hygienic precautions will be taken such as wearing a face mask, gloves and/or booties (if available), and sanitizing their hands. Or, you may be able to negotiate for a photographer to access the property, taking necessary hygiene precautions, or to arrange for a virtual tour to be made of the property in lieu of public showings until the health crisis is over.

The tenants in my client's property are under quarantine and the lease is ending. What can we do?

The coronavirus pandemic is a genuine public health issue, and has resulted in a state of emergency at the national level. Numerous states and counties have similarly declared states of emergency. Be sure to follow any local or state emergency mandates regarding quarantines or sheltering in place. In addition, several jurisdictions across the country have suspended eviction and foreclosure proceedings.

If a tenant or anyone living in the property is under quarantine for COVID-19 illness or exposure to the coronavirus, they should be allowed to remain in place for the duration of their quarantine, which is currently a 14-day period. If the lease agreement calls for penalties for failure to vacate the property, the landlord may exercise discretion in choosing to enforce it or not. The landlord and tenant could agree to additional 14 days' of rent, or however long the holdover is.

You may recommend that the landlord have the property professionally cleaned and disinfected following the [CDC's latest guidelines](#) prior to the next tenant moving in.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19

Shelter-in-Place Order: What Does It Mean?

In an effort to prevent the continued spread of, and exposure to, COVID-19, a growing number of states, cities and counties have issued “shelter-in-place” orders. These shelter-in-place-orders, sometimes referred to as “stay at home” orders, generally require citizens to stay at home and discontinue all *non-essential* outings. While shelter-in-place orders vary from location-to-location, individuals are permitted to continue engaging in *essential* activities, such as trips to grocery stores, pharmacies, hospitals, and a doctors’ offices. Non-essential activities, however, which generally includes activities such as trips to hair salons, dine-in restaurants and bars, movie theaters, gyms, and museums, are prohibited.

How are Shelter-in-Place Orders Enforced?

Many states, such as Hawaii, New York, and Colorado, rely on citizens to police themselves, while others impose civil fines for violations. Some states take an even harder approach, such as California, where a violation of the state-wide order could result in a misdemeanor with up to six months of imprisonment. Should a business defy a shelter-in-place order, the business could face a revocation of its license. If you must leave your home for an essential activity, most shelter-in-place orders mandate that citizens practice social distancing by staying at least six feet away from one another at all times, and some limit the number of people allowed to gather in a place at any given time.

How do Shelter-in-Place Orders affect real estate business?

It depends. If real estate services are considered an essential service under the order, REALTORS® may be able to continue to conduct real estate business, which is the case in several states, like Illinois, Wisconsin and Connecticut, where real estate services are considered an “essential service” in the state’s shelter-in-place order. However, this is not always the case. Several states, including New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont, do not consider real estate to be an essential service, thereby limiting the continued conduct of real estate activities to actions that may be accomplished remotely. Keep in mind that even where real estate services are deemed “essential”, it may not be business as usual – many states require telework or remote work whenever possible and prohibit gatherings of more than 10 people, including in office spaces. REALTORS® should endeavor to conduct as much work as possible remotely, and follow the [Center for Disease Control’s \(CDC\) recommendations](#) for preventing spread of, and exposure to, COVID-19.

Where have Shelter-in-Place Orders been issued?

As of March 25, 2020, the following states have issued shelter-in-place orders or executive orders closing non-essential businesses: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. For the most current information about orders in effect in your area, refer to your local and state governments.

What if a city or county’s Shelter-in-Place Order conflicts with the state’s Shelter-in-Place Order?

In general, a state’s shelter-in-place order will supersede a city or state order. Some state orders even explicitly prohibit a city or county from enacting a more permissible order. If, however, a city or county order is more restrictive, the more restrictive order should be followed for that specific geographic area, so be sure to familiarize yourself with all applicable shelter-in-place orders.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE ORDERS: CHECKLIST FOR BROKERS

- ✓ Determine whether a Shelter-in-Place Order was issued in your geographic area.
- ✓ Be familiar with the terms of the order.
- ✓ Determine whether real estate is identified as an “essential service” in the order.
- ✓ **If real estate IS included as an “essential service” in the Shelter-in-Place Order:**
 - Promptly communicate with staff and agents how the order impacts their ability to conduct business.
 - Determine whether the brokerage’s office will remain open, and if so, whether to limit the number of individuals permitted in the office at any given time.
 - Consider whether staff will be permitted, and encouraged, to work remotely.
 - Encourage staff and agents to limit in-person contact and to conduct business *remotely* as much as possible.
 - Reiterate the importance of following the [CDC’s recommendations](#) for preventing the continued spread of, and exposure to, COVID-19 when conducting business, and servicing clients.
 - Have a [Preparedness Plan](#) in place to be ready to respond to COVID-19 issues.
- ✓ **If real estate IS NOT included as an “essential service” in the Shelter-in-Place Order:**
 - Promptly communicate with staff and agents how the order impacts their ability to continue to conduct business.
 - Close the brokerage’s office in compliance with the terms of the order.
 - Provide clear and prompt communication to brokerage staff and agents regarding the office closure, and remote work requirements and capabilities.
 - Encourage staff and agents to continue conducting business and servicing clients remotely, including by leveraging available technology, and alternative ways to market properties.