

Consumers: Buying and Selling During COVID-19

The Government of Alberta has designated REALTORS® as an essential service providers, but this does not mean business is continuing as usual. Face-to-face interaction should be avoided whenever possible and when not possible, extreme caution should always be exercised. It is crucial to maintain open lines of communication with your REALTOR® and your lawyer. As professionals, they understand the rapidly changing nature of this public health emergency and are equipped to assist you with the flexibility you need.

By working together, we can take the precautions needed to stop community spread of COVID-19.

Suggested Safety Precautions to Implement

1. Social Distancing

- Complete appointments and meetings virtually using online meeting tools such as Zoom and Skype.
- In place of open houses, request virtual tours and videoconferencing options.
- When in-person meetings are deemed necessary, recommended procedures are followed including, safe distances (six feet at all times), masks, hand sanitizers, etc.

2. Electronic Documents

- Request that the signing of all documents should be entirely paperless.

3. Photos and Video Services

- If your real estate agent offers photo and video services, please leave the lights on and ensure the home is prepared for photos, reducing the need for the photographer to touch anything.

4. Buyers and Sellers

- To limit the amount of people entering your home, ensure that your REALTOR® confirms that the buyers have been prequalified and are ready to buy using AREA's [Practice Tips guide](#).
- Use of photos and video tours should be maximized to reduce the number of locations visited.
- With your REALTOR®, use the [Practice Tips guide](#) to ask the other party and their representatives COVID-19 health and travel questions. This will help you make an informed decision about viewing a property or accepting a showing request.

5. Well-being

- All appointments (including staging, inspections, showings, etc.) must be rescheduled if you have travelled in the past 14 days or if they are displaying any symptoms of the coronavirus.
- Evaluate your comfort level by considering if:
 - You are comfortable hosting showings while the coronavirus continues to spread.
 - You are comfortable in visiting homes while the coronavirus continues to spread.

Showings for Sellers

Stay up to date on [government recommendations](#) for social distancing and use AREA's [Practice Tips guide](#) with your REALTOR® to ask the buyer and their representative COVID-19 health and travel questions so you can make an informed decision about accepting their showing request.

Outlined below are suggested guidelines for preparing your home prior to property showing, how a showing should be run, and preparing the home after the property showing.



Preparing the Home Prior to Property Showing (your REALTOR® can assist with these tasks)

1. Disinfect common spaces, including door handles, closet and cupboard knobs, sink handles, surfaces, light switches and counters with antibacterial/germ killing cleaners.
2. Turn on all lights, open all closet doors, all bathroom/bedroom and other doors to minimize the necessity for any agents/buyers to touch any surfaces.
3. Provide hand-sanitizers or sanitizing wipes at the door.
4. Post a note in a highly visible location that states that the agent/buyers are to clean their hands prior to entering the home, during the visit and that the agent/buyers are not permitted to any touch surfaces, doorknobs, etc.
5. Communicate with your REALTOR® to ensure everyone attending the property has provided their responses to questions in the [Practice Tip Guide](#) mentioned above and that you are comfortable with their responses before approving the showing.

Protocol for Property Showing

1. During regular circumstances, you may choose not to be home during a showing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, please use your discretion when it comes to this decision.
2. Prior to confirming the property showing, your REALTOR® will verify you (and the viewers) are symptom free and have not been in contact with anyone with a COVID-19 diagnosis.
3. Limit showings to only one or two buyers at a time. No extended family members, children, or others should be allowed in the home to reduce the amount of people in the home.
4. Remain six feet away from everyone throughout the showing.
5. Conversations between the buyer and their agent should be conducted outside of the home and off the property.
6. Prior to entering, safe hygiene should be practiced by disinfecting hands with the provided sanitizers.

Preparing the Home Following the Property Showing

1. Disinfect common spaces, including door handles, closet and cupboard knobs, sink handles, surfaces, light switches and counters with antibacterial/germ killing cleaners.
2. Turn off all lights and close the doors.

Showings for Buyers

Stay up to date on [government recommendations](#) for social distancing and use AREA's [Practice Tips guide](#) with your REALTOR® to ask the seller and their representative COVID-19 health and travel questions so you can make an informed decision about viewing their home.

Outlined below is the protocol for buyers when they are attending a property showing.



Protocol for Property Showing

1. Prior to scheduling a property showing, use online tools which allow you to explore the listing from the comfort of your home. Only view properties you are confident could lead to placing an offer.
2. Prior to confirming the property showing, your REALTORS® will verify you (and the occupants of the home you are viewing) are symptom free and have not been in contact with anyone with a COVID-19 diagnosis.
3. Limit showings to only one family unit at a time.
4. Remain six feet away from everyone throughout the showing.
5. Conversations with your agent should be conducted outside of the home and off the seller's property.
6. Prior to entering, practice safe hygiene by disinfecting hands with the provided sanitizers.
7. Limit touching as much as possible. Please do not close doors or turn off the lights.
8. Do not use the bathroom during the showing.