

Showing a Property Responsibly

Picture this: you are with your clients, who are looking to purchase a house. You take them to see a property that they are interested in. At the end of the showing, they notice another property down the street with a “For Sale” sign on the lawn, and ask you if they can see that property today as well. What do you do?

Recently, the Commission has been made aware of two issues regarding the showing of properties. Sellers have complained about:

- (1) registrants showing properties without making an appointment, and**
- (2) registrants neglecting to secure properties after a showing.**

This article is a reminder of the responsible way to show a property to ensure that sellers and their properties are treated with respect, and that you are fulfilling your professional responsibilities as a registrant and agent.

While lockboxes make frequent showings more convenient for registrants representing both sellers and buyers, they can be problematic if registrants do not respect the instructions that are set out by the sellers’ representatives in the listings.

If a listing states that potential buyers must make an appointment to view the property, registrants who use the lockbox to show the property without making an appointment may be in breach of Bylaw 702. In Hearing Committee decision #2014-18, the Committee stated that: “Just because a seller lists his property for sale does not mean that he has waived his expectation of privacy or his right to grant or refuse access to his property.”

The second complaint of sellers, that registrants who have shown their property have failed to secure the property before leaving, is also concerning. The Commission is aware of instances where a registrant neglected to arm the security system before leaving the property, and also where a registrant has failed to lock the door to the property. The Commission reminds all registrants that **properties must be secured upon leaving**. Failure to properly secure a property after a showing may also be a breach of Bylaw 702.

In summary, to protect yourself from liability for breach of your professional responsibilities:

- (1) make sure to follow the seller’s instructions and make appointments to view properties when required, and**
- (2) always lock the door and return the key to the lockbox on your way out.**