

When Marketing, Think Safety First

If you're like most REALTORS®, you put a great deal of thought and effort into your marketing materials, including advertisements, signs and business cards. You want to make every dollar count—but how much consideration do you give to the safety afforded by these communications? How much information are you giving the public that many people go to great lengths to keep private?

Here are some very important steps that you should take to ensure your marketing pieces are both smart *and* safe:

- All of your marketing materials should be polished and professional. Don't use alluring or provocative photography in advertising, on the Web or on your business cards. There are many documented cases of criminals actually circling photographs of their would-be victims in newspaper advertisements. These victims were targeted because of their appearance in the photograph.
- Limit the amount of personal information you share. Don't use your full name with middle name or initial. Use your office address rather than your home address—or list no address at all. Giving out too much of the wrong information can make you a target.
- Concentrate on your professional proficiency rather than personal information in newspapers, resumes and business cards.
- Be careful how much personal information you give verbally as well. Getting to know your client does not need to include personal information about your children, where you live and who you live with.
- All agents in your office should use only their first initial and last name on their "For Sale" signs to conceal gender and prevent anyone other than a personal acquaintance or current client asking for you by name.

(Sources: Washington Real Estate Safety Council; Louisiana REALTORS® Association; Nevada County Association of REALTORS®)

Visit NAR's REALTOR® Safety Web site at www.REALTOR.org/Safety