

Open House Safety

1. **Park where you cannot get blocked in.** Agents are most afraid when they are walking back to their car after an open house. Therefore, take a few minutes to make sure you have a clear line of sight to your vehicle.

Before you exit your car, look around. Can you see the front door? Are there trees or shrubbery within 10 feet that can serve as a hiding place? When getting out of the car, keep looking around. When you get to the front door, turn around and walk back — are there places where someone could surprise you?

2. **Meet the neighbors.** There's safety in numbers. Introduce yourself, point out your car, and invite the neighbors over to the open house. Ask if he or she would keep an eye and ear open for anything out of the ordinary. Besides, meeting the neighbors will drive people to the home and is a great source of referrals.
3. **Check your phone.** Check your cell phone's strength and signal prior to the open house. Have emergency numbers programmed on speed dial. Carry an extra, fully charged cell phone battery.
4. **Keep it light.** Turn on the lights and open the curtains. These are not only sound safety procedures, but also great marketing tactics.
5. **Establish your escape routes.** Walk around the house and notice how to get in and out of rooms. If there is a fence in the backyard with a gate, unlock the gate for easy exit. As another escape route, open the garage door but lock the door leading to the inside from the garage. Direct clients to the front door with signs.
6. **Set up for safety.** Carry only what you need — purses go in the trunk of your car *before* you leave your house, not when you arrive at the open house. Finally, when picking a room to wait in during the open house, pick the one with the most cell service and with escape routes.
7. **Check out your guests as they arrive.** As soon as someone comes in, introduce yourself, and direct guests to a sign-in sheet.

Ask yourself, "Is this someone I'm comfortable with? Do I want to be alone with this person?" If not, enlist your *support team*. Make sure there are others around you as you work with this person.

8. **Never, ever turn your back on a prospect.** Let prospects walk in front of you. If a man says, "Ladies first," to a female agent, the agent should say something like, "You are such a gentleman, thank you. But I really want you to

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see this home, and if I can direct you where to go, I think you'll gain a further appreciation for this home."

Both men and women can be violent, so this advice applies regardless of the visitor's gender.

9. **Never go into certain rooms.** When showing visitors around, never go into rooms with no escape routes. These include walk-in closets, bathrooms, basements and laundry rooms, among others. Instead, direct visitors to those rooms.
10. **Close up in teams.** Openings and closings are the most dangerous times during an open house. Often, there is another agent down the street also doing an open house. If you're alone, lock up your house, go over to the other agent, and offer to walk through his or her house and close it up with him or her and then both of you can go over to your house to do the same. Working in teams applies to both men and women.