



MICHIGAN REALTORS®

April 22, 2020

Governor Gretchen Whitmer
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer,

On behalf of more than 34,000 Michigan Realtors®, I am writing to let you know we are prepared to serve as an industry guidepost for safety, best practices, and ethical behavior for real estate during these extremely complex and stressful times.

Covid-19 has impacted Michigan's spring and summer real estate market and will require important deliberations on best practices for sellers and buyers alike. The only way to overcome the fear and uncertainty created by Covid-19 is to approach the buying and selling of real property with a premium on safety, knowledge, and exemplary service to our clients.

Realtors® throughout Michigan have continued to embrace innovative practices, assisting and often collaborating with their clients to develop new listings and create virtual showings. While some real estate closings have been successful through virtual means, many other closings and listings have been particularly difficult to navigate without the ability to engage more directly in the process. We fear that, absent reasonable easing on real estate restrictions to support new listings and responsible engagement between Realtors® and their clients, there will be incalculable damage to Michigan's economy and the real estate market going forward. For that reason, we respectfully ask that you consider adopting the latest Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) memo, or specifically lift restrictions on some forms of in-person real estate activity.

We appreciate the difficult decisions you have had to make during this pandemic, and we do not make this request lightly. Flattening the curve demands concerted effort by all Michigan citizens, and certainly Realtors®, as they serve clients in a responsible, safe, and ethical manner.

After much research and input from our membership, we believe there are many proven examples from surrounding states where real estate activity has continued in a responsible and health-conscious manner. As May 1st approaches, Michigan Realtors® proposes the following considerations to make sure public health is kept a priority while easing restrictions for a stronger real estate market through limited travel and in-person engagement:

- Real Estate Licensees should work remotely to the greatest extent possible, conducting in-person meetings only when necessary to develop a new listing, or for a client to view a property, or to sign necessary documents;
- No in-person real estate open houses shall be permitted;



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- Property photography/videography, viewings, inspections, appraisals, and final walk-throughs shall be arranged by appointment and limited to no more than four people on site at any one time, exercising social distancing at all times;
- Private showings should be limited to owner-occupied, vacant homes, commercial, and industrial property;
- Any in-person activities must abide by CDC/Michigan guidelines for social distancing.

In addition to these considerations, Michigan Realtors® proposes the following additional protocol for our members to follow for in-person meetings or showings:

- Consider limiting “in-person” showings to potential buyers who have been pre-approved for financing or have provided proof of funds adequate for purchase. Use photographs, virtual showings and floor plans to help buyer-clients narrow down their housing needs and wants prior to any in-person showings;
- Realtors® may wish to work to avoid overlapping appointments;
- Confirm in advance that a particular seller has authorized in-person showings;
- Consider providing marketing materials and other information relevant to the home electronically in advance of the showing;
- Ask sellers to turn on all of the lights and leave interior doors, drapes and blinds open. Remind sellers to clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces prior to and after the showing;
- Agents conducting showings may wish to meet their clients at the home rather than drive clients to showings. If meeting clients at a home, ask them to wait in the car for agent’s arrival;
- Discourage anyone who does not need to view the home from attending a showing;
- Maintain at least a six-foot social distance at all times;
- Ask buyers and showing agents to refrain from touching any surface in a home. Encourage the use of gloves and masks. Do not share phones, pens or tablets;
- After a showing, rather than discussing the home while outside the property, consider waiting to discuss the home via email or phone.

We understand this pandemic is impacting every Michigan citizen uniquely. As you undertake the difficult task of opening up Michigan’s economy, please know that we are prepared to hold ourselves out as an example of how business can operate intelligently, compassionately, and responsibly to best serve those clients who wish to call Michigan home.

Sincerely,

Maureen Francis
2020 President
Michigan REALTORS®