



SELLSTATE

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: Part 12 SAFETY

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SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Selling real estate can be fun, and most salespeople do it because they like dealing with people. But selling real estate can also be one of the riskiest professions because of all the strangers you may have to meet alone, crime experts say. Real estate professionals who are aware of basic safety guidelines can improve their chances of not becoming a victim and keep their daily business activities fun, profitable, and safe.

Use this prepackaged sales meeting tool kit—including ready to go agenda, activities, and talking points—to help develop your salespeople's danger radar and your own office safety policy, if you don't already have one.

Each element of this tool kit is numbered at the top of the page so you can easily move through the content chronologically

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 1: Facilitator Talking Points

These notes will guide you and your salespeople through a discussion and activities on safety

Before the Meeting

- Review the entire safety meeting toolkit.
- Review your company's existing safety policy.
- Develop an action plan indicating how you'll add to or change your company's policy. The action plan worksheet lists items and policies you can offer salespeople and suggestions for how to implement them. Use the worksheet to indicate who'll provide these resources.

Print the following:

1. Facilitator talking points—Component 1
2. Handout 1: Safety agenda—Component 2
3. Handout 2: Action Plan worksheet—Component 3
4. Handout 3: True Story—Component 4
5. Activity 1—Typical Day worksheet—Component 5
6. Activity 2a, 2b, 2c—Map out a Typical Day; Recognizing Danger, Avoiding Danger worksheet —Component 6
7. Activity 2a, 2b, 2c facilitator answer key —Component 7
8. Handout 4: 10-second rule—Component 8
9. Handout5: 10-second rule (business card size)—Component 9
10. Optional: What's Wrong with This Scenario—Component 10
11. Scenario talking points—Component 11
12. Handout 6: Defending Your Life handout—Component 12
13. Activity 3—Applying Safety Techniques—Component 13

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 1: continued

Activity 1: Typical day (3 minutes)

Have the participants write down their top five tasks—the items on their business to-do list—for the next few days. When they've finished, have them set aside their lists until the end of the discussion.

True Stories (3 minutes)

Gain participants' attention about the importance of safety in one of three ways:

1. Have them read the story, "Safety First," about an attack on a salesperson. (Component 4)

2. Relate a story on safety concerns from your own experience.

3. Research and relate crime statistics for your area. Start with:

APBNews.com: Obtain crime ratings by Zip code.

REALTOR.COM (Click on "Neighborhoods", and then on "Relocation Crime Lab"):

Compares crime rates between any two U.S. cities. Crimes are broken down by robberies, rapes, homicides, assaults, and motor vehicle thefts.

County and City Crime Statistics Link Guide

National Criminal Justice Reference Service Statistics on drugs and Crime; gun violence; homicide

Criminal Justice Statistics: Includes link to U.S. Census Bureau ranking of cities (with more than 200,000 people) by crime rate; various police department stats by state

Background, goals, and objectives of safety meeting (3 min.)

To segue from the story or stats to the discussion, tell participants: U.S. homicide trends; drugs and crime stats, and then explain:

"You put yourselves at risk every day, meeting strangers and showing properties. Our company is taking a proactive position on safety by providing you with the skills to detect a potentially dangerous situation and the techniques to deal with a dangerous situation should you ever experience one.

In this meeting, we will;

- Use the 10-second rule of thumb for safety when showing a property.
- Come to recognize dangerous situations.
- Prevent dangerous situations.
- Learn how to regain control in dangerous situations.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 1: continued

Activity 2a – Map out a Typical Day (5 min.)

This activity sets the stage for activity 2b, which demonstrates to salespeople the potential safety risks in their everyday activities.

Lead the discussion by asking salespeople about their typical day activities—not their to-do list items necessarily—but the activities that are part of the job of real estate (listing appointments, showings, closings). Make a list of these activities on a flip chart while participants complete the first column of the Activity 2a worksheet.

To ensure that the group highlights all the critical typical day real estate activities, refer to the Activity 2a Answer Sheet.

Activity 2b—Recognizing Danger (7 min. each)

This activity demonstrates to salespeople the potential safety risks in their everyday activities.

You can either lead this discussion or break participants into small groups of three or four. In either case, ask them to list potentially dangerous scenarios for each typical day situation in column two—safety assessment—on the same worksheet.

Again, to ensure that their lists are complete, refer to the Activity 2a Answer Sheet.

10-second rule (5 minutes)

Now that the group has assessed how its safety can be compromised in specific situations, pass out and review the 10-second rule handout—a series of questions salespeople should ask themselves in various situations.

Underscore how to use the 10-second rule by applying it to the list of typical activities you wrote on the flip chart.

Activity 2c—Avoiding Danger (7 min. each)

This activity shows salespeople how they can prevent danger from occurring in job situations.

You can either lead discussion or break participants into small groups of three or four.

Ask them to list preventive measures in the third column of their worksheets. Again, refer to the Answer Sheet to ensure that their lists are complete.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 1: continued

If needed, apply these tips, from the September 2000 issue of REALTOR Magazine, to the Avoiding Danger exercise.

1. Don't host an open house alone; take along a colleague. Never show property alone at night or advertise it as vacant.
2. If you must sit a property that doesn't have a phone, bring along a cell phone. Tell someone at your office you'll call every hour, then do it like clockwork so that person will know right away if something is wrong.
3. Be careful how you dress. Flashy or expensive jewelry might attract the wrong kind of attention.
4. Don't put your home phone number on your business card. Buy a voice pager.
5. Always take your own car for showings. When you leave your car, lock it.
6. Let potential buyers take the lead when exploring a home, with you following behind. Avoid going into the basement or confined areas with a prospect.
7. Always have prospects meet you at your office the first time. Ask them for identification. If they question you about it, say it's company policy.
8. Find out as much as you can about prospects, such as where they work, what they do, and how much they earn. Ask lots of questions and be a good listener.
9. Know your sales area. Preview the property.
10. Don't be greedy. If you're suspicious, it's better to walk away from a listing or a showing.

Optional: What's Wrong with This Scenario? (3 min.)

If you have time, ask salespeople to analyze the dialogue in the scenario and identify red flags that might indicate a threat to their safety. Most importantly, ask the group to provide alternative responses for the salesperson.

Use the provided talking points to make sure that the group catches all the red flags in the scenario.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 1: continued

Discussion— Defending Your Life (5 min.)

Explain that even the most prepared salesperson can still run into trouble. Review the handout that describes how to defend yourself.

Activity 3—Applying Safety Techniques (2 min.)

This activity applies the information learned in this session to their real-life to-do lists.

Ask participants to revisit their Activity 1 Worksheet and identify one potentially dangerous situation. Ask them to explain how they could regain control if attacked during the activity. Participants can complete this activity with their own lists or swap lists with a neighbor.

Adjourn

If you plan to implement or offer some of the items and policies named in the action plan, share those with the group now. Be clear about what's part of company policy and what's just good judgment. Then thank participants for their time, and urge them to be careful out there.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 2: Safety Agenda Handouts Overview

H A N D O U T	F L I P C H A R T	
		Welcome (2 min.)
		Activity 1: Typical day (3 min.)
		Participants write down the activities that they must accomplish in the next couple of days—their business to-do lists. Set aside handout for later use in Activity 3.
		True Stories (3 min.) 1. Relate the provided story about how a real estate professional was harmed on the job, or 2. Relate personal story or crime statistics for the area
		Background, goals, and objectives of safety meeting (3 min.)
		Activity 2a: Map out a Typical Day (5 min.) Group names the top five real estate activities, such as listing presentations and showings. Facilitator lists those on a flip chart while participants complete their corresponding handouts.
		Activity 2b: Recognizing Danger (7 min. each) Participants assess all potential dangerous scenarios that could arise during the activities listed in 2a. Option 1: Small group activity Option 2: Facilitator-lead discussion
		10-second rule (5 min.) What is it? (handout) Apply the rule to the typical day activities

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 3: Action Plan Worksheet

Use the table below to help improve your associates' safety on the job. The left-hand column lists safety items and policies that you can buy or implement. The "suggestions" column lists ways to supply or implement the items and policies. Use the remaining columns to identify who'll provide the safety measure. For example, if you intend to offer company-sponsored safety training for the associates, place a check mark in the "company" column in the self-defense course row. If training is a component of company policy, place an additional check mark in the "policy" column. If a self-defense class is recommended, but will be the associates' responsibility, check the "associate" column.

Use the completed worksheet during the sales meeting to update your associates about your company's safety policy. Or customize your own version with the blank worksheet.

Safety item/policy		
	Associate	Company Policy Suggestions
Whistle		Can be provided by broker at reasonable cost.
Self-defense course		Can be reimbursed by the broker or hire a consultant to provide in-house training.
Mace/pepper spray		Can be provided by broker. Review local and state laws regarding the legality of these items.
Call-in policy		Ask associates to call office at specific times. If the office is closed on weekends, arrange for salespeople to call each other.
Open-house policy		Have associates partner at open houses or have a male salesperson substitute for a female. Make periodic checks of open houses.
New-client ID policy		Create procedures, policies, or forms to verify prospects' identification. Require all prospects to meet associates in the office on a first visit; request a piece of identification.
Property ownership verification		Establish procedures, such as checking county property records, so associates verify that people who claim to own property are in fact owners. Avoid a situation where a caller claims to be a seller, but intends to lure a salesperson to a vacant house or remote location.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 3: continued

Review salespeople's collateral materials		Create guidelines to encourage associates to eliminate personal information (phone numbers, addresses) from their business cards and collateral materials and to eliminate descriptions, such as "quiet, secluded street; vacant property" from ads.
10-second rule handout		Encourage associates to post the 10-second rule in a prominent place and on the backside of their business cards.
Itinerary policy		Associates should leave a daily itinerary with the receptionist or in a pre-determined place. Minimally, this should include contact information and destinations

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 5: True Stories

Safety First

BY RICHARD WESTLUND

April 5 she let down her guard at the wrong time. "I was in the office and the phone was ringing off the hook," she says. "A man said he wanted to . . . see a \$375,000 house . . . right away."

Barbara Slaughter, a broker for Property Associates Inc, Tallahassee, Fla., told the caller she had to contact the owner, asked for his name and number, and promised to call him back. She did. She *later* learned that he gave a fictitious name and provided a number in nearby Monticello that turned out to be a pay phone at a restaurant where he was waiting for her return call. Slaughter agreed to meet him at the property, which was located in a rural area. "When I arrived, he was sitting in an orange van wearing a-T-shirt" she said. Slaughter, had been talking with an associate on her car phone as she pulled up. Before hanging up, she said, "This guy makes me uneasy, but you can't always judge a book by its cover."

Although Slaughter thought no one was home, a Bronco was sitting in the driveway, and the woman who lived at the house waved to them from the house. Slaughter showed the man around the home, and he acted like a typical buyer. After the tour, he asked to see another house closer to town, a vacant three-bedroom on a one-acre lot. "I was in a hurry, so I turned into the driveway," Slaughter says. "He pulled in behind me. I got the key from the lockbox, and we went inside. I tried to stay behind him as we went from room to room. He asked a lot of questions, like a buyer, and I was feeling comfortable. As we came back through the kitchen, I turned my back on him to get a flier off the counter. When I did that, he grabbed me from behind and caught me by the wrists."

The attacker wedged Slaughter between himself and the kitchen counter so that she couldn't move. She screamed, which unnerved the attacker, who may have intended to harm her. "He said, 'If you shut up, I'll tell you what I want. I want money,'" she recalls. "I told him I had \$10 in the car, and I would give it to him if he let me go. After about 15 minutes in the kitchen, I talked him into letting me go to the car." At the car, Slaughter managed to slam his arm with the door, jump inside, and lock the door. However, her keys and phone were still inside the house, "All I thought of was giving him the \$10 because I had promised it to him. But he must have thought I had a gun in the car because he ran back to the van."

Slaughter's car was trapped in the driveway by the van and her car phone was still in the house. She cracked the window slightly and held the \$10 bill out but the man. Apparently thinking that she was armed, he wouldn't approach the car and motioned for her to get out. Finally, she got out, threw the crumpled bill across the car and quickly locked the door. He retrieved the money and sped off.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 5: continued

Concerned that he might be heading back to the first house, where he knew the woman was home alone, Slaughter called the police and then raced off to warn the property owner. To her knowledge, the man didn't return to the house, but the police recently informed Slaughter that someone matching the description of her attacker harmed a real estate practitioner in Jacksonville, Fla.

Slaughter, who's been a practitioner since 1978, says it's taken her a long time to recover. "We trust everybody here because we have a small-city atmosphere. We're not used to dealing with crime. But everyone must be careful. Now, I ask callers to meet at the office first rather than the property."

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SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 6: Your Typical Day

SAFETY Activity 1: Your Typical Day

Directions: List five activities that comprise a "typical day" for you.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 7: Activity 2a, 2b, 2c Worksheet

Directions:	
Activity 2a	Group brainstorm on the top 4 most common activities that comprise a "typical day." Write the top four responses your group came up with in the spaces provided on this worksheet.
Activity 2b	Moving across the worksheet (from left to right), identify those "typical day" activities during which your safety could be jeopardized. Write your responses in the Safety Assessment column.
Activity 2c	Look back at your responses for the second column. In column three, list the safety measure(s) you could take to help avoid the identified potentially dangerous situations.

2a: Typical Day	2b: Safety Assessment	2c: Preventative Measures
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<i>E.g.</i> Conducting an open house	Can be assaulted as the result of being alone	Buddy-up, allow prospect to view property alone (i.e., basements, etc.), show during daylight, etc.
1) _____ _____	1) _____ _____	1) _____ _____
2) _____ _____	2) _____ _____	2) _____ _____
3) _____ _____	3) _____ _____	3) _____ _____
4) _____ _____	4) _____ _____	4) _____ _____

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 8: Activity 2a, 2b, and 2c Worksheet Ideas

Directions:	
Activity 2a	Group brainstorm on the top 4 most common activities that comprise a "typical day." Write the top four responses your group came up with in the spaces provided on this worksheet.
Activity 2b	Moving across the worksheet (from left to right), identify those "typical day" activities during which your safety could be jeopardized. Write your responses in the Safety Assessment column.
Activity 2c	Look back at your responses for the second column. In column three, list the safety measure(s) you could take to help avoid the identified potentially dangerous situations.

2a: Typical Day	2b: Safety Assessment	2c: Preventative Measures
<i>E.g.</i> Conducting and open house	Can be assaulted as the result of being alone.	Buddy-up, allow prospect to view property alone (i.e., basements, etc.), show during daylight, etc.
1) Setting up a listing presentation	1) Can be assaulted as the result of being alone with a prospect.	1) Verify the property is owned by the person who is calling. Ideally, meet the person in the office first and check ID.
2) Showing a property	2) Can be assaulted because your alone in a new environment	2) Always follow prospects into rooms—don't let them get between you and exits; take your own vehicle; leave your itinerary with the office
3) Answer calls	3) Can be assaulted if you give personal information or get inaccurate about a prospect	3) Do not share info such as marital status or your residence. If you must meet the client off-site, get accurate business phone number, then check it.
4) Going to closings	4) People may think your carrying a large sum of money	4) If nervous, ask to be escorted to your vehicle; leave with a group; make sure you aren't followed

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 9: 10-Second Rule for Personal Safety

Taking in your surroundings, lets you spot and avoid danger.
Take ten seconds during the course of your day to ask yourself these questions.

Is there a questionable activity in the area?
Are you parked in a well-lit, visible location?
Can you be blocked in the driveway by a prospect's vehicle?

Are there suspicious people around?
Do you know exactly where you're going?
Are people coming and going or is the area unusually quiet?
Do you observe any obstacles or hiding places the parking lot or along the street?
Is anyone loitering in the area?
Do you have an uneasy feeling as you're walking in?
Is someone following you in?
Does anything seem out of place?
Is anyone present who shouldn't be there or who isn't expected?

10 seconds total. Make these actions a habit. Then share these with someone else.

"Appeared in "What You Can Do About Safety", *REALTOR[®] Magazine*, September 2000. Courtesy Night Owl/Vector Security, Landover, Md.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 10: 10-Second Rule Reminder Card

Encourage salespeople to post this 10-Second Rule reminder on the back of their business cards.

Take 2 seconds to consider your situation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you arrive at your destination
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After you step out of your car
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While you walk towards your destination
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the door
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As soon as you enter your destination
Make it a habit.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 11: Safety Scenario

Directions: Analyze the dialogue below to identify the red flags you should be alert for.

Salesperson: Hello.

Prospect: Hello, I'd like to see a house that you have listed.

Salesperson: O.K. May I have your name please?

Prospect: Steve. Steve Smith.

Salesperson: And which property would you like to see?

Prospect: The one at 123 South Street.

Salesperson: Let me see what I can set up, Mr. Smith. Can I have your telephone number and give you a call back?

Prospect: I'm not in my office right now. Can I call you back in an hour to see what you've set up?

Salesperson: That would be fine.

(An hour later)

Prospect: Hello. This is Steve Smith.

Salesperson: We're lucky. The house you want to see on South Street is vacant right now. I've set up an appointment for this evening at 7 o'clock. Is that O.K.?

Prospect: That would be fine.

Salesperson: Can you meet me here at the office at about 6:45?

Prospect: I'll be coming straight from a meeting at the office and will be pretty rushed. Can we just meet at the house?

Salesperson: O.K. Mr. Smith. I'll see you at the house at 7 tonight.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 12: Facilitator Notes for Safety Scenario

Use these notes to help your salespeople identify the red flags in Component 10—the safety scenario activity. (This activity is optional.)

Red flag No. 1

Steve Smith doesn't give an office or home phone number. He says that he'll call the salesperson back. There's no way for the salesperson to track down him if needed.

Alternative:

If you're in this situation, try to get as much personal information from Mr. Smith as you can before you agree to meet with him. Even though he's not in his office, it doesn't hurt to call and make sure he works there as a protective measure.

Red flag No. 2

The salesperson informs Steve Smith that the house he wants to see is vacant.

Alternative:

Instead of telling a caller that a house is vacant, explain that the house is available to show. If the property is indeed vacant, take precautions. Inform colleagues where you're going and what time you'll be back. Bring pepper spray. Try to take a co-worker with you.

Red flag No. 3

The salesperson set up an appointment after business hours. Although this alone isn't cause for alarm, add it to the other red flags in this scenario and you've got a recipe for danger.

Alternative:

If you're going to show a property alone at night, inform people about where you're going and what time you'll be back. Bring pepper spray. Try to take a coworker along with you.

Red flag No. 4

Steve Smith can't meet the salesperson at the office. He asks to meet at the property.

Alternative:

If you can't meet a cold caller ahead of time, make sure to take the precautions mentioned above. Make sure you get personal information on the caller. Can the caller be reached at a work phone number?

Wrap up to scenario

Encourage participants to listen to their instincts. It's better to be safe than sorry.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Component 13: Defending Yourself

The best defense is precaution. But if you're attacked, these suggestions can save your life.

1. Try to talk your way out of the situation. Stay calm, and use your persuasiveness to talk your way out of danger.

2. Stun and run. Using a sharp or blunt object, such as your car keys, pen, or phone, hit the assailant's head, eyes, or groin as hard as you can. Then run.

Chemical sprays are also effective, but only if you already have one available when you need it.

3. Don't antagonize or threaten the attacker. If you do, their violent behavior may worsen.

4. Use apparent compliance. Appear to acquiesce to the attacker. When the attacker's guard is down, try to escape. But never, ever get into the assailant's car.

Adapted from "Safety First", *Florida REALTOR® Magazine*, June 1994.

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Other Resources

[REALTOR® Safety Week Home Page](#)

[REALTOR® Magazine Online Prepackaged Sales Meeting on Safety*](#)

[Personal Safety: To Meet or not to Meet?](#), REALTOR® Magazine Online, Sept. 2003

[NAR Library's Field Guide to REALTOR® Safety](#)

[Don't Be a Victim: Personal Safety for REALTORS®](#) (video)

[12 safety posters](#) developed by the Washington Association of REALTORS®' Real Estate Safety Council

["Agent Safety"](#), Realty Times

[Realty Times Safety Columnist Robert Siciliano](#)

["Real-estate Agents Fearful After Slaying"](#), *The Seattle Times*, Jan. 12, 2001.

[National Crime Prevention Council](#) self, home and family section: Tips to protect yourself and your home

["What You Can Do About Safety"](#), *REALTOR® Magazine*, September 2000.

["5 Security Steps for Companies"](#), *REALTOR® Magazine*, July 1998.

["13 Tips for Outwitting the Bad Guys"](#), *REALTOR® Magazine*, July 1998.

["How to Protect Yourself from Crime"](#), *REALTOR® Magazine*, April 1997

["Risky Business"](#), *REALTOR® Magazine*, June 1997.

["Real Estate Pros' Eyes, Ears Keep Communities Safe"](#), *REALTOR® Magazine*, August 1997.

["Safety is No Accident at Open Houses"](#), *Real Estate Today*, March 1994. (Available through NAR's Info Central, 800/874-6500.)

SALES MEETING TOOL KIT: SAFETY

Other Resources: continued

A video on personal safety for real estate practitioners is available from the Women's Council of REALTORS® for \$39.95. To order, phone (outside California) 888/750-3343; in California, 213/739-8227. Ask for REALTORS® Safety Video, #444-49.

Washington Real Estate Safety Council Packet—Recommended Office Procedures includes a customer identification form, salesperson identification form, and salesperson itinerary form. Download the forms here or visit the Washington Association of REALTORS® Web site, www.warealtor.com/safety