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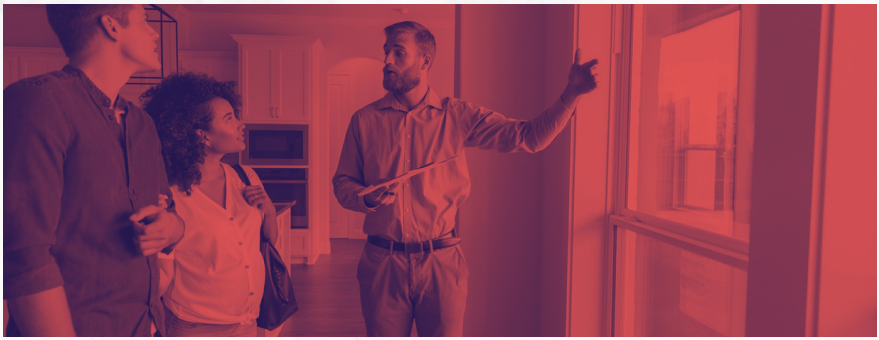
SAFETY TIPS FOR SALES REPRESENTATIVES



SAFETY TIPS FOR SALES REPRESENTATIVES

If you are concerned about a suspicious customer, contact your supervisor with information on them so that others can be notified to be watchful. If you are part of a community group chat, consider sharing the information with the group.

KNOW WHO IS IN YOUR SHOWHOME

Keep a sign-in sheet in the show home. When customers come in, ask them to sign-in and provide some personal information including name, address, and phone number. Ask direct questions to qualify a suspicious customer and assess their motivation. If you are concerned that someone is still in the show home when you are closing, call out and state that you are closing up, lock the doors and call your supervisor.

SAFETY TIP: Keep an eye on the door on busy days and try to keep track of people coming in and out.

BE AWARE AND BEWARE

Be aware of your surroundings. Do a regular walk through of the show home and show home. Plan your escape routes in advance. Some additional things to keep in mind:

- Know where the exits are and think about where you could run for help.
- Is there another show home or neighbor nearby?
- How long would it take to reach your car?

Practice and prepare for emergency scenarios through role-playing exercises.

Your escape routes and actions in case of an attack should be automatic. You should be able to rely on them without thinking.

If you leave the show home to show a feature home, pay close attention to your instincts (trust your gut!). show home must be locked and alarmed. A sign must be posted on the door indicating your return and contact information.

BE AWARE AND BEWARE (CONTINUED)

Do not lead the way, it is too easy to be cornered or trapped in a room, basement, or attic. Have the customer go ahead of you. You can comment on each room from the safety of the door, from there you can flee more easily if you get a bad feeling about the situation. Offer the customer the option to tour the show home independently and to come and see you in the office afterwards with any questions/comments.

SAFETY TIP: Be aware of your surroundings and plan your escape routes in advance. If you are faced with a dangerous situation, a survival mindset can be critical. You will have more confidence if you have thought through your options and done some planning.

BE ALARMED

Be familiar with the alarm system in the show home and aware of any other audible signals e.g., door chime. Know how the alarm works and conduct routine checks to ensure it's working properly. If the alarm has been disengaged on a high traffic day, remember to reset it. Program the alarm system to maintain the door chime when alarm is disengaged.

SAFETY TIP: ALWAYS wear your personal panic button. Do not hesitate to follow your instinct. Trust your gut. If you feel like something is wrong, use your panic button!

YOUR PHONE IS YOUR LIFELINE

Keep your cell phone fully charged and with you at all times. Make it a part of your person. If you keep your cell phone in a purse or bag, or leave it at the front entrance, it may not be available when you need it most.

If you have an emergency, call 9-1-1 from the show home phone and stay on the line. Do not hang up. If someone tries to get the phone from you, throw the phone where it cannot be reached; under a desk or in a corner, in order to keep the line open.

Take your cell phone if you leave the show home to show a feature home and be sure the Supervisor or your buddy knows how to reach you. Be on the phone with your buddy as you are leaving the site and locking up.

SAFETY TIP: Place the address (and any location direction instructions) on or near the landline in the show home to ensure it is readily available in the event emergency services needs to be called. We forget a lot of information in emergency situations, so having it readily available will take away some of the panic.

HAVE A BUDDY

Know in advance who you are going to call if:

- Your instincts tell you to get help
- You feel uneasy in a situation

Your buddy is someone who knows your distress codes and who you can reach quickly by phone. Your buddy can be another your Supervisor, another salesperson, a family member or friend.

Create a buddy system with other sales representatives in the show home parade and join a community group chat, if available.

Let your buddy know when your shift ends or, if you have a meeting after hours or, if you must leave the show home to show a feature home.

Be on the phone with your buddy as you are leaving the site and locking up.

SAFETY TIP: If you are concerned that someone is still in the house when you are closing, call out and state you are closing the show home, lock the doors and call your Supervisor.

CREATE A DISTRESS CODE

If you can use the phone, but the person you are with can overhear the conversation and you do not want to alarm them, a pre-arranged distress code can help.

If a customer is beginning to make you nervous, or uneasy about them, call the Supervisor or your buddy and tell them you need the Red File. In this case, Red File is the pre-arranged distress code to send someone to the site so that you are not alone. You can make up your own distress code.

Use the distress code if you are uneasy. If you are in immediate danger, call 911! If it's not practical to call 911 with the suspect present, create a different level of distress code so the person you are calling will call 911 immediately. If calling 911, try to stay on the line as long as possible so they can get your location information.

Authorities agree that most attackers and thieves are looking for easy targets. Be assertive, show that you are in control and have a distress code for times you feel uneasy.

SAFETY TIP: Share and practice your distress code with: Supervisor, sales representatives, friends and family, community/show home parade groups

CAR SAFETY

If you are working in a remote location, your car may be your best route of escape. When you park your car, ask yourself: "In an emergency, am I going to be able to run to my car and drive away?"

Things to consider:

- Move your car within sight of the entrance after high traffic hours and before it gets dark.
- Park in a well-lit area.
- Park where you can't be blocked in.
- Back in so you can easily get away, or park so the driver's door is closest to the house.
- If your car breaks down, use your cellphone to call for help and stay in the locked vehicle until help arrives.
- Always keep your car keys with you.
- Consider a car with a keyless entry.
- Keep your vehicle in good running condition and the gas tank full.
- Make sure your cell phone is fully charged.
- Keep blankets, tools, flares, a first aid kit, water, a candle and matches, dry food and warm clothes in your vehicle.

SAFETY TIP: ALWAYS have your cell phone. If you are in immediate danger, run for safety first and when you have the opportunity, **call 911**.

MARKETING & PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Marketing materials should be polished and professional. Limit the amount of personal information you share. Use your work number or the office number. Never give your home address or personal phone number.

Be guarded with your personal information. Getting to know the customer does not mean revealing personal information about your children, where you live and who you live with.

Criminals may scout show homes for jewelry and items that are easy to sell. Thieves often work in teams, so only carry the cash and credit cards you need and don't wear expensive jewelry at the show home.

SAFETY TIP: Dress for the weather. If you need to escape a dangerous situation on foot, you could find yourself exposed to the weather for an extended period. In the winter, bring a coat with you and keep a blanket in your vehicle.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Danger isn't always easy to identify, but there are often early warning signs if you know what to look for.

If you are uncomfortable or feel hesitant in a situation, trust your instincts. Here are some signs that your body is already reacting to stress:

- Palms sweat and body starts to shake.
- Breathing becomes fast and shallow.
- Heartbeat accelerates up to two times its normal rate.
- Vision, color and depth perception are affected.
- Night vision will be low and you'll have tunnel vision.
- Hearing and motor skills are affected.
- Ability to speak and think is affected.

Danger can be easier to identify if you learn to trust your instincts and listen to the signals your body is sending you. Safety experts agree, when your personal safety is involved it is best to err on the side of caution, trust your instincts and take the necessary precautions.

SAFETY TIP: Control your breathing by breathing – 4 seconds in through your nose, 4 seconds out through your mouth. Practice this. It helps slow your heart rate and minimize other physiological changes that can affect your ability to stay safe.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

The previous tips dealt with prevention, but what if you are faced with the worst-case scenario - an attack? If you are faced with danger, trust yourself and stay as calm as possible. Think rationally and evaluate your options.

- Yell "FIRE" to get attention. People respond faster to "FIRE" than a call for "HELP".
- Run first and then call 9-1-1 as soon as possible.
- Do not resist. If the attacker has a weapon, you may think it is safer to do what he says. If someone tries to rob you, give up your property, not your life.
- Stall for time. Go along with the attacker to buy time to assess the situation. When his or her guard is down, try to escape.
- Distract them and then run. You should try to get away, but it can depend on your shoes, your clothing, your physical stamina, the location and how close the attacker is.
- Use verbal assertiveness. Hold your hands in front of you and yell "STOP or "STAY BACK"! Yell and show that you are not afraid to fight back.
- Use physical resistance. Act quickly and decisively to throw the attacker off guard so you can escape.

There is no one right way to respond to a confrontation. Your response depends on the circumstances, location of the attacker, your personal resources, characteristics of the attacker and the presence of weapons.

There are many strategies that are effective. Rely on your own judgement to choose the best one for you.

Consider taking a self-defense course so you will be confident with the options. Be sure to keep your skills current and retrain at least once a year. Also, be sure that the training is not giving you a false sense of security.

SAFETY TIP: Get an accurate description of your attacker and record it. Even the smallest details may give authorities a clue to finding the suspect. Tell the police everything, including what was said and even things that seem unimportant.