

OPEN HOUSE SAFETY

MORE THAN BALLOONS & COOKIES



Open houses preparation is more than balloons and cookies, it is vital that agents are preparing to keep themselves safe. As the following checklist displays, there are many safety risks that can be minimized through proper preparation.

Before your open house

- Prepare the Sellers. Remind the sellers to put their valuables in a secure place. This includes electronics, prescription drugs, jewelry, and firearms.
- Assess the Marketing. Does the property description or photographs make this property appealing for criminals? Does it identify that the home is vacant, rural, or full of luxurious items or electronics?
- Find a Buddy. Industry affiliates, such as mortgage or title reps, are often very willing to join you. If not, do you have a family member, friend, or another agent that can join you?
- Meet the Neighbors. This takes a little time, but it is well worth the effort. Neighbors are interested in the home for sale, and it will be great for them to know you'll be there. They can supply additional neighborhood info that helps you promote the area, too. Plus, familiarity builds trust – and you may gain a client in return.
- Use a Cloud-Based Camera. Consider adding a cloud-based camera. Simply knowing a property is under surveillance can be a deterrent to crime.
- Assess the physical layout of the property. Know the layout of the home and its exits. Know the backyard and any potential safety concerns with the layout.
- Visit the nearby police substation and fire station. It is great to know how close these are to the home, and it is for your safety, too! Invite them over to the open house, and let them know that you'll have refreshments!

During your open house

- Avoid Certain Rooms. While touring the home with clients, avoid entrapment risk in rooms such as attics, basements, and those with tight quarters.
- Door Bells. Sometimes it is not feasible for you to know every time a person walks in your open house. Adding a decorative ring of bells to the handles of your entrances can be an easy way to alert you of activity within the home.
- Evaluate Every Prospect. If possible, make a quick notes of each prospect including their vehicle and physical description. This can also be a helpful resource to remember their name, too.
- Check-In Regularly. If alone, call the office or your buddy regularly.

After your open house

- Closing with a Buddy. If it wasn't possible for a buddy to join you for the full open house, ensure that you have someone with you during closing. This time presents several risks for criminals to take advantage of the situation.
- Secure the Home. Ensure that all windows and doors are locked. Don't simply check those that you unlocked.
- Express gratitude. Follow-up with any neighbors, police, or fire department that stopped by.

Resources

Wooten, A. (2009). *The Real Estate Guide to Safety: Unleashing the Power of YOU*. S.A.F.E. Publishing.
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