



Professionalism Guide

Maintaining professional courtesy in your dealings as a real estate professional is essential to the success of your business. Be sure to use common sense and remember *The Golden Rule* during all your business interactions, whether with clients, coworkers, or competitors. Some of the best tips for maintaining professionalism are:

- **Maintain Effective Communication:** Respond clearly and promptly to inquiries and notify interested parties of the developments in the transaction as soon as possible.
- **Be Honest and Transparent:** Be sure to disclose *all* potential conflicts of interest and pertinent information regarding the property or transaction.
- **Use Respect with Everyone:** Treat everyone involved in a transaction with respect and fairness by considering all perspectives and needs and working toward mutually beneficial solutions.
- **The Golden Rule:** “Do unto others as you would have done unto you.”

Even the smallest acts of professional courtesy will keep you out of trouble and set your reputation as a trustworthy businessperson. Use the key tool of professionalism to unlock the door to success. For more information, visit the Bay East website [here](#) or contact our Professional Standards department at professionalstandards@bayeast.org.

1. SERVING CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS

a. Showing a home:

- i. DO discuss the good features of a home while discussing with colleagues, not only the drawbacks. Do your seller a favor.
- ii. DON'T discuss with other real estate professionals the condition of a property or compare it with other properties while you are in seller's home.
- iii. DO call first for an appointment.
- iv. DO be on time for appointments or call if you're going to be late or if there is a cancellation.
- v. DON'T forget to identify yourself on the telephone to the sellers.
- vi. DO show respect and courtesy to the sellers at all times.
- vii. DO call out when you enter a home if you were unable to reach someone at the home by knocking on the door. Let them know you are a friend, not a burglar.
- viii. DON'T let customers roam around the property without you.
- ix. DON'T peek in windows. You might be stopped as a "peeping Tom" or "peeping Tammie".
- x. DO knock on any closed doors before entering a room in a home. You might get a real surprise if you don't.
- xi. DON'T smoke in a home when you are showing it.
- xii. DON'T leave cigarettes or other debris (candy wrappers, etc.) at the property while showing the house.
- xiii. DON'T let anyone – children or adults – eat ice cream, drink soft drinks, eat food or smoke while showing a house. It could be costly to you and your customer.
- xiv. DO keep children under control at all times when showing a home, the knick-knacks and furniture belong to the seller.
- xv. DO make sure pets do not get in or out of the home while you are showing it. If a pet does get in our out, make every effort to retrieve it, and call the listing office if you are unable to find the pet.
- xvi. DO ask the seller before using the telephone in the home.
- xvii. DO use walkways and paths and try not to walk all over the grass or in the flowerbeds.
- xviii. DO show the entire house.
- xix. DON'T take food or candy from the home or pick fruit from trees unless the seller offers it to you.
- xx. DON'T forget to leave your card when showing a home.
- xxi. DON'T forget to turn off lights that you have turned on when showing a home, and don't forget to lock all doors.
- xxii. DON'T forget to draw the drapes, if you have opened them, after showing the house.
- xxiii. DO report anything suspicious in a home to the listing office at once.
- xxiv. DON'T forget to promptly return the key to the proper place, i.e., back in the lock box or back to the office as soon as possible.

2. HELPING CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS

- i. DON'T tell a prospective buyer where the key is located so he may get into the house without a real estate licensee.
- ii. DON'T give the seller's phone number to the customer unless you have been given permission by the broker or sales associate handling the listing.
- iii. DO verify all information the seller gives you and know as much as you can about the listing. Don't take a chance unless you know for sure.
- iv. DO be honest in the description you put in the listing; do justice to your seller.
- v. DO represent property honestly in all merchandising techniques.
- vi. DO give helpful suggestions to sellers to make their home more salable when taking a listing.
- vii. DO try to keep the seller's costs as low as possible.
- viii. DO follow up the listing with at least one call a week to the seller.
- ix. DO keep the seller informed at all times. Also keep in touch with your customers.
- x. DO know the approximate distance to schools, shopping, etc., in time or miles.
- xi. DON'T bluff your customers if you don't know. Tell them you will find out what they want to know. This will save a lot of grief later.
- xii. DO return keys promptly to sellers when the home has been sold or the listing expired.
- xiii. DO disclose any interest you may have in a transaction.
- xiv. DO return telephone calls.

3. A HANDY GUIDE TO COURTESY

a. General Courtesy

- i. DO honor the real estate professional's sign. Make appointments through the agent.
- ii. DO report all suspicious customers to your manager and then perhaps to your police department.
- iii. DO give accurate and precise information on listings and know your office inventory.
- iv. DON'T be discourteous to sellers or customers, escrow officers or loan officers. You need all of them.
- v. DO be clean and neat in your personal appearance. The first impression you make is usually the one that remains in the eyes of your client or customer.
- vi. DON'T use any rude jokes or profanity. No sale has ever been closed because of this.
- vii. DON'T promise anything you cannot do. It might cost you a lot of money.
- viii. DO write legibly; better yet, print. Be deliberately neat.
- ix. DO say "thank you" and "please."
- x. DO keep the REALTOR® Code of Ethics and the Golden Rule foremost in your mind at all times.

4. WORKING WITH COLLEAGUES

a. On the Phone:

- i. DO return calls from other real estate professionals first. They may have an offer or need information to write an offer.
- ii. DON'T pitch other listings to the real estate professional calling on a specific home unless he has asked for more information on other listings. He might be writing an offer on the property or have customers with him.
- iii. DO identify yourself as a fellow REALTOR® when calling for information so the floor salesperson does not lose his customer calls.
- iv. DO speak slowly when giving your telephone number to anyone – For example: area code 216 (pause) 555 (pause) 45 (pause) 67.
- v. DO include your phone number when leaving information for a person on a telephone answering machine. That person may be getting his messages away from his office and may not have access to a phone book.
- vi. DON'T keep other real estate professionals on the phone when they inquire about listings. Answer their questions, but don't try to sell them.

5. HELPING FELLOW PROFESSIONALS

- i. DO arrange showings, even though the broker or sales associate handling the listing is out of the office.
- ii. DO give specific instructions and directions and use major streets for identification in listing information.
- iii. DO check keys that you have made for a listing to be certain they work before dropping them off at other offices or on the property.
- iv. DO report to the listing agent the status of your showing within 24 hours if possible.

6. CLINCHING THE DEAL

- i. DO obtain loan commitments, extension agreements, accepted or countered offers on time.
- ii. DO write enforceable offers.

7. KEYS

- i. DO return the key to the listing office as soon as you are through with it. Never mail it!
- ii. DON'T put keys in a place where a person cannot reach them easily or where you have to climb a wall to reach them.
- iii. DO call the broker or sales associate handling the listing if the key is not where it is supposed to be.

8. DEALING WITH THE COMPETITION

- i. DO show courtesy to other real estate professionals, especially in front of customers and clients.
- ii. DON'T speak ill of your competition.
- iii. DON'T discuss anything regarding terms, conditions, or price with a seller of a home that is listed with another office.
- iv. DON'T call the seller of a new listing held by another office and embarrass them by asking why they did not list with you.

9. LOCK BOX ETIQUETTE

- a. The use of lock boxes on properties for sale has been a great convenience for all of our members. In return for the privilege of using a lock box on a property we in turn owe it to the owner to be extra careful to ensure that their property will remain secure at all times. When showing properties by means of a lock box, please follow all of these rules of etiquette.
 - i. Knock loudly or ring the doorbell before entering the home.
 - ii. Once inside the home, knock loudly on any closed door before entering the room. This avoids embarrassing surprises!
 - iii. Leave your business card in a suitable, obvious location inside the home as a notice that you have shown the home.
 - iv. Before leaving the home, make a quick tour of the doors and windows to make sure that they are closed and locked. Do this even if it means making your prospects wait a few minutes. They will appreciate your thoroughness and professionalism.
 - v. After locking the main door, try it to make sure that it is actually locked.
 - vi. Return the door key back to the lockbox. **NEVER KEEP THE KEY.**
 - vii. Never let anyone stay in the house if the family is not there.