**(BROKERAGE) PANDEMIC POLICY
NOTE: This should not be construed as a directive or as legal advice. Brokers are free to use the information contained as they see fit.**

**Effective Date**This policy will be in effect (triggered) when one of the following situations has occurred:
1) A National State of Emergency has been declared by the United State government;
2) A State of Emergency has been declared by the State of Florida; or
3) A State of Emergency has been declared by Volusia County

**Declaration of Emergency**Following its decision to declare a State of Emergency, (Broker) will notify its agents, employees, and vendors as soon as possible via email and/or text message. The Declaration will contain as much information as is known at the time and (Broker) will make every effort to keep its agents and employees informed of any developments or changes.

**Duration**The duration of the Emergency is to be determined by (Broker) at its sole discretion based upon available information/recommendations from Volusia County, the State of Florida, and the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC).

**Classes, Training, Meetings, Events**All in-person classes, meetings and events will be postponed, canceled or re-scheduled for the duration of the Emergency as determined by (Broker) or as recommended/ordered by a recognized health authority.
(If Broker has capability to offer Zoom or other web-based meeting or teleconference, insert details here)

**Employees/Agents**(Broker) employees and agents will follow all recommended safety precautions issued by the CDC, the State of Florida and/or Volusia County as outlined below.

* Employees/Agents will wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based sanitizer
* Employees/Agents will immediately wash hands or use a hand sanitizer every time he/she opens the front door. This simple task will reduce the risk of carrying the virus into the office.
* Employees/Agents will not shake hands, or touch other Employees/Agents or each other in any way
* Employees/Agents will stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who visits the office
* Employees/Agents will avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
* Employees/Agents will be required to stay home when sick
* Employees/Agents will be required to cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, then immediately wash hands or use a hand sanitizer
* Employees/Agents will clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, including workstations daily using Lysol disinfecting cloths.

**Infection/Quarantine**In the event any Employee/Agent contracts an infectious disease, or is recommended/ordered to be quarantined by a local, state or federal health authority, the Employee/Agent will not be permitted in the office until such time as a recognized health provider deems it safe to return to work.
During that time, an employee is permitted to work from home when possible.
Employees will be paid normal compensation for the duration of the time required to stay home, and such time will not be counted against the employee’s paid sick benefits as outlined in the (Broker) Employee Manual.

**(Broker) Office**Following CDC guidelines, (Broker) is encouraging agents NOT to come into the office unless it is absolutely necessary. (Broker) reserves the right at its sole discretion to limit the number of agents that may be present in the office at any given time.

**Optional Provision**

**Effective (date), (Broker) is suspending all walk-in traffic at the office until (date).** This policy will also be re-evaluated at that time. (Broker) will make its best effort to accommodate employee/agent/customer needs during this crisis.

**Continuation of Business**During the Declared State of Emergency, (Broker) will continue to conduct business to serve our customers/clients and support our agents.

## Dealing with Customers/ClientsAccording to the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) Guidelines, you may ask clients or others you interact with in your real estate business if they have traveled recently, particularly to areas identified as having an increased risk of coronavirus. Take note if they have any signs of illness, including fever, coughing or respiratory illness, and maintain the physical distance recommended by the CDC (six feet).

To avoid potential fair housing issues, be sure to ask all clients the same screening questions based on current, factual information from public health authorities.

When possible, encourage agents to conduct as much business as possible via electronic means, including phone calls, texts, emails and video conferencing systems (Facetime, etc.)

**Showings**If you typically drive your clients to showings, you may refuse to drive potential clients to see homes, as long as any change to your business practices is applied equally to all clients. You may refuse to drive clients who show signs of illness or reveal recent travel to areas of increased risk of coronavirus, or you may instead decide to stop driving clients in your car altogether, and simply arrange to meet clients at a property. If you do continue to drive clients in your car, it is a good idea to frequently clean and disinfect surfaces like door handles and seat belt latches, and to ask clients to use hand sanitizer when getting in and out of the car.

Prior to a showing, CRS recommends the following:
Open all doors and sanitize all door knobs and handles after each showing
Leave cabinet doors open and any other spaces open that buyers might want to see
Turn on any lights, lamps or switches buyers might want on
Keep windows and doors open to let fresh air in

During a showing, please adhere to the CDC’s guidelines to maintain proper physical distance and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after touching anything that may have been touched by the Seller or the customer. If you decide to do any cleaning at your client's home after a showing, be sure to check with your client in advance about any products you plan to use. There is some evidence that certain cleaning products may not be safe for pets, for example.

**Open Houses**Agents with listings who would normally hold an Open House for the listing, should consider the following:

Have a conversation with your Seller about the effectiveness of holding an Open House during a declared State of Emergency. Here are some issues to consider.
►The chances are that attendance will be minimized during the Emergency anyway.
►Some Sellers will not want to take the chance than an infected person enters their home, and could spread a virus simply by touching surfaces in the home.
►Even if the property is vacant, a virus can be deposited on surfaces in the property and transmitted to other potential Buyers.
►Consider that your safety, as well as the safety of other potential Buyers may be at stake if an Open House is held.

If, after having the conversation with your Seller, the Seller is still insistent on holding an Open House, and you are willing to take the risk, explain that it is your Broker’s policy to follow the guidelines issued by the CDC (see Employee/Agent section). Maintaining physical distance, not shaking hands, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces may not seem friendly things to do, but these simple changes in behavior are strongly recommended to help contain and ultimately stop the spread of the disease.
You could also propose alternative marketing opportunities for your seller's consideration, such as video tours and other methods to virtually tour a property. If you do hold an open house, consider requiring all visitors to disinfect their hands upon entering the home, limiting the amount of people in the home and providing alcohol-based hand sanitizers at the entryway, as well as soap and disposable towels in bathrooms. If you decide to do any cleaning at your client's home, be sure to check with your client in advance about any products you plan to use. There is some evidence that certain cleaning products may not be safe for pets, for example.

NAR has offered the following Questions and Answers:

## Q: May REALTORS® continue to hold open houses during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: First, members should consult with their brokers, and consider how federal, state and local authorities' recommendations and actions, such as “shelter in place” mandates, impact the advisability, and even permissibility of open houses.

Where open houses are permissible, **NAR strongly encourages members to consider the advisability of continuing to hold open houses at this time, especially in light of the guidance and actions of federal, state and local authorities, including “**[**The President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America (link is external)**](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf)**” recommending that gatherings of ten or more persons be avoided.**

## Q: What if my client insists that I continue to hold open houses?

A: **You are never required to put yourself at risk in servicing a client.  Have an open and honest conversation with your client about your concerns with holding an open house at this time, including whether doing so would contradict current government recommendations or mandates, particularly in geographic areas with “shelter in place” mandates.**  If after discussing these issues, you and your client mutually agree to hold an open house, advise your client about necessary precautions to minimize exposure to, and the spread of, COVID-19.

## Q: What precautions should be taken if an open house is held?

A: **In accordance with** [**guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the President (link is external)**](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf)**, ensure that less than ten people are touring the home at any given time, and consider only allowing one buyer group to tour the home at a time.** Be sure that guests maintain social distancing of six or more feet apart, and require potential buyers to wash their hands or to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately upon entry and to remove shoes/cover footwear with booties. Also, be sure to check with your client before using any cleaning products, and recommend that your client disinfect their home after the open house, especially commonly touched areas like doorknobs and faucet handles.

## Q: May I ask individuals whether they are sick or have recently travelled before touring the home?

A:  **Yes, you are never required to put yourself at risk in servicing a client, and it is reasonable to ask whether they are currently sick or have recently traveled.**  To avoid fair housing concerns, be sure to direct such questions to all potential buyers on an equal basis.

## Q: What are alternative ways to market a property?

A: Now is a great time to leverage the many available alternative marketing opportunities.  Let your clients know that you will continue to service them and can continue to market their home using an incredible array of available technology.  Offer your clients three-dimensional interactive property scans (via Matterport, Cupix, EyeSpy360); host a virtual tour or help your seller conduct a live tour using Skype or Facebook; and use virtual staging to showcase a property.

## Q: Are open houses continuing to be held across the country?

A:  **Yes, however, a recent NAR survey showed that a large percentage of REALTORS® have suspended holding open houses**.  In the “[2020 NAR Flash Survey:  Economic Pulse](https://www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/research-reports/nar-flash-survey-economic-pulse)”, conducted March 16-17, 2020, 40% of members nationally reported they suspended holding open houses.  In geographic areas experiencing a significant COVID-19 outbreak, that number increased to 45% of members.  Members have reported temporarily ceasing open houses in order to restrict traffic into listed homes, to practice social distancing, and to ensure potential buyers are taking recommended precautions.  Members also reported limiting home tours to serious buyers only, leveraging a variety of technology tools at their disposal to continue conducting business.

## Q: Have MLSs taken any action related to open houses?

A:  **A number of MLSs are promoting the use of virtual tours in open house fields, while some have disabled the use of open house fields all together.** For example, the Northeast Florida Association (NEFAR) recently disabled open houses in its MLS, and others have added warning messages advising of governmental restrictions on public gatherings.

Florida REALTORS® received a call from the Surgeon General in Florida asking REALTORS® to refrain from holding Open Houses.

**Transactions**There is no doubt that the Emergency will affect transactions in progress. Should a transaction you have currently be affected by this Emergency, please consult with your Broker. Florida REALTORS has also produced a good video on the legal implications/issues that you can watch here:
<https://www.floridarealtors.org/media/1249>

**(Broker) Statement**(Brokerage) understands that this period of time is likely to be stressful, and we want to assure our valued agents that we will be available to answer your questions and help you through the crisis. We WILL get through this!
In the big picture, a short period of time when we all have to change our habits is a very small price to pay to spare our agents, our customers and clients, and our community at large from suffering from this disease.