

COVID-19: HOW TO CONTINUE TO OFFER ESSENTIAL REAL ESTATE SERVICES - A GUIDE FOR ROYAL LEPAGE REALTORS® -

HOW TO CONDUCT A VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Royal LePage has continued to take action to help keep both you and your clients safe as we face this unprecedented global crisis together. The safety measures we are taking are being guided by public health authorities and the government as well as company-specific initiatives. **We are NOT permitting traditional open houses or person-to-person consumer outreach such as door knocking.** We will communicate the lifting of this restriction when it is safe to return to traditional business practices.

REALTORS® who wish to provide an open house service MUST host the event in a virtual fashion, utilizing online tools and digital video technologies. One that we recommend is Facebook Live, a live video streaming feature on Facebook that allows you to broadcast a live video through your company page or personal profile. It's easy, and it's free. It allows you to engage with your viewers and answer any questions in real-time. And, once a Facebook Live video is created, it can reside on your page or profile for viewers who missed the live event. To help you get started, we've put together a how-to guide, '[Leveraging Facebook Live for Virtual Open Houses](#)'.

HOW TO SHOW A PROPERTY DURING THE FIGHT TO CONTAIN COVID-19

Physical Property Showings Strictly Limited

- A REALTOR® should first work with a buyer to assess properties through virtual options (virtual tours, floorplans, photos);
- If a buyer is interested in a property, a REALTOR® should then provide a virtual showing (the buyer's agent uses technology to walk the buyer through the home);
- As a practice, physical showings as a home shopping process, where a potential buyer visits multiple homes, must stop.
- **When a buyer has narrowed their search to a single property and requests a physical visit, you should make the necessary arrangements to keep both you and them safe.**

All showings, including a property visit by a REALTOR® to conduct a virtual open house, should adhere to the following guidelines, developed to reflect the guidance of government and public health authorities:

Buyers

- Before scheduling a showing, confirm with your purchasers and all occupants of the property (owners or tenants) that they are not displaying any signs of illness. Refer to [Government of Canada guidelines on symptoms and prevention measures](#) on an ongoing basis as information and guidance on these is subject to change. Guidelines currently include, but are not limited to:
 - **Prohibiting access to property showings when you, your buyer client(s), or any occupant of the property:**

- has recently travelled anywhere outside of Canada or has been in contact with anyone who has travelled outside of Canada; or
- has had any of the following symptoms in the last 14 days: Fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing; or
- has knowingly come into contact with anyone experiencing the following symptoms in the last 14 days: Fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing;
- has come in contact with anyone with a presumptive or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days.

Please reference the attached [Showing Health Disclosure Declaration](#) to be used to record the above declarations for each showing REALTOR® and each buyer client. The form should be on the MLS as an attachment to the listing and be completed in conjunction with the showing appointment request. Showing appointments should ONLY be confirmed once the signed form has been received by the Listing REALTOR®. These forms should be maintained by the Listing REALTOR® for all showings in the event of a requirement for contact-tracing purposes related to COVID-19. The criteria on the Showing Health Disclosure Declaration form is subject to change should the government and health authorities guidelines change. We will share an updated form with you if that happens.

- Help your clients understand the importance of following current direction from government and health authorities, the risks that come with attending in-person showings, and the [measures they MUST follow while viewing a home](#).
- Limit viewing to buyers (those who are/will be named on the offer):
 - Additional family members, friends or children MUST NOT be in attendance.
 - Meet your buyers at the property:
 - Practice [social distancing measures](#) when travelling to the showing by driving in separate vehicles.
- Do not share items such as phones, tablets or laptops.
- Request in advance of the showing that the seller open all interior doors (including closets) and leave all lights on, to eliminate the need to touch surfaces in the home:
 - Do not shut interior doors or turn off lights during or at the end of the showing.
- Request that all occupants of the home be absent during the showing (take a walk or drive for one half hour to avoid any physical contact with buyer or buyer's agent). If an occupant must be present, insist they practice [social distancing measures](#).
- Do not greet others with handshakes or other physical contact, and keep at least 2 metres apart at all times.
- Immediately prior to entering the home or touching the lockbox, follow hand sanitizing guidelines established by health officials:
 - Disinfect with an alcohol-based sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - Use sanitizing wipes to clean/disinfect the door handle and/or lockbox.
- Do not touch surfaces while walking through the home:
 - Have buyers place their hands in their pockets throughout the visit.
 - Use sanitizing wipes to disinfect a surface should you or the buyer inadvertently touch one.
- Under no circumstances should visitors use the washroom facilities while viewing the home.
- Ensure [social distancing measures](#) are rigorously maintained throughout the showing. If required, walk each buyer through the property one at a time.
- Request clients notify you if they become ill at any time after showing:
 - If a client becomes ill or is diagnosed with COVID-19, communicate this with the listing Realtor (who should then communicate with the seller).

- Keep a list of everyone that attended the property, including the date and time and their contact information. In the event of an infection, you may be asked to provide the information to local public health authorities so they may investigate further.

Sellers

- Help your clients understand the importance of following current direction from government and health authorities, the risks that come with allowing in-person showings, the measures they must take to prepare for the viewing of their home, and the [measures that visitors will take while viewing their home](#).
- Carefully review the Royal LePage COVID -19 [Seller Consent, Release and Indemnity Form](#) with your selling client(s) to ensure you are fulfilling your fiduciary duty, and secure their written direction (signed approval(s)) to proceed with showings.
- Double check with all parties immediately prior to any scheduled showing, that no one is experiencing new symptoms of illness of any kind.
- Use the attached Royal LePage [Showing Health Disclosure Declaration](#) to capture information confirming that **no one** attending the showing (Buyer REALTOR® or buying clients, or any occupant of the property):
 - has recently travelled anywhere outside of Canada or has been in contact with anyone who has travelled outside of Canada; or
 - has had any of the following symptoms in the last 14 days: Fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing; or
 - has knowingly come into contact with anyone experiencing the following symptoms in the last 14 days: Fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing;
 - has come in contact with anyone with a presumptive or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days.

This disclosure information MUST be captured for the buyer representative and each party participating in the showing. The form should be on the MLS as an attachment to the listing and be completed in conjunction with the showing appointment request. Showing appointments should ONLY be confirmed once the signed form has been received by the Listing REALTOR®. The criteria on the [Showing Health Disclosure Declaration](#) form is subject to change should the government and health authorities guidelines change. We will share an updated form with you if that happens.

- Restrict viewers to buyers who have an accepted conditional offer or an offer pending contingent on physical inspection **ONLY**.
 - Anyone other than the principals on the offer can view it virtually. There are **no exceptions**.
- Prior to a showing, have the seller or tenant open all interior doors (including closets) and leave all lights on, to minimize the need for viewers to touch surfaces in the home.
- Have all occupants of the home be absent during the showing (take a walk or drive for one half hour to avoid any physical contact with buyer or buyer's Realtor). If an occupant must be present, insist they practice [social distancing measures](#).
- Require that the seller or tenant disinfects all exterior door handles with an alcohol-based sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol prior to the showing.
- Require that the seller or tenant thoroughly clean and disinfect the lockbox, all door knobs, surfaces, light switches and counters with antibacterial/germ killing cleaners after the showing.
- Ensure you retain a fully completed [Showing Health Disclosure Declaration](#) for **EVERY** in-person showing of the property in the event of a requirement for contact-tracing purposes related to COVID-19.