



Home Owner News



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Sell Your Home Yourself: FSBO (For Sale By Owner)

FSBO (Fizzbo) Toolbox

Chapter 2: Common Sense Safety

By Bill Boeckelman

Everyone would probably agree that fastening your seat belt whenever you drive a car is a sensible safety precaution. This doesn't mean that you're **expecting** to be in an automobile accident. It's just a normal precaution for sensible people to take.

The same is true for the following recommendations. They're basic precautions for sensible people to take when selling their own homes. While some of the recommendations may seem a little inconvenient to implement, it's always better to be safe than sorry.

REMEMBER: It's your house ... you're in charge ... you make the rules ... don't be intimidated ... be sensible.

COMMON SENSE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

1. Show the house "by appointment only". Never allow a stranger who "drops by" to enter the house.
2. Never make an appointment with anyone to see your home unless they have given you their name, address and **home phone number** and you have called them back to verify the number. A tactful way to obtain this information is to say, "Let me check with my husband/wife for the best time and I'll call you back."

An *automated* way to obtain this information would be to have all calls directed to a phone number that is always answered by an answering machine. The message on the machine can indicate that you will return their call with information about "the house for sale", IF they leave their name, address and phone number.

Again, you want their **home phone number**. Do not schedule an appointment if you only have the buyer's cell or work number.

Double check the information in a phone directory.

3. While your home is on the market, you should have an unlisted phone number with "caller ID" service to use in your advertisements. If you don't have one, you should get one. The cost of installation is worth it.

The unlisted number prevents people from using reverse directories to obtain the address of your home from the newspaper ads and the "caller ID" enables you to capture the phone numbers of ALL callers.

4. Always ask how many people will be coming with the caller to see the house. Limit the number of people permitted to accompany the caller. Never allow a group of more than three people, including the caller. If, after visiting your home, a buyer seems

interested and would like to schedule another appointment, you can decide if it's OK to allow additional people to come with them on the **next visit** (i.e. their parents, or other relatives, etc.)

5. You don't have to grant every caller an appointment. Interview each caller until you are sure he or she is a real buyer. Don't give out your address until you are comfortable with the way the telephone conversation is going. If you have any doubts, **don't schedule the appointment.**

6. Never give a caller or visitor any information regarding your schedule. Don't indicate when you won't be home, when your spouse won't be home, when you pick up the children, when you work, when you'll be on vacation, etc.

7. Use the "buddy system". Always have someone else with you during scheduled appointments OR let a friend or neighbor know, in advance, the times for all scheduled appointments and have them call or check-in on you after each one. If you make an arrangement with a neighbor, an additional precaution might be to leave the shades and blinds open so they can see what's going on inside the house during the appointment.

8. Never allow a stranger into your house without first seeing valid identification. A photo driver's license would be the ID of choice. You can inform them during the pre-appointment telephone conversation that this is an expected requirement for seeing the house. Anyone who hesitates about presenting ID before entering your home, is not the type of person with whom you want to be dealing. An additional precaution would be to record the license plate number of the car they are driving.

9. Keep a log of **everyone who calls** about the house and **everyone who visits** the house. Record their name, address, phone numbers, the car they drive, the license plate number and any other notes about them that you feel are relevant.

10. Make sure that promotional materials (flyers, ads, etc.) for the home do not reveal "security related" information.

11. Conceal and secure all valuables including jewelry, silverware, collectibles and firearms.

12. Never let visitors wander around the home unattended. Make sure couples/groups stay together. Be alert if one member of the group seems to be attempting to divert your attention away from where the others are.

13. If you have an alarm system with a "panic button" (a "call police" button), carry it with you and be prepared to call for help if you sense a problem. If you don't have a panic button, it might be prudent to have a member of your family "on alert" near the front door or outside the house on the front lawn ready to go for help if the need arises.

14. If, at any time during the appointment, you feel uncomfortable with the way the visitors are behaving, politely conclude the showing appointment and ask them to leave.

