

Open House Tips

The idea of letting strangers into their home can be extremely intimidating for many sellers. Taking the necessary steps to secure a home during an open house will put your clients at ease and create a safe environment for potential buyers. Open houses are a great way to bring in more attention to your property. Not only do open houses help clients get a feel of the place, they also help them visualize living there. But among all the benefits is a very real challenge – safety. Check out this list of tips you should consider using as part of your open houses:

- ▽ **Safety in Numbers**: Bringing an associate or assistant or even a close friend or spouse is the easiest way to ensure your safety.
 - ⊗ Trust your instincts. If a guest is making you feel uncomfortable or you're being led into a situation you feel you can't control, get out. Whatever reasons you might have to stay they're not worth your life.
- ▽ **Preparation**: Prior to unlocking the door to begin the open house, plan an escape route, or two, in the event you need to make a quick exit. Open all the blinds and curtains, this brings in natural light, as well as let's you see who is approaching or walking by the property.
 - ⊗ If you suspect someone is casing the joint, stay until your seller(s) return or ask them to come home early.
 - ⊗ If the property is vacant, you can call the police non-emergency complaint line (403-343-5575) and explain your situation.
- ▽ **Tell One, Tell All**: Other than advertising your open house, it would be wise to remind a couple of close friends or associates that you are hosting an open house. Give them the date and duration of the open house. Send them a text or call when you're home safely, and if you don't text/call them they should contact you to check in.
 - ⊗ It is suggested to not hold an open house for longer than 2 hours.
 - ⊗ If you're alone and unsure of a guest at the open house, call a friend or associate and pretend like they're outside – speak loudly and say "Great, you're outside right now? Ok, ill see you soon".
 - ⊗ If you need to use discretion, some brokerages have a code for a dangerous situation, example, calling your broker: "I'm at the Jones' house and I need the RED file." In this instance, the 'RED file' signifies danger and that someone should send help immediately. If the danger wasn't an emergency, you could say 'YELLOW file' and maybe that is code for send someone to help but not the police. These are merely suggestions.
- ▽ **Make it Count**: A good way to track the amount of people who attend, and generate some leads, is to keep a sign in sheet at the front entry. Additionally, try to keep track of people by counting the number of people who enter and exit the property. If your number of people who entered doesn't match your number who exited, ensure you call someone and do a sweep of all the rooms, closets and the backyard with this person still on the phone with you.
- ▽ **Stowaway Valuables**: Ensure your seller(s) has locked away/hid all valuables in the house. It's also important for you to place any purse or valuables in your car trunk (or the oven 😊 just don't forget!). This eliminates any temptation.
 - ⊗ Keep your cellphone close but ensure you engage with buyers. If you don't need a laptop or iPad then don't bring it.
- ▽ **Head to Toe**: Dress professionally but wear appropriate footwear that allows you to move quickly.