



# REALTOR SAFETY

IT'S REALTOR SAFETY MONTH, BUT CLOSE  
CALLS AND HIGH-PROFILE NEWS PUT INDUSTRY  
PROS ON GUARD YEAR-ROUND

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An Inman Select Special Report

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### *KEY FINDINGS:*

- The industry is still recovering from the shock of Beverly Carter's kidnapping and murder.
- There is much work to be done on improving agent security, especially among female agents who often rely on family and friends for support outside the office.
- Vacant homes, open houses and internet leads allow for the most vulnerable circumstances in real estate.
- Those open to safety apps have a number of favorites, including Real Safe Agent, SafeTrek, bSafe, Life360, Homesnap safety timer, Glympse and Guardly.
- Nearly half of respondents would consider carrying a gun, but few who do have ever been forced to use one on the job.
- A big concern with carrying weapons is that in a situation gone wrong, they could be used against the agent.
- Agents on the whole feel well-supported by their brokerages on safety concerns, but brokers could improve by being more consistent.



# This month

two years ago, Arkansas Realtor Beverly Carter went missing after a home showing.

A jury's less than hour-long deliberation in January 2016 served her murderer justice, but leaves the real estate industry unsettled nonetheless.

That the events of this tragic tale came out crystal clear during trial — how she was targeted for being a “rich broker” — makes them unbearably poignant.

Her case, and others like it that sit cold, certainly give Realtors, the majority of whom are female, pause for concern.

It could be any day. A male client has been down in the basement for just a little too long for comfort. Your potential buyer wants to meet right away at a vacant home, but darkness is falling.

It's probably nothing, you tell yourself, but all it takes is one risk. One person with bad intentions to take advantage of a vulnerable position.

September is Realtor Safety Month, and hopefully every agent and broker is taking the opportunity to review personal and office safety procedures for out in the field.

As many anecdotes in our *Inman Special Report on Agent Safety* this month show, agents will often find themselves in a dangerous situation because they haven't thought a few steps ahead.

A new Texas agent in the survey describes a common situation: “I have shown a home to complete strangers, two men in a not-so-safe neighborhood. I realized at that moment how vulnerable I was and didn't take any safety measures.”

If you have a bad feeling about someone, listen to your instincts and call in support. It's all about what you do next.

Sheer life experience can help with those gut feelings.

“I can get a bad feeling about a situation and decide quickly if I need an exit strategy,” said an experienced female broker in Portland, Oregon. “I was a bartender for 20 years, so I am seasoned in reading people and situations. I have had cold leads call me where I refused to pick them up because they

wouldn't do a first meeting in a public place. I have not regretted any choices as of yet.”

Being alert to danger, no matter how benign the situation appears, is a good start.

“I had a listing appointment at a vacant home with a male seller. I just didn't get a good vibe,” said a Minnesota team leader. “I had 911 pre-dialed on my phone in one coat pocket and pepper spray in the other.”

## Lessons learned from Beverly Carter's murder

The industry is still recovering from the shock of Carter's kidnapping and murder. Her name comes up many times in this survey.

“It's a dangerous profession — we do put ourselves at risk,” said an experienced female broker.

An experienced Tennessee agent said: “Ever since the Little Rock, Arkansas, agent was murdered, it's really hit home with me. It was close to where my family lives. She did not do anything I had not done lots of times. I am really aware now.”

Of course, Carter is not the only agent to be murdered on the job. A number of other fatalities and close calls are mentioned in this month's Special Report from all over the country.

Safety in numbers is a recommendation that comes through time and time again in this research, but it is not always possible. And the best systems can let you down if you find yourself overpowered.

As one newly trained Minnesota agent explained: “Saying that two of us should do open houses is great in theory but not very practical in reality.

“Saying we can call and say (the code word), ‘red folder’ is good but not when no one is in office on a Sunday when we are holding our open house. I just don't feel secure.”

While a number of respondents called for industry-wide mandatory safety rules, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) said earlier this month that this approach was not the answer.

“The prevailing sentiment has always been that every community is different — from rural to urban areas — so enforcing a ‘one-size-fits-all’ national

program may not be the most effective strategy for keeping our members safe.”

Instead, NAR’s safety program acts as a clearinghouse of tools and resources for members and associations to use, it said.

“We consistently roll out new information, tips, resources, videos and best practices so that that each agent, firm or association can adopt a strategy that makes the most sense for them.”

In its 2016 Member Safety Report, NAR found that in terms of proactive procedures, the typical NAR member meets 50 percent of unknown prospective buyers and sellers in a real estate office or a neutral location before first viewing a home.

And many brokerages have set up their own systems, drawing from recommendations like this in NAR’s safety program. They might also pair agents in open houses and have agreed emergency codes ready for when a situation goes sour.

There are still, however, a number of brokerages that are just paying lip service to their safety procedures once a year and leaving it to their agents to use common sense.

For some women who responded to our research, this isn’t good enough. One agent changed firms because she was not happy with this laissez-faire attitude.

Some female agents are taking matters into their own hands rather than waiting for the male managers in the office to do something.

“I feel like they care, but taking the time to come up with and implement strategies has come from within the ranks of other female agents, not from the male leadership,” said a female Utah agent.

More men need to take it seriously, said a new agent on a team in Texas who doesn’t feel supported by her brokerage in this area.

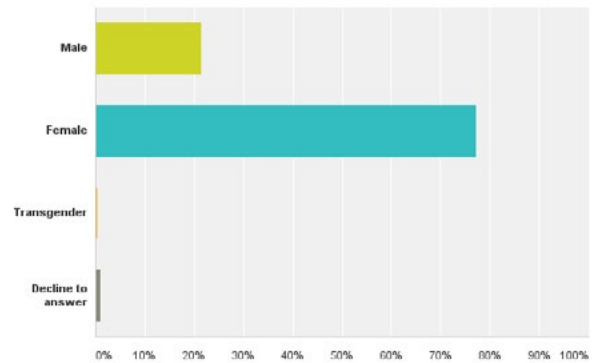
“I would like to have more men think that it is an issue. Men don’t really feel scared much. Women do — a lot.”

Meanwhile, a number of women said they are relying heavily on their husbands or family to back them up, especially at open houses, and asking

others to track their mobile phones as they go on appointments.

Q6 Please identify your gender.

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



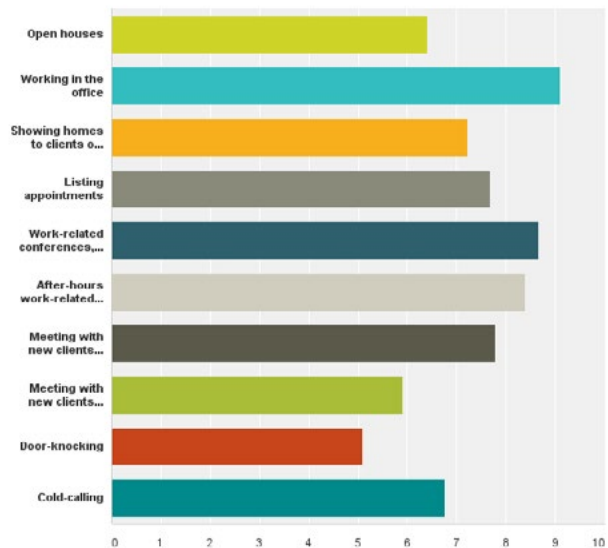
### Survey findings

Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents to our survey this month were women — nearly 80 percent.

The unsafe situations these agents found themselves in most were door knocking, meeting with new clients who were internet leads, open houses and cold calling.

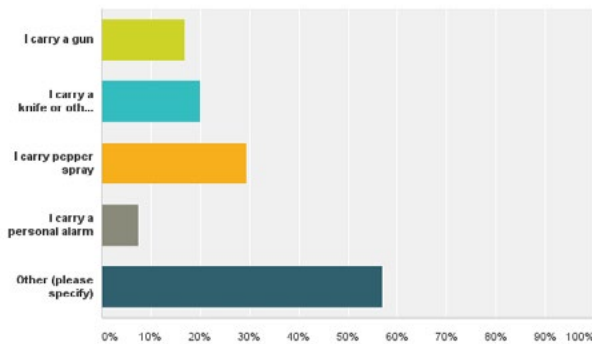
Q7 On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “I never feel completely safe working in real estate,” and 10 being “I always feel completely safe working in real estate,” please rate how you feel about your overall safety during work hours.

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



**Q12 Do you carry any safety tools or devices with you when you are working in real estate? (Check all that apply).**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

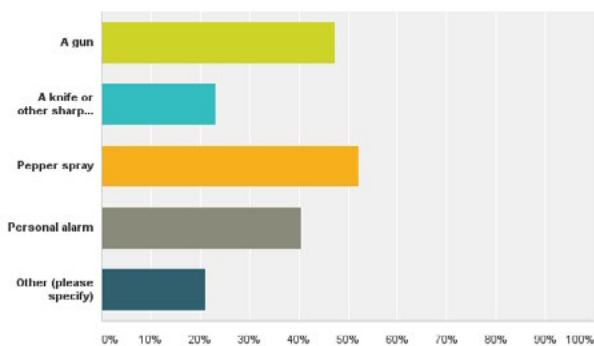


The tools they were using to protect themselves were pepper spray (29.41 percent), a knife or other sharp weapon (20.07 percent), while 16.96 percent carried a gun or preferred a personal alarm (7.61 percent).

Nearly half (47.4 percent) said they would consider carrying a gun, 52.25 percent would consider carrying pepper spray, 40.48 percent a personal alarm and 23.18 percent would think about carrying a knife.

**Q13 Would you consider carrying ... (Check all that apply)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



Tasers or stun guns were also mentioned as possible tools.

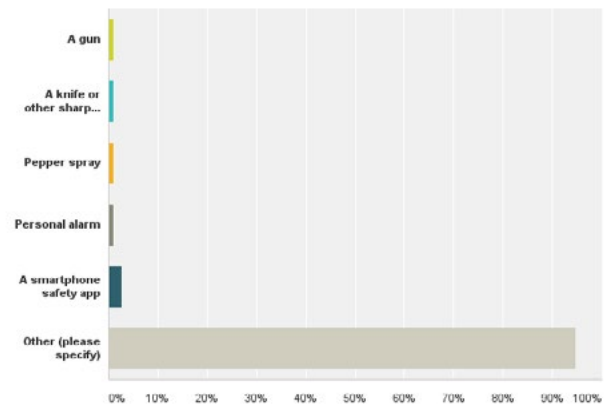
A new Texan agent, who is still getting used to evaluating situations that might be a threat, said: "I carry my taser that looks like a phone just in case I need to defend myself."

A small percentage said they have had to actually use their weapon of choice, while many respondents mention having close calls.

Few who carry a gun said they had been forced to use it, and the same goes for a knife or sharp weapon, pepper spray or personal alarm (all 1.04 percent). Only a handful of agents had ever needed to deploy a smartphone safety app as well (2.77 percent).

**Q15 While working, have you ever had to use or deploy ... (Check all that apply)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



Respondents also recommended wasp spray, self-defense training and big flashlights for protection.

One North Carolina broker had found something that was working well for her: "We use bracelets connected to our cell phones that will make an emergency call if a button is pressed on the bracelet. It looks like jewelry."

An Austin, Texas, agent with years of experience who uses a stun gun added: "I also have a pendant that is an alarm. If pressed, that alerts my husband and business partner with my exact GPS location, and they actually can hear what is happening as well. It is a program called Cuff that works with my pendant alarm."

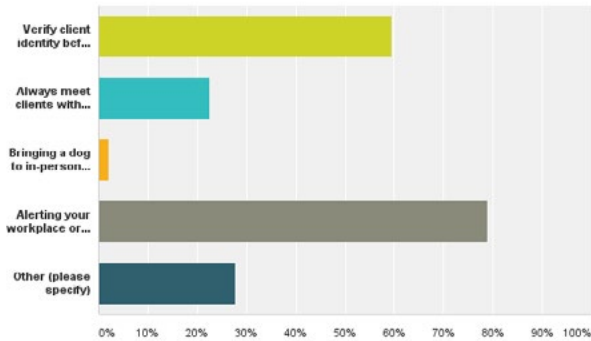
What you don't want is for your weapon of choice to be turned on you, respondents stressed.

"Sometimes I have a horn," said an experienced New York agent. "If I am carrying something else, I feel as a woman it could work against me."

A veteran broker from Kentucky pointed out practically: "Female agents cannot even find a ringing phone in their bag. How the hell will they ever find a gun, get the safety off and fire it? They are clueless about the surprise and force of an attack."

**Q16 What other measures do you take to stay safe during working hours? (Check all that apply)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



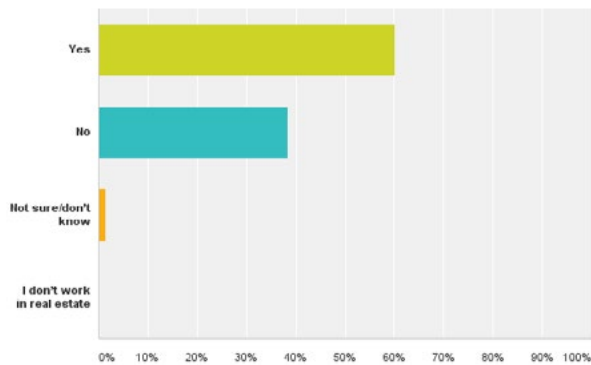
Broker and trainer Lee Davenport has some good advice for the novice gun carrier.

“I carry a gun if I show property, but I was always taught by my dad and law enforcement officers: If you show it, you have to use it, otherwise they will take it from you.

“A lot of times men can overpower women, so if you are not prepared to use it, don’t show it.”

**Q17 Have you ever taken a class or training geared toward self-defense?**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



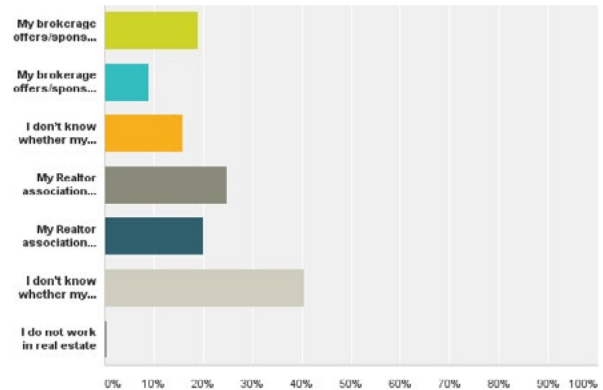
One respondent argued that the phone would be the first thing someone took off you in an attack, so the efficacy of apps can be limited.

Other measures agents are taking to stay safe include alerting their workplace or loved ones of where they are and when they expect to return, (78.89 percent), taking the time to verify a client’s identity before setting up in-person meetings (59.52 percent) and always meeting clients with a partner or friend in tow (22.49 percent).

The majority of respondents (60.21 percent) have taken self-defense lessons or training.

**Q18 Do any of the following organizations or entities offer or sponsor safety training for real estate agents? If so, have you taken the offered training? Please check all that apply.**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



Added one seasoned agent: “Sneakers are my best friend, aside from the pepper spray.”

In a number of cases, respondents were vague about the safety training available to them.

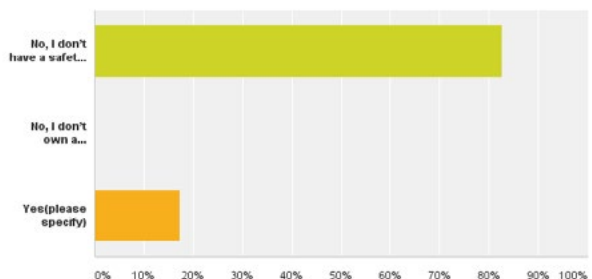
More than 40 percent did not know whether their Realtor association offered safety training while 15 percent didn’t know whether their brokerage offered safety training.

**Safety apps still underused**

Horrible events such as the Beverly Carter murder have led to the creation of more safety apps for agents. Many can be used for a variety of occasions, not just real estate.

**Q14 Do you have a safety app installed on your smartphone?**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



NAR's safety report found that 42 percent of members surveyed use a smartphone safety app, but in our research, more than 80 percent did not have a safety app. In fact a number of respondents didn't know safety apps existed.

Davenport, who does training for Re/Max, Keller Williams and Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate, among others, finds it hard to understand why such a low percentage of agents are using safety apps.

"It's not top-of-mind," she said. "With all the things an agent manages as they multi-task, unfortunately safety is not sexy, so people are not using apps."

They want apps that help them grow their business, she said.

The Atlanta Realtors Association is running free self-defense classes. "I will be curious if they are as well-attended as our classes on marketing," she said.

Davenport has used a number of safety apps and particularly likes bSafe, which can be programmed to time a fake call.

In addition to finding this useful when she's out with a new client, it also comes in handy on a date, so she promotes the variety of possibilities to others.

In our survey, those open to safety apps named a number of favorites, including Real Safe Agent, SafeTrek, bSafe, Life360, Homesnap safety timer, Glympse, Guardly, Samsung Galaxy Note 4 security/emergency call and Alert 911.

"I use TrackIt, which I carry in my pocket. I feel my phone is the first thing a perpetrator would take from me," said an experienced Missouri agent.

## **Real people, real stories, real threats**

One thing is clear in this research: Carter's fatal experience should not be seen as a one-off. A number of agents in the survey have had close calls or felt threatened.

As one female Wisconsin agent said bluntly: "As a woman, in an empty house full of beds with a stranger? Do I need to draw you a picture?"

"Vegas is still the 'Wild West,'" added one experienced female broker from Nevada. "There's at least one person a day in our town who is killed. I am

trained to carry to protect myself and my customers if need be. Our workplace has changed over the years — we're being targeted by thugs or people who want a free tour. I try to use more caution and stay alert while out of the office."

One established Des Moines agent has her reasons for being overly cautious and refraining from open houses.

"On a bright sunny Friday afternoon five years ago in April 2011, a young colleague of mine was murdered at an open house. We both represented the same new construction company. I do not do open houses. Safety is everything."

With 80 percent of her business coming from referrals, this agent has new clients complete a "prospect identification form" in dotloop prior to meeting in person.

"This can be personalized and downloaded from NAR," she explained. "Prior to my meeting with prospective new buyer clients, I always have them obtain verified pre-approval with a lender. Then we have a CITO (come into the office) meeting to determine if we want to work together. With prospective new seller clients, I have them send me a copy of their most recent mortgage statement."

She has recently adopted a new seller policy of CITO as well, prior to touring a property.

Predators are everywhere, it seems. A Portland, Oregon broker added: "Female Realtors in my market area have been victims of predatory-type behaviors. One local property manager was murdered while showing an apartment."

To a rookie New York state agent just starting out, safety is a huge concern.

"If I'm meeting a male client by myself in the field, I'm very aware of keeping him in my line of vision at all times and make sure that he walks in front of me, especially inside vacant homes. I also let my husband know ahead of time the names and numbers of new clients that I'm meeting, as well as the locations where I'll be taking or meeting clients."

While more comments were expressed about people pretending to be buyers, one experienced,



successful agent from South Carolina sees more risk on the listing side.

“I actually had three close calls while listing property and selling on-site,” she said. “I think we are bigger targets in a listing setting. I meet buyers at the office before putting them in my car. When it comes to going on a listing appointment or showing your own listing, it’s more difficult to take precautions.”

## **Internet leads can expose agents to new dangers**

This research shows there is much work to be done on improving security, especially among female agents who often rely on family and friends to support them if they don’t find it in the office.

Leads from outside an agent’s sphere of influence, from cold calls or the internet, were a concern and an area where agents would like to see more support from their brokers.

“The company generating the leads should ensure they check lead credentials before they disburse the leads to the agent,” said an experienced Las Vegas agent.

These valued leads can come with some real consequences. “I have been targeted by internet leads with bad intentions on multiple occasions,” added a veteran Washington broker on a team.

One rookie North Carolina agent has her reservations about the leads she gets from Facebook. “Meeting leads from Facebook is scary,” she said. “You ‘know’ them but...”

Real estate professionals are simply taking more risks than other occupations, said a Colorado broker: “If I don’t personally know or have a personal referral for the person I am meeting, I never fully trust that they are a legitimate lead. CPAs don’t go into empty houses to do their client’s taxes. Realtors are obviously at a much higher risk of being targeted by someone with bad intentions.”

Be firm on meeting unknown internet clients at the office, warned a new Washington agent.

“I have had a couple of internet leads that raised my hackles. Our office policy is to meet new clients at the office. While engaging with these leads, I stressed

that we needed to meet at the office and they both canceled the night before.”

Meanwhile, in this time of social media marketing, some are taking a step back.

According to a rookie agent: “Awareness and vetting strangers through lender pre-qualification helps me feel safer, but not 100-percent safe all the time. My latest business cards do not have my picture on them.”

Added a woman agent in Chicago: “I do think about the amount of people who can access my personal number and name with my photo on the internet at any time.”

## **Reckoning with vacant homes**

Vacant homes are flagged in our research as more rife with danger than occupied properties. Carter was showing a vacant, remote home when she was attacked.

One New York broker who deals with abandoned homes and new construction said the real estate office constantly talked about safety and checking for squatters.

The feeling from our respondents was that vacant homes are ideal places to commit a crime.

“Too many Realtors have been attacked,” said a veteran Illinois broker. “One in the neighboring community of Decatur, Illinois, was murdered a few years ago when she went to show a vacant house, and it has never been solved.”

This experience of a female agent in Texas sums up vacant homes’ inherent danger.

“I was showing a vacant home in an upscale, gated community to a client and there was a man hiding in the attic,” she said. “We were touring the main level of the home and I noticed that a back door going out to the pool was unlocked but didn’t think too much about it.

“Obviously, this should have been my first alert. We continued upstairs when we walked into one of the bedrooms with a private bath. I noticed a towel on the floor (odd for a vacant home) just as my client opened a door that appeared to be a closet, but it was a door into the attic.

“I peered in over her shoulder and saw a man trying to hide against a wall. My client didn’t see him and I pretended not to see the guy. I quickly closed the door and said ‘nothing exciting, it’s just the attic’ and pointed to the stairs, motioning for my client to leave immediately.

“I closed every door between us and we went straight out the front door and called the police. Luckily, nothing happened to either me or my client. He was there for a ‘secret hookup’ and didn’t have any ill intentions, but it could’ve been a very bad situation.”

Another broker in Washington has been in two vacant property situations, both internet leads: “Someone posing as a buyer contacted me to show vacant homes in secluded areas by myself. I learned that he was a felon who had been doing this throughout our area.

“Thankfully I found out before I met him in person. Another time I showed vacant properties to buyers who turned out to be prolific scam artists. These situations were big wake up calls.”

Another buyer requesting only vacant homes rang alarm bells for one female agent in Atlanta.

“I spoke with a potential buyer on the phone who wanted to see homes, and he kept asking if the property was vacant. Then when I asked for him to spell his last name it was ‘Slaughter.’ All the hair on my arms stood up. I ended the call and never phoned him back.”

One experienced Vermont agent was greeted at a vacant home tour by a new client who immediately told her he didn’t like Realtors.

“I carry pepper spray and never let him get behind me nor did I go in the basement. In the end, he was fine,” she said, but she wasn’t taking any chances.

An odd phone call from a buyer who only wanted to see vacant homes also raised a flag with one experienced Chicago agent.

“The client seemed odd over the phone and in person,” she said. “He requested to only see vacant homes. When I brought my husband along, he sat in the car while I showed the properties.

“The client had a shocked look on his face when he saw my husband and thereafter rushed through the properties.”

### **Open houses: an open door for trouble?**

In the experience of some survey respondents, open houses are another opportunity for stalkers or predators.

One Austin, Texas, agent recalled: “During an open house when four men came into the home when I was first starting out, I felt like I had been cornered.

“I immediately left out the back door to show them the yard and made sure from that point on they were always in front of me, not behind me.

“My husband was a police officer for 10 years and it has been drilled into me about making sure I have an exit.”

This Madison, Wisconsin, agent has her suspicions about a regular open house attendee in her market.

“There is a guy I call ‘the creeper’ who comes to open houses, stands silently in the driveway, then comes in the house and stands silently in the front room, sometimes looks out the window, sometimes looks at maybe one more room in the house, then announces: ‘I have already seen this one,’ and walks out.

“I have to assume I am not his type.”

A situation can be so much more threatening if you are by yourself.

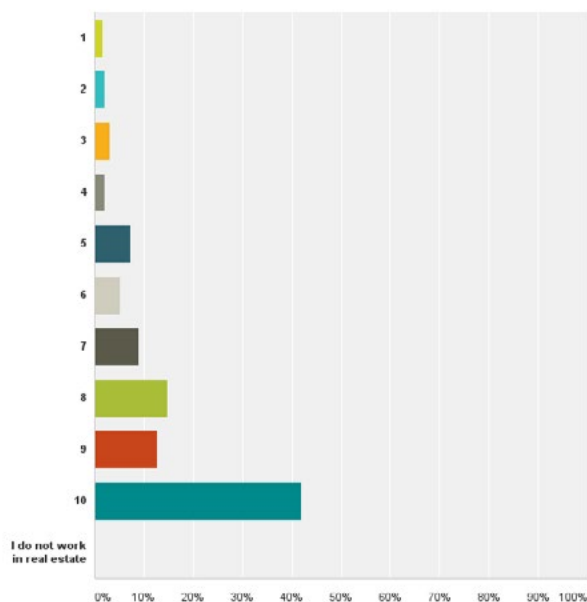
A relatively new Colorado agent remembers: “I was setting up my open house signs and didn’t see this car following me the whole way up the mountain as I was doing it. I got out of my car at the house and he pulled up and said: ‘I have been following you so that I can see this home.’ I said, ‘Sure.’

“I went to knock on the door and luckily the homeowners were there but getting ready to leave. The man all of a sudden didn’t want to see the house anymore and quickly got in his car and drove off.

“Then it clicked in my brain that I was by myself in this big house back in the mountains. I got one of my lenders to come meet with me for the rest of the open house.”

**Q9** On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “my brokerage is not at all concerned about my safety” and 10 being “my brokerage is very concerned about my safety,” please rank how you feel about how your brokerage manages safety issues.

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



As a number of couples do, this Minneapolis agent and her husband have a system that has come in handy:

“During an open house, a gentleman would appear when no one was in the house and disappear as soon as someone came in the door.

“I called my husband with our ‘code’ of: ‘I’m in the perfect house for you and doing an open from 1 ’til 3. You should run by and see if it is a fit for you.’

“My husband showed up in about nine minutes and I greeted him with, ‘Hi honey, what are you doing here?’ He said he was in the neighborhood and wanted to see the house. The strange man left and didn’t return.”

### What brokerages are doing to help

Agents in the survey felt, on the whole, well-supported by their brokerages on safety concerns.

More than 40 percent (41.87 percent) felt very strongly (giving a 10 out of 10 ranking) that their brokerages were concerned about their agents’ safety, and more than three-quarters (77.83 percent)

felt their brokerages were concerned (with a ranking of 7 out of 10 or above).

Respondents felt, however, that brokerages were more vigilant when an incident had recently happened in their market and it was top-of-mind. Otherwise, they’re apt to mention the issue spasmodically.

One experienced female agent in Florida said that brokerages should give more consistent attention to the problem.

“Brokers need to focus on providing safety training on a regular basis, not only after a story about a Realtor has hit the news.”

“I think more direct training could be required, not just offered,” added one respondent.

Others felt their office should have better systems in place to log agents’ appointments and to have a code if a situation arose.

“Realtors are the No. 1 asset of a company. Their safety is of utmost importance,” said one Illinois broker. “Knowing what to watch for, knowing what to do, can make the difference in who you are and where you are tomorrow.”

One experienced Kentucky broker liked the way their brokerage is using social media to signal a problem: “At my company, we use a Facebook closed page to report unusual phone calls and emails.”

Pressuring agents to follow every lead as soon as possible can expose them to danger, respondents noted.

“The prescience has kind of been set,” said one New Mexico agent and career development director. “Lead calls, agent runs. Not sure how to change that unless change happens in the masses.”

Some respondents felt it was the agent’s individual responsibility to take care of his or her own personal safety, and that brokerages could only do so much.

“We have a strict policy to meet buyers at the office or a public place before working with them,” an experienced female agent from North Carolina said. “We could have a stronger check in policy for listings, but agents are rogue.”

Lax safety precautions in a brokerage can affect agent retention, it seems. One Texan agent who

changed brokers because she didn't think safety procedures were a priority at her firm said: "I did not like meeting with unknown buyers from phone duty calls.

"There was little to no opportunity to get to know them first, unlike internet leads where I typically have a conversation first with a lender about pre-qualification. I changed brokers, and this is no longer an issue."

The laidback approach by this agent's brokerage in Arizona may result in it losing her if management is not careful.

"There are some safety procedures in place, but they are rarely talked about," she said. "I asked if our office would host a self-defense workshop, and I was turned down."

Some brokerages have set policies so that agents are never in a situation alone.

"We have mandatory safety training and personal protection training," said one successful broker based in Texas. "Our broker or a member of the management team knows what appointments we have, and we don't go to appointments alone — ever."

Just talking about it does not protect anyone, added respondents.

"Of course, I love my brokerage, and I believe they are concerned about my safety. However, I wish they would offer a safety class or safety tips every now and again, or even [have] a safety plan in place," said a new agent in California.

"Sometimes, it's a bit too much like lip service," said a Texan agent. "There are protocols in place, but I feel it could be emphasized more as well as incorporated every day."

Another cause for concern is that attitudes toward protection, such as guns, can vary between brokerages and agents themselves.

"My manager is concerned about safety," said an established Pennsylvanian agent, who has been in three unsafe situations and is making her own rules. "However the company is more concerned about the brand. They have told us that even if you are licensed to carry, no firearms are permitted in any home listed by them or any prospective client.

"I therefore will carry a concealed weapon. I love my work, but I also value my life more than the brand."

One new Florida agent has found on-site training conducted by the broker to be extremely valuable:

"Our broker reviews safety practices frequently and always with new agents. We have field trips to demonstrate how to be safe in scoping out the client, opening and showing homes."

Make your brokerage's safety systems known to clients, especially those who give you a bad feeling, advised an experienced North Carolina agent:

"I was out with two guys and felt vibes. One of them even made a comment about me going out alone with two men. I told them that I wasn't worried because I had met them at the office and people had seen them and I had left their names, phone number and the properties I was showing with my husband. Nothing happened."

Teams or a buddy system can help make you safer, said a number of respondents.

"Our team does everything in pairs," said an agent in Florida. "That gives me a higher comfort. Also we have a team calendar, which details where we are, who we are meeting and their phone number."

## **Safety suggestions for agents and brokerages**

A number of suggestions were offered on how the industry could improve agent safety.

Make it company policy to meet in the office before showings and to show a driver's license at open houses.

"If everyone did it, consumers wouldn't think it was odd," said one Los Angeles agent.

Discourage "dressing to impress and tempt," said a veteran Illinois broker, adding something that undercuts everything that is advised on social media:

"Discourage personal promotion. Sometimes it only takes a photo to catch the attention of someone you would rather not."

A new LA agent gave her wishlist: "It would be wonderful if there was a safety plan in place, for instance, if you have to go show vacant property,

and no one is able to go with you, to have a list of volunteers who would be willing to accompany you.”

An experienced Maryland agent added: “Have an app or program everyone uses and managers can check to make sure everyone is safe.”

In an ideal world, said a Texas agent, “if there was an industry-wide standard of scanning driver’s licenses to pull up critical details about criminal history, that would be a huge start.”

One Colorado broker added: “Find a better way to be able to screen potential clients — some sort of database to scan whether or not they have a criminal history or active warrants or sexual offender records.

“These can currently be accessed, but a database to tie everything together, a one-stop-shop screening tool would be better.”

“Set up a system that makes the perp not feel so anonymous and in control,” said one respondent. “Could a system be created that linked to electronic lockboxes that would trigger a camera and microphone direct to monitoring system that agents could pay for?”

## **Spread the word in your market about known predators**

Communication is crucial when it comes to agent safety.

One experienced agent from Texas, who was phone stalked in 1990, expressed the wish that her brokerage keep her on high alert and informed when something is happening in the area.

Spread the word, said a new Illinois agent: “I think it is important for anyone in the industry who does not feel safe for any reason to report it so that everyone, whether it be in the office or city wide association,

can be watching out for this and note if it becomes a pattern with others.

“Keeping a threat to yourself only makes it more difficult to help that person out, should they be in real danger.”

## **Sights on safety past September**

A male Alabama broker who teaches safety to agents in his office and association sums up the approach too many in real estate have toward safety at the moment: “We as an industry focus on agent safety one month a year, usually for one class on one day. Agent safety should be expressed to our industry weekly and monthly.

“Too often, when associations do safety seminars, they bring in people who have no idea what this profession does, and their primary goal is to sell a product.”

He added: “Every agent has to understand that their life is more valuable than a closing check and for 11 months out of the year we forget that fact. Agents have to understand that if you have to pull a gun or deploy pepper spray, you’ve already lost.

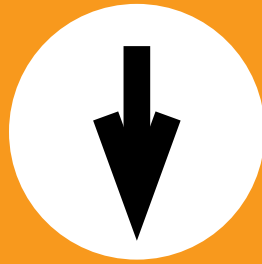
“Agent safety is an attitude or a mindset — it must be proactive, not reactive.”

And an experienced women agent from Massachusetts gets the last word. Don’t chase every deal if it’s putting you at risk.

“Stop telling the world ‘my life is real estate,’” she said. “We are mothers, fathers, husbands and wives. We have lives beyond real estate.

“People think we’re all rich and entitled or after the almighty dollar so we’re easy prey. We work very hard, but I don’t jump like I did when I was first in the business, to get that elusive would-be buyer.”

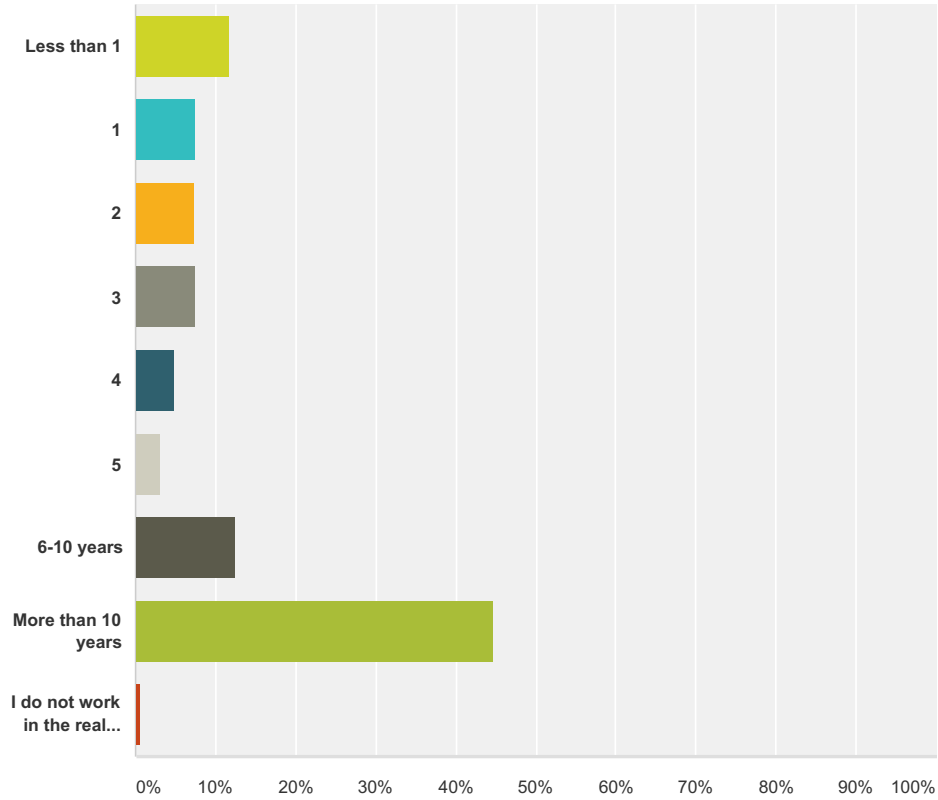
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# Real estate agent safety survey

## Q1 How many years have you worked in real estate?

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

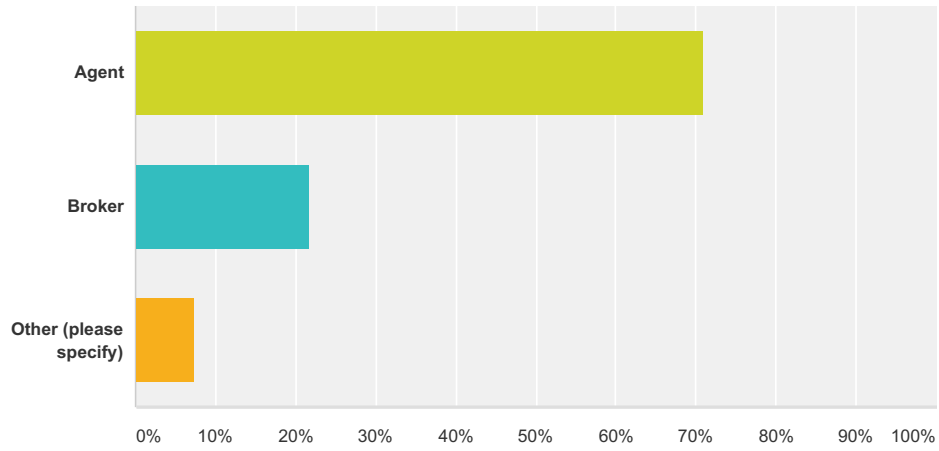


Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 1	11.76% 34
1	7.61% 22
2	7.27% 21
3	7.61% 22
4	4.84% 14
5	3.11% 9
6-10 years	12.46% 36
More than 10 years	44.64% 129
I do not work in the real estate industry	0.69% 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>

# Real estate agent safety survey

## Q2 What is your job title?

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



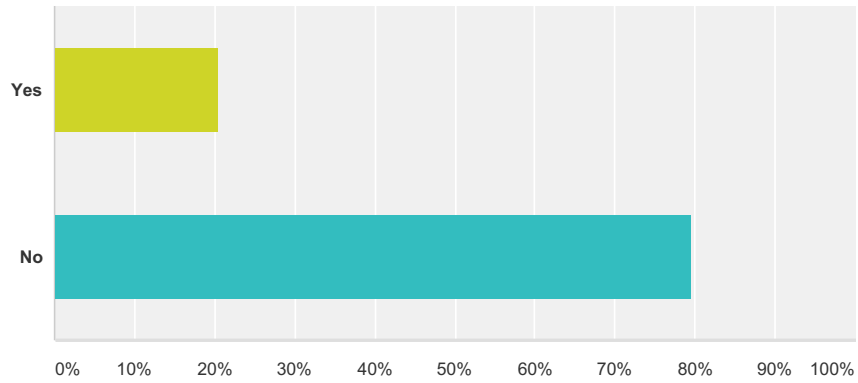
Answer Choices	Responses
Agent	70.93% 205
Broker	21.80% 63
Other (please specify)	7.27% 21
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>



# Real estate agent safety survey

## Q3 Are you on a team?

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

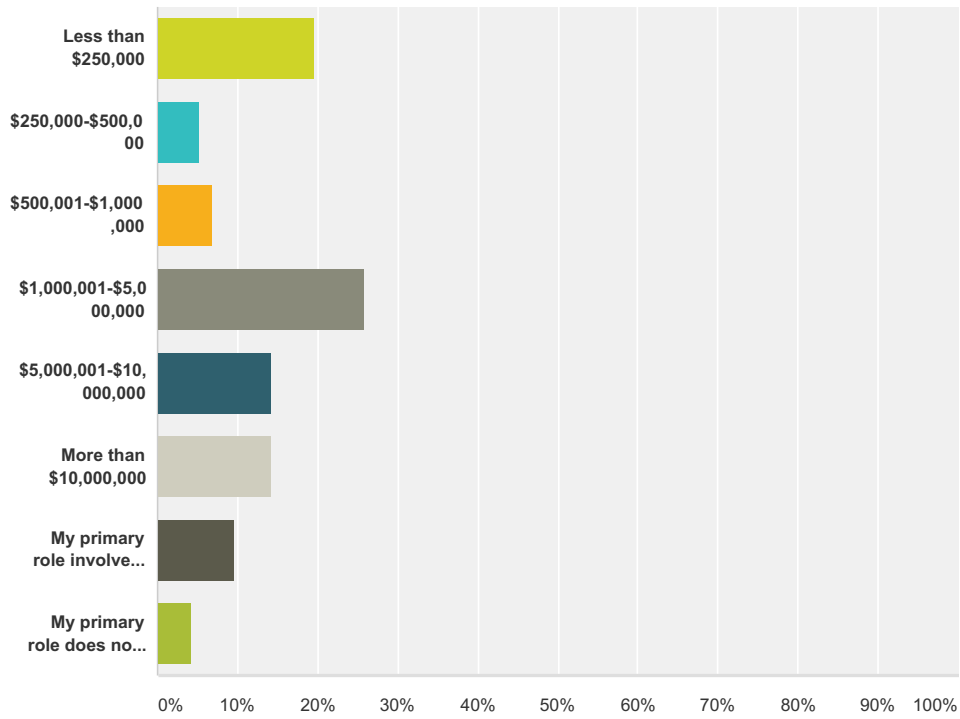


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	20.42%	59
No	79.58%	230
<b>Total</b>		<b>289</b>

## Real estate agent safety survey

### Q4 If your primary role is to sell real estate, what was your/your team's overall production in 2015?

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Less than \$250,000	19.72% 57
\$250,000-\$500,000	5.19% 15
\$500,001-\$1,000,000	6.92% 20
\$1,000,001-\$5,000,000	25.95% 75
\$5,000,001-\$10,000,000	14.19% 41
More than \$10,000,000	14.19% 41
My primary role involves real estate sales, but I was not selling actively in 2015	9.69% 28
My primary role does not involve real estate sales	4.15% 12
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>

Real estate agent safety survey

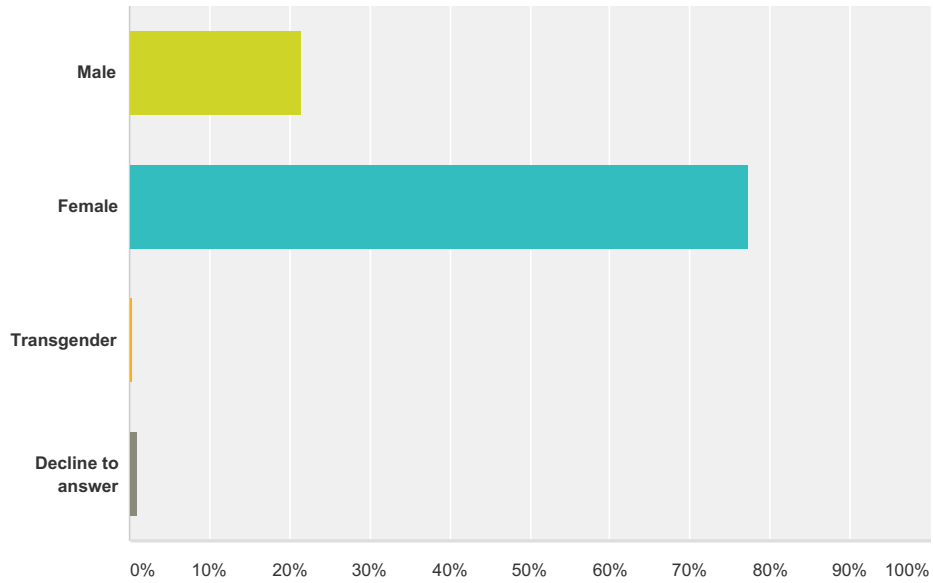
**Q5 What's your real estate market? (City and state) (Open-ended)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

# Real estate agent safety survey

## Q6 Please identify your gender.

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

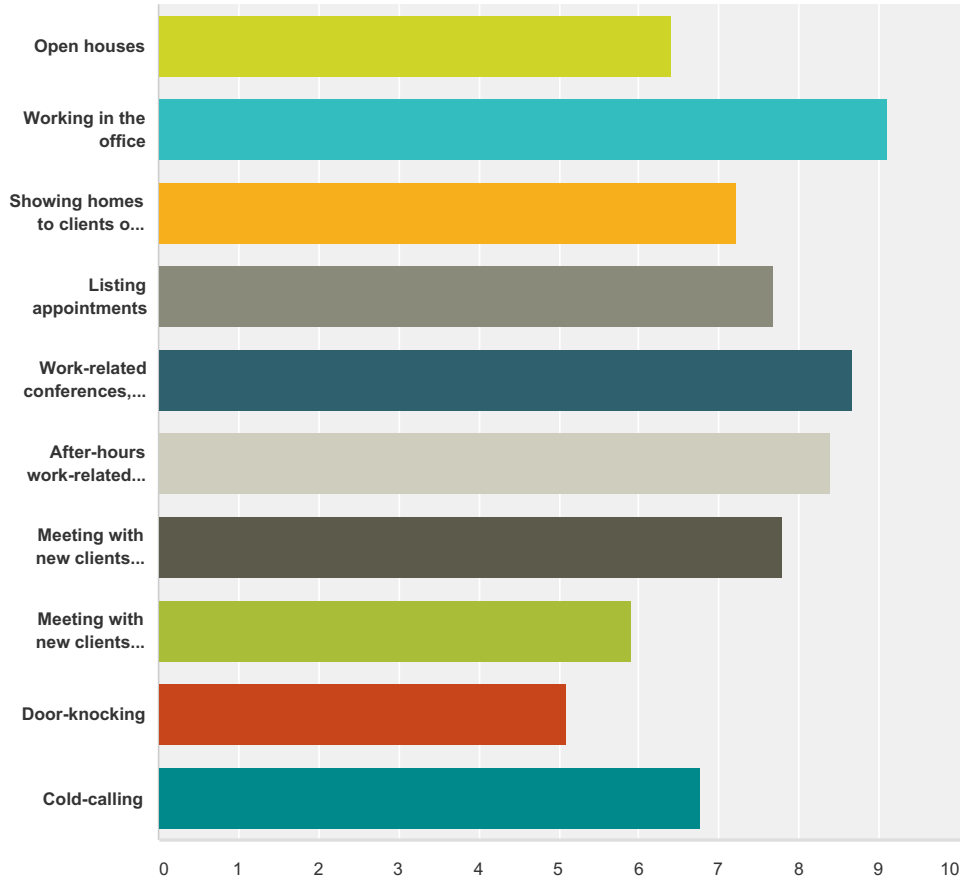


Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	21.45%	62
Female	77.16%	223
Transgender	0.35%	1
Decline to answer	1.04%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>289</b>

## Real estate agent safety survey

**Q7 On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “I never feel completely safe working in real estate,” and 10 being “I always feel completely safe working in real estate,” please rate how you feel about your overall safety during work hours.**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A I do not work in real estate	N/A I work in real estate but do not partake in this event/activity.	Total	Weighted Average
Open houses	4.84% 14	5.54% 16	3.11% 9	6.23% 18	11.42% 33	8.65% 25	13.49% 39	17.30% 50	13.84% 40	6.92% 20	0.00% 0	8.65% 25	289	6.41
Working in the office	1.05% 3	0.35% 1	0.70% 2	1.05% 3	1.39% 4	1.05% 3	2.79% 8	8.71% 25	24.04% 69	55.75% 160	0.35% 1	2.79% 8	287	9.10
Showing homes to clients or potential clients	3.13% 9	1.39% 4	2.08% 6	4.86% 14	9.72% 28	5.56% 16	17.01% 49	22.92% 66	18.06% 52	12.85% 37	0.35% 1	2.08% 6	288	7.22
Listing appointments	0.70% 2	1.39% 4	1.74% 5	4.53% 13	7.67% 22	4.88% 14	12.89% 37	21.60% 62	19.51% 56	19.86% 57	0.35% 1	4.88% 14	287	7.69

## Real estate agent safety survey

Work-related conferences, educational events or seminars	<b>0.69%</b> 2	<b>0.00%</b> 0	<b>0.69%</b> 2	<b>0.69%</b> 2	<b>0.69%</b> 2	<b>2.43%</b> 7	<b>2.78%</b> 8	<b>7.99%</b> 23	<b>19.10%</b> 55	<b>56.94%</b> 164	<b>5.90%</b> 17	<b>2.08%</b> 6	288	8.66
After-hours work-related parties	<b>0.35%</b> 1	<b>0.69%</b> 2	<b>1.04%</b> 3	<b>1.04%</b> 3	<b>2.42%</b> 7	<b>3.46%</b> 10	<b>4.50%</b> 13	<b>13.49%</b> 39	<b>18.69%</b> 54	<b>40.83%</b> 118	<b>3.81%</b> 11	<b>9.69%</b> 28	289	8.39
Meeting with new clients (referrals)	<b>1.73%</b> 5	<b>1.04%</b> 3	<b>2.77%</b> 8	<b>2.77%</b> 8	<b>6.23%</b> 18	<b>4.50%</b> 13	<b>9.00%</b> 26	<b>16.96%</b> 49	<b>25.95%</b> 75	<b>24.91%</b> 72	<b>2.08%</b> 6	<b>2.08%</b> 6	289	7.79
Meeting with new clients (internet leads)	<b>5.90%</b> 17	<b>6.60%</b> 19	<b>7.64%</b> 22	<b>9.72%</b> 28	<b>10.42%</b> 30	<b>7.99%</b> 23	<b>14.58%</b> 42	<b>13.89%</b> 40	<b>11.11%</b> 32	<b>5.90%</b> 17	<b>0.00%</b> 0	<b>6.25%</b> 18	288	5.90
Door-knocking	<b>8.71%</b> 25	<b>5.57%</b> 16	<b>4.88%</b> 14	<b>6.62%</b> 19	<b>4.88%</b> 14	<b>5.57%</b> 16	<b>8.71%</b> 25	<b>5.57%</b> 16	<b>4.88%</b> 14	<b>3.83%</b> 11	<b>1.05%</b> 3	<b>39.72%</b> 114	287	5.09
Cold-calling	<b>6.60%</b> 19	<b>2.78%</b> 8	<b>1.74%</b> 5	<b>2.08%</b> 6	<b>3.82%</b> 11	<b>3.13%</b> 9	<b>2.78%</b> 8	<b>7.64%</b> 22	<b>6.60%</b> 19	<b>22.22%</b> 64	<b>3.47%</b> 10	<b>37.15%</b> 107	288	6.77

## Real estate agent safety survey

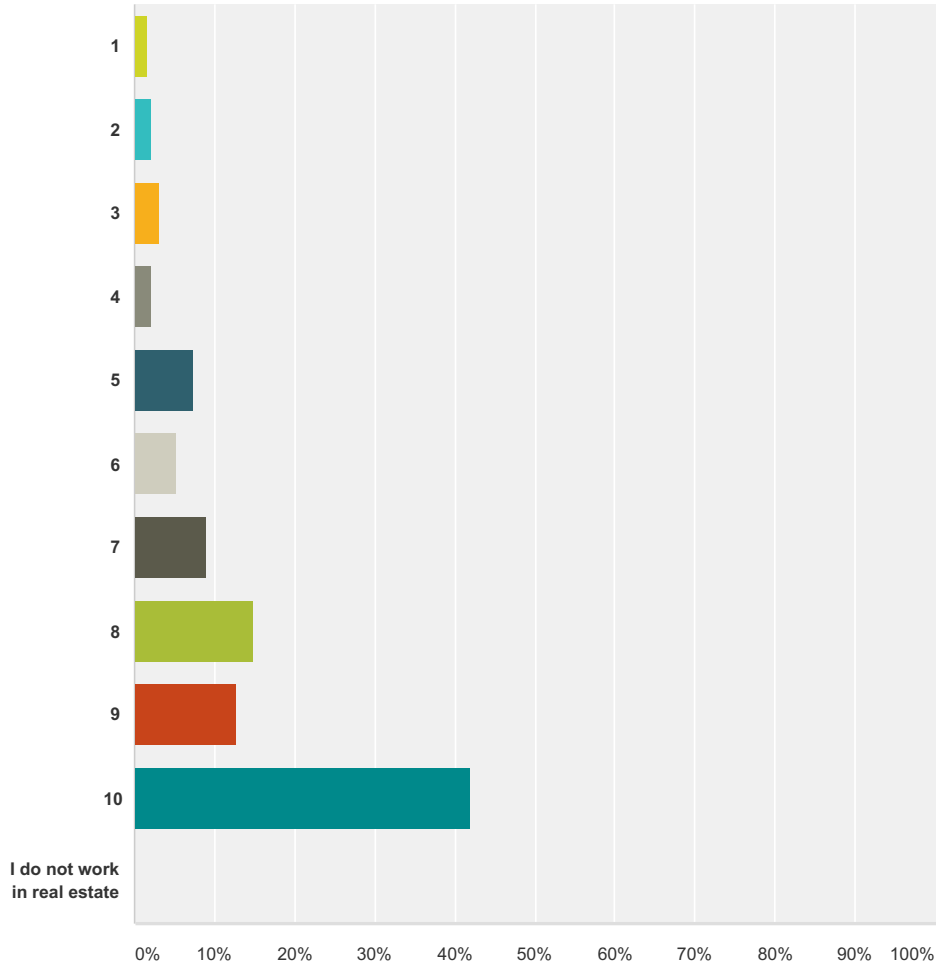
### **Q8 Why? (Open-ended)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

Real estate agent safety survey

**Q9 On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “my brokerage is not at all concerned about my safety” and 10 being “my brokerage is very concerned about my safety,” please rank how you feel about how your brokerage manages safety issues.**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
1	1.73% 5
2	2.08% 6
3	3.11% 9
4	2.08% 6
5	7.27% 21
6	5.19% 15
7	9.00% 26
8	14.88% 43



## Real estate agent safety survey

9	12.80%	37
10	41.87%	121
I do not work in real estate	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>289</b>

Real estate agent safety survey

**Q10 Why?  
(Open-ended)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

Real estate agent safety survey

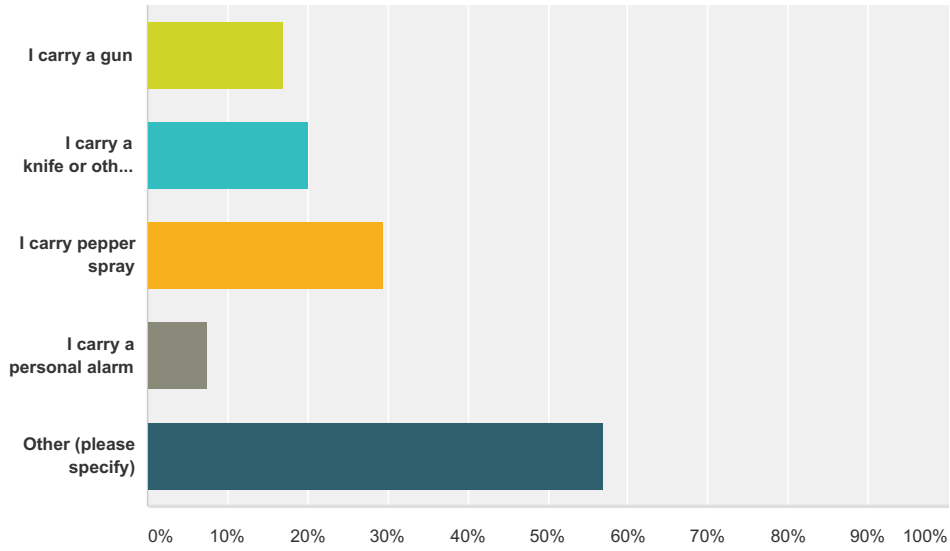
**Q11 Have you ever been involved in a situation that you felt was potentially dangerous to yourself while working in real estate? If so, please describe the situation.  
(Open-ended)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

Real estate agent safety survey

**Q12 Do you carry any safety tools or devices with you when you are working in real estate? (Check all that apply).**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

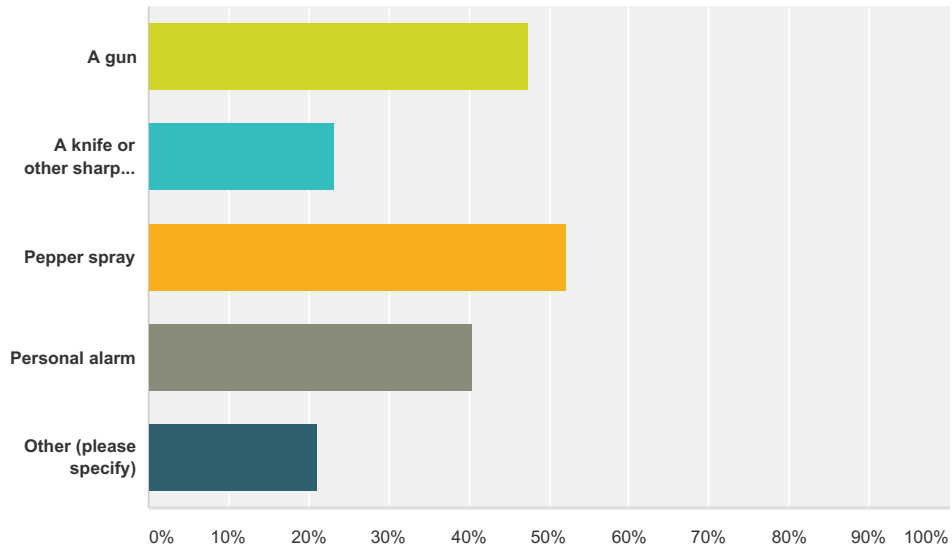


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
I carry a gun	16.96%	49
I carry a knife or other sharp weapon	20.07%	58
I carry pepper spray	29.41%	85
I carry a personal alarm	7.61%	22
Other (please specify)	57.09%	165
<b>Total Respondents: 289</b>		

# Real estate agent safety survey

## Q13 Would you consider carrying ... (Check all that apply)

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

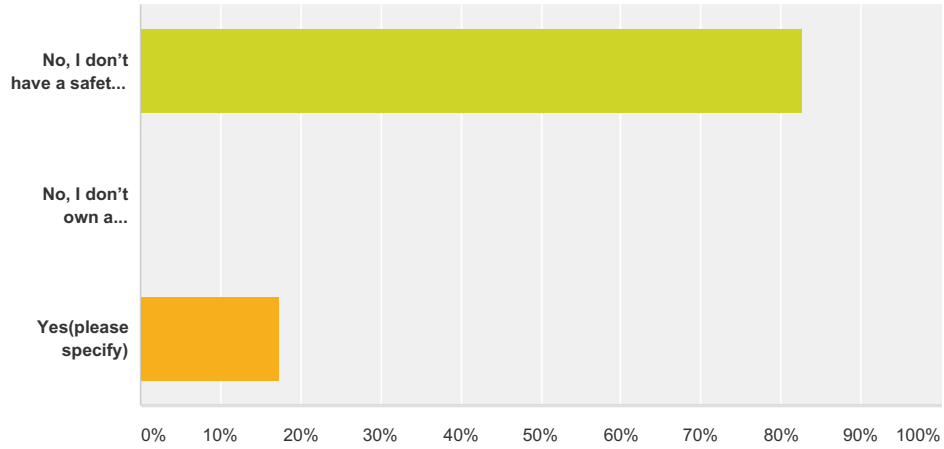


Answer Choices	Responses
A gun	47.40% 137
A knife or other sharp weapon	23.18% 67
Pepper spray	52.25% 151
Personal alarm	40.48% 117
Other (please specify)	21.11% 61
<b>Total Respondents: 289</b>	

# Real estate agent safety survey

## Q14 Do you have a safety app installed on your smartphone?

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

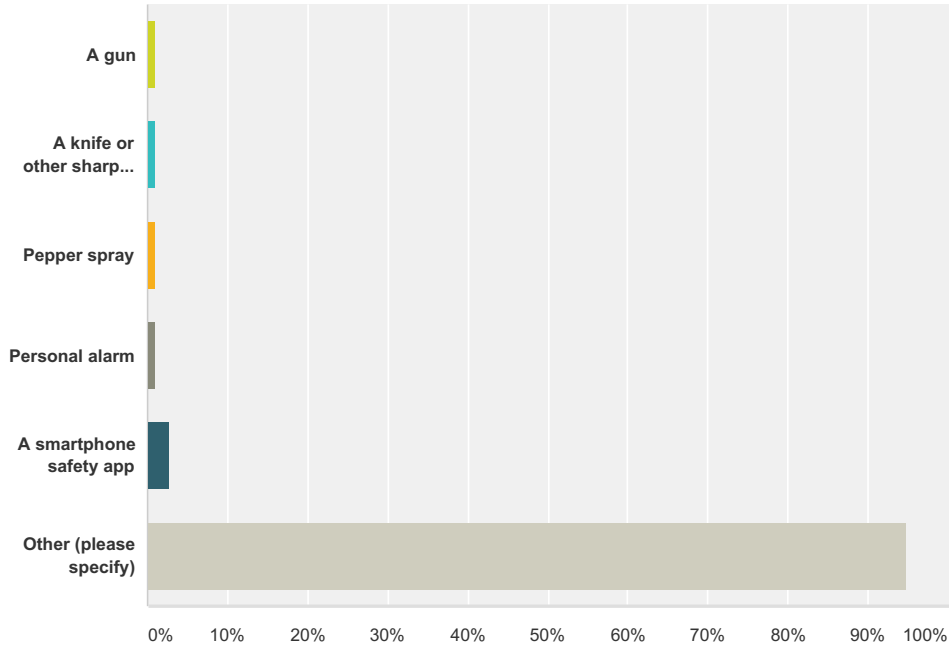


Answer Choices	Responses
No, I don't have a safety app installed on my smartphone	82.70% 239
No, I don't own a smartphone	0.00% 0
Yes (please specify)	17.30% 50
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>

Real estate agent safety survey

**Q15 While working, have you ever had to use or deploy ... (Check all that apply)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

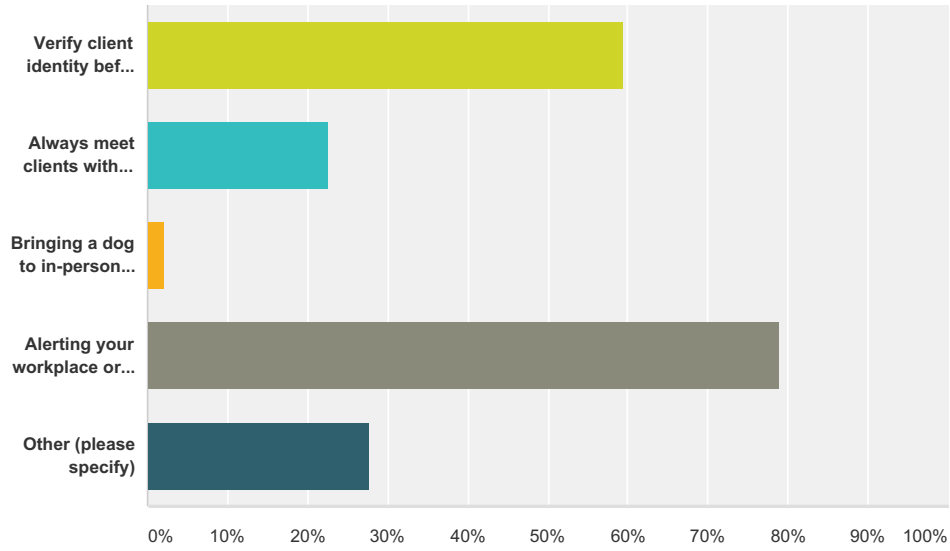


Answer Choices	Responses
A gun	1.04% 3
A knife or other sharp weapon	1.04% 3
Pepper spray	1.04% 3
Personal alarm	1.04% 3
A smartphone safety app	2.77% 8
Other (please specify)	94.81% 274
<b>Total Respondents: 289</b>	

# Real estate agent safety survey

## Q16 What other measures do you take to stay safe during working hours? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



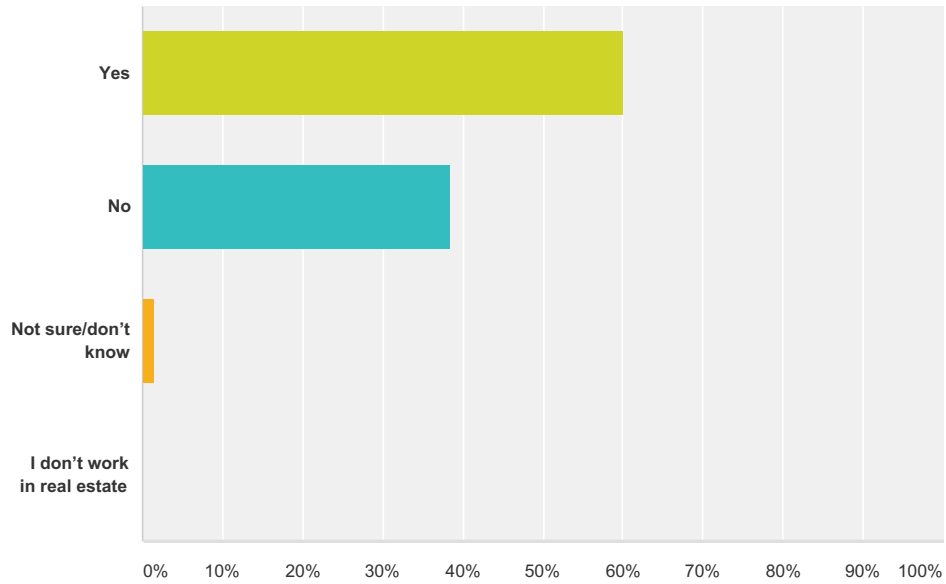
Answer Choices	Responses
Verify client identity before setting up in-person meetings	59.52% 172
Always meet clients with a partner or friend in tow	22.49% 65
Bringing a dog to in-person meetings or showings	2.08% 6
Alerting your workplace or loved ones about where you will be and when they should expect you to return	78.89% 228
Other (please specify)	27.68% 80
<b>Total Respondents: 289</b>	



# Real estate agent safety survey

## Q17 Have you ever taken a class or training geared toward self-defense?

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0

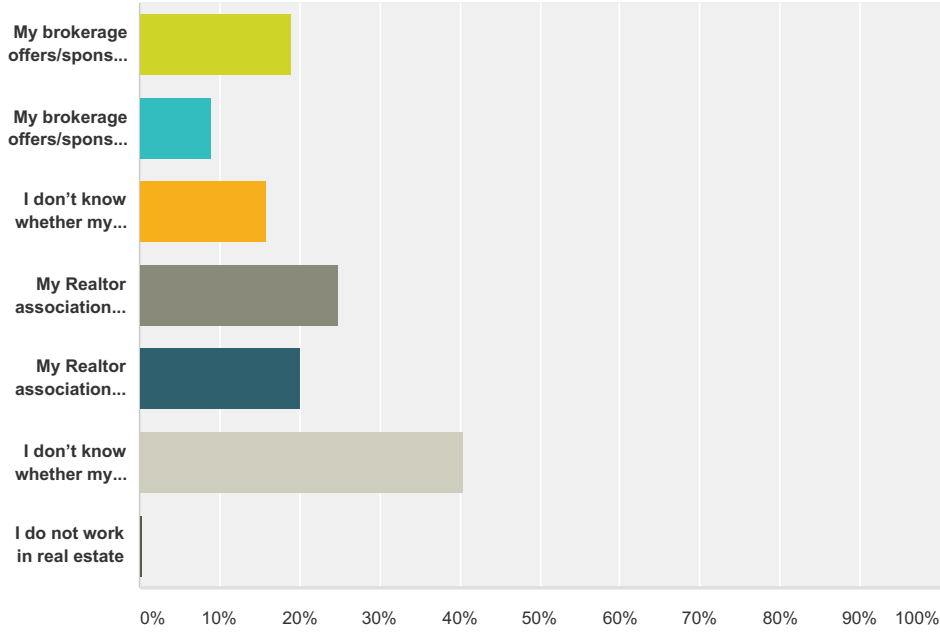


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	60.21% 174
No	38.41% 111
Not sure/don't know	1.38% 4
I don't work in real estate	0.00% 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>

Real estate agent safety survey

**Q18 Do any of the following organizations or entities offer or sponsor safety training for real estate agents? If so, have you taken the offered training? Please check all that apply.**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
My brokerage offers/sponsors safety training, which I have taken	19.03%	55
My brokerage offers/sponsors safety training, which I have not taken	9.00%	26
I don't know whether my brokerage offers/sponsors safety training	15.92%	46
My Realtor association offers/sponsors safety training, which I have taken	24.91%	72
My Realtor association offers/sponsors safety training, which I have not taken	20.07%	58
I don't know whether my Realtor association offers/sponsors safety training	40.48%	117
I do not work in real estate	0.35%	1
<b>Total Respondents: 289</b>		

Real estate agent safety survey

**Q19 What could you, your brokerage or the industry do to help you feel more safe at your job -- if anything? (Open-ended)**

Answered: 289 Skipped: 0