

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Professional Courtesies - a Guide for REALTORS®

Iowa Association of
REALTORS®

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Pathways to Professionalism

Are you seeking ideas for improving your client relationships? There is much to consider in the REALTOR® Pathways to Professionalism, NAR's voluntary guide to professional courtesies.

While the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the National Association establishes objective, enforceable ethical standards governing the professional conduct of REALTORS®, it does not address issues of courtesy or etiquette. Based on input from many sources, IAR has developed the following list of professional courtesies for use by REALTORS® on a voluntary basis. This list is not all-inclusive, and may be supplemented by local custom and practice.

Respect for the Public

- ❖ Follow the "Golden Rule" - Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- ❖ Respond promptly to inquiries and requests for information.
- ❖ Schedule appointments and showings as far in advance as possible.
- ❖ Call if you are delayed or must cancel an appointment or showing.
- ❖ If a prospective buyer decides not to view an occupied home, promptly explain the situation to the listing broker or the occupant.
- ❖ Communicate with all parties in a timely fashion.
- ❖ When entering a property, ensure that unexpected situations, such as pets, are handled appropriately.
- ❖ Leave your business card if not prohibited by local rules.
- ❖ Never criticize property in the presence of the occupant.
- ❖ Inform occupants that you are leaving after showings.

- ❖ When showing an occupied home, always ring the doorbell or knock and announce yourself loudly before entering.
- ❖ Knock and announce yourself loudly before entering any closed room.
- ❖ Present a professional appearance at all times; dress appropriately and drive a clean car.
- ❖ If occupants are home during showings, ask their permission before using the telephone or bathroom.
- ❖ Encourage the clients of other brokers to direct questions to their agent or representative.
- ❖ Communicate clearly; don't use jargon or slang that may not be readily understood.
- ❖ Be aware of and respect cultural differences.
- ❖ Show courtesy and respect to everyone.
- ❖ Be aware of - and meet - all deadlines.
- ❖ Promise only what you can deliver - and keep your promises.
- ❖ Identify your REALTOR® and your professional status in contacts with the public.
- ❖ Do not tell people what you think - tell them what you know.

Respect for Property

- ❖ Be responsible for everyone you allow to enter listed property.
- ❖ Never allow buyers to enter listed property unaccompanied.
- ❖ When showing property, keep all members of the group together.
- ❖ Never allow unaccompanied access to property without permission.

- ❖ Enter property only with permission even if you have a lockbox key or combination.
- ❖ When the occupant is absent, leave the property as you found it (lights, heating, cooling, drapes, etc). If you think something is amiss (e.g. vandalism) contact the listing broker immediately.
- ❖ Be considerate of the sellers property. Do not allow anyone to eat, drink, smoke, dispose of trash, use bathing or sleeping facilities, or bring pets. Leave the house as you found it unless instructed otherwise.
- ❖ Use sidewalks; if weather is bad, take off shoes and boots when you are inside a property so rugs and floors will stay clean.

Respect for Peers

- ❖ Identify your REALTOR® and professional status in all contacts with other REALTORS®.
- ❖ Respond to other agents' calls, faxes, and e-mails promptly and courteously.
- ❖ Be aware that large electronic files with attachments or lengthy faxes may be a burden on recipients.
- ❖ Notify the listing broker if there appears to be inaccurate information on the listing.
- ❖ Share important information about a property, including the presence of pets, security systems, and whether sellers will be present during the showing.
- ❖ Show courtesy, trust and respect to other real estate professionals.
- ❖ Avoid the inappropriate use of endearments or other denigrating language.
- ❖ Do not prospect at other REALTORS® open houses or similar events.
- ❖ Return keys promptly.
- ❖ Carefully replace keys in the lockbox after showings.

- ❖ To be successful in the business, mutual respect is essential.
- ❖ Real estate is a reputation business. What you do today may affect your reputation - and business - for years to come.

Prepare for Showings

- ❖ When inquiring about a property and when talking with another REALTOR®, always identify yourself and your company.
- ❖ Never be afraid to explain to a buyer that appointments are necessary and that no one likes to be "barged in" on. Listings have been cancelled because of repeated failures to observe this courtesy.
- ❖ When asking for the showing appointment, if you think the buyer will feel more comfortable, suggest that the seller be absent during the showing and explain why.
- ❖ Space appointments so that you will have ample time to show each listing and still get to the next appointment on time.

Showing the Property

- ❖ Punctuality and courtesy go hand in hand.
- ❖ Avoid parking in the driveway. Many sellers find this a little presumptuous and objectionable.
- ❖ Use the sidewalks! Grass and landscaping are precious to the seller. In bad weather, take off shoes and boots when inside the property.
- ❖ When showing an occupied home, always ring the doorbell and knock before entering. Knock before entering any closed room.
- ❖ Enter listed property first to make sure that unexpected situations, such as pets or disarming alarm systems are handled appropriately.

- ❖ Be responsible for visitors. Ask them not to smoke in listed property.
- ❖ Legibly sign and fully complete the guest register.
- ❖ Keep sarcasm and negative comments about the property and neighborhood to yourself.
- ❖ If the seller is home during a showing, ask permission before using the telephone or bathroom.
- ❖ Never allow buyers to enter property unaccompanied.
- ❖ Never discuss any details of the sale, including price with the seller. Refer all inquiries to the listing agent.

After the Showing

- ❖ If sellers are on the property, inform them that you are leaving after a showing.
- ❖ Make sure that the house is left the way you found it. Ensure that heating and cooling controls are set correctly. Be sure to turn off the lights, shut windows, and lock doors.
- ❖ Leave your business card if not prohibited by local rules.
- ❖ If you are the showing agent, call the listing broker to report the results of any showing, correct any inaccurate listing information, and anything that appears wrong with the property.
- ❖ Return the key you borrowed to the lockbox, or listing office PROMPTLY. The seller may have made only one key available.

Presenting the Offer

- ❖ The selling agent should personally deliver the contract offer to the listing agent as soon as possible. Prior buyer qualification is expected, the

contract should be properly prepared, and the selling agent should be ready to answer questions regarding financing, settlement, and other contract terms.

- ❖ The listing agent should have settlement cost sheets ready so the seller will know the obligations if the offer is accepted.
- ❖ The listing agent should explain all details of the terms of the offer to the seller.
- ❖ The listing agent should personally return the contract offer, whether accepted or rejected, as soon as possible.

After the Sale

- ❖ It is extremely important for the listing and selling agents to remain as cooperative liaisons between the seller and buyer to ensure a smooth settlement process.
- ❖ Keep listing agent informed of any problems or complications that develop with contract contingencies in a timely manner.
- ❖ Prepare all extensions when necessary, not at the last minute.
- ❖ Resolve all conflicts and problems prior to settlement.
- ❖ Set settlement time as far in advance as possible to give all parties sufficient notice.

Definitions:

Professional - (1) of, engaged in, or worthy of the high standards of a profession

Courtesy - (1) courteous behavior; gracious politeness (2) a polite, helpful, or considerate act or remark (3) an act or usage intended to honor or compliment