

# Conducting Business During COVID-19 Crisis

## Best Practices for Commercial Real Estate Professionals

As our country and our industry face the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis together, we encourage Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) members to continue following official safety guidelines provided by the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), [New York State](#) and [New York City](#).

Working closely with brokerage firms, REBNY has compiled the following best practices from industry leaders to help our commercial brokerage community and its clients stay safe and healthy, while supporting business continuity.



### KEY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- **Understand the facts:** Continue to check [CDC](#), [NYS](#) and [NYC](#) updates and guidelines.
- **Social distancing:** Consider conducting meetings and events via phone or videoconference.
- **Sanitation:** Clean and disinfect all frequently touched objects and surfaces, per CDC recommendations.
- **Hygiene:** Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer with alcohol.
- **Stay home:** If you, a member of your household or anyone on your team is ill, stay home and avoid physical contact with others.
- **Seek help:** Call the NYS Novel Coronavirus hotline if you suspect exposure (1-888-364-3065).

*Important Note: These Best Practices should not be construed as offering or providing legal advice in any form. The information contained herein is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive or complete. This document is not intended to replace the reader's need to speak with their own attorney regarding the issues presented. All readers should seek independent legal advice where they have specific legal questions pertaining to specific legal circumstances or where otherwise appropriate.*



## STAYING SAFE AT PROPERTY SHOWINGS

- ✓ Check with the building to follow current policies for visitors and showings.
- ✓ Discuss precautions and a safety action plan with the seller or landlord.
- ✓ Consider offering clients the option to conduct a virtual tour of the property instead of an in-person meeting.
- ✓ If showings are permitted, explore options to conduct them by appointment only, and consider limiting attendees to essential parties only.
- ✓ Ask clients or appropriate parties not to attend showings if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect all frequently touched areas and surfaces in the property before and after every appointment.
- ✓ When possible, provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer and/or disinfecting wipes to all individuals upon arrival.
- ✓ Avoid shaking hands during in-person interactions.



## STAYING SAFE WHILE CLOSING DEALS

- ✓ Discuss options for online and/or electronic closings (or parts of them) with all parties involved.
- ✓ Encourage all parties to limit in-person closing meetings by using document review, approval and signing software.
- ✓ Consider limiting attendees at each closing only to the most essential parties, including using powers of attorney.
- ✓ Avoid shaking hands during in-person interactions.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect all frequently touched areas and surfaces before and after the closing.
- ✓ Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer and/or disinfecting wipes to individuals upon arrival.

## REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF FAIR HOUSING COMPLIANCE

As you take precautions, please remain compliant with [Fair Housing Laws](#):

- Develop precautionary safety and health policies for all in-person meetings
- Put these policies in writing so they are clear and available to all. It is crucial not to be selective as to whom these policies are applied.
- Implement these policies with everyone equally, consistently and in the same manner. i.e. When requiring use of hand-sanitizer, questioning an individuals' recent travel history, or expressing concerns of visible symptoms, make sure it is applied to all individuals.

## STAY IN TOUCH

Please share this information with your colleagues and follow REBNY for updates on best practices for conducting business during the Coronavirus crisis. REBNY will continue to keep you up-to-date during this rapidly changing situation.

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