HOMESELLER GUIDE

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Quick **REFERENCE**

Escrow #	
New Address	
City/State/Zip	

Complete the following information as it becomes available.
IMPORTANT: Do not cancel your home insurance or disconnect utilities prior to the close of escrow.

REAL ESTATE AGENT	
Name	
Team Members	
Company	
Address	
City/State/Zip	
Phone #	
Cell #	
Fax #	
Email	
Website	

CLOSING AGENT OR ATTORNEY	
Name	
Phone #	
Fax #	
Email	

Assistant	
Phone #	
Email	

Address	
City/State/Zip	

SERVICE	COMPANY	PHONE #	ACCOUNT #	DEACTIVATION DATE
Internet				
Cable/Satellite				
Gas				
Electric				

HOME INSURANCE	
Current Agent	
Phone #	
Policy #	
END Date	

New Agent	
Phone #	
Policy #	
START Date	

Home Warranty	
Plan #	
Policy #	

PHONE SERVICE	
Company	
Phone #	
Account #	
New Phone #	
Deactivation Date	

NOTES

Thinking About **SELLING YOUR OWN HOME?**

Selling your home yourself depends on your personal preferences and how much time and energy you're willing to invest in your home sale.

Industry experts advise against owners selling their own homes, citing that an experienced real estate sales professional can find the right buyer, the best price and often prevents costly and time-consuming problems that may arise during the transaction.

Home sellers need to be prepared to do a lot of the work, like holding their own open house. You will need to be outgoing and comfortable answering endless questions about your property. You will need to accept that strangers are going to look in your closets, under your sink and cabinets, etc.

Patience can also be important when holding out for the best possible offer. A good eye and a willingness to spend time staging your home are helpful, too. You can hire staging consultants to give advice on how to make your home look its best. Sometimes an objective set of eyes can see "curb appeal" that you may have overlooked.

Common **FSBO MISTAKES**

1. Repairs that may need to be done prior to presenting your home for sale vs. repairs that are to be done after you find a buyer are important decisions and may affect your asking price for the home.
2. Are you going to prepare the contract yourself or are you going to have an attorney prepare it for you? Either way, you need to have a copy ready for the buyer to sign on the dotted line at a moment's notice.
3. Select a title or settlement company before putting your home on the market so the company can take delivery of the contract and the buyer's earnest money check. Many FSBO sellers are simply not prepared to sell their home and unaware of the sale and closing process.
4. What is a competitive price for a home? Are you informed enough or able to do research to competently price your home? Or do you need the assistance of a professional appraiser? Many appraisers will sell you a competent and objective "paper appraisal."

If you price your property too high, it could take forever to sell it. If you price the home too low, you could lose money.

Real estate agents consistently work to keep properties in front of buyers by placing them into their shared database known as MLS: Multiple Listing Service. The MLS database provides real estate professionals access to your property information to increase visibility and opportunities for a sale.

Reasons to Use a **REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL**

It pays to use a real estate professional because real estate has become a very complicated business, and selling or buying a home will be one of the most important financial transactions of your life. From the moment you consider selling you will benefit from choosing a professional to list your home and the combined efforts will ensure a smooth and pleasant experience for everyone involved. Your home may be listed in the Multiple Listing Service, providing you with incomparable exposure and ensuring you have as many real estate professionals as possible helping to find a buyer. Additionally, your agent knows how to specifically target advertising and use all the marketing tools available to sell your home expediently by conducting a variety of efforts on your behalf. Most importantly, when it comes to closing escrow, your PROFESSIONAL can be invaluable, leading you through the paperwork and familiarizing you with insurance, property disclosures, inspection procedures and so much more.

It's always a good market in real estate - when you know what you're doing - and no one knows as much as your real estate professional about today's real estate market.

Recipe For a **SALE**

THERE ARE 5 MAIN INGREDIENTS THAT MAKE UP THE SALE OF YOUR HOME.

1 LOCATION — You usually cannot move a home! To coin the favorite phrase of appraisers: "Location, Location, Location". The pricing of your property must reflect its location.

2 CONDITION — The upkeep and presentation of your property is crucial to obtain the highest value for your home in any given market at any given time. The pricing of your property must reflect its condition.

3 PRICE — Price is the number one factor in the sale of a home. A property is really only worth what one person is willing to pay another to gain ownership of the property. Price must be in direct relationship to the other four ingredients and it is the most important of all!

4 TERMS — The more terms available on your property, the more potential purchasers you reach. The pricing of your property must reflect the kinds of terms available to purchase it.

5 THE MARKET — Interest rates, competition, and the economy all make up and influence the state of the market when you sell your home. The pricing of your property must reflect the current status of the market.

When all of the above ingredients are in agreement…there is a good possibility your home will sell! If just one ingredient is out of line, it will take a longer time to sell. The more ingredients that are out of line, the longer it will take before you can begin packing and moving to your new home.

Planning to **SELL**

PREPARING YOUR HOME

So you're planning to sell your home. You have decided on a price, based on current market values, but your home may sell faster and bring a higher price if it shows well. Potential buyers will get the best impression if your home is clean, neat, uncluttered, in good repair, light, airy, and quiet. Here are a few general guidelines to get your home show ready:

CLEAN EVERYTHING. Cleanliness signals to a buyer that the home has been well cared for and is most likely in good repair. A messy or dirty home can cause prospective buyers to notice every flaw.

UNCLUTTER your home before you show it. Have a garage sale. Empty closets. Throw away what you can't sell. The less "stuff" in and around a home, the roomier it will seem.

LET THE LIGHT IN. Raise the shades. Open the blinds. Pull back the curtains. Put brighter bulbs in all the lamps (but not bright enough to cause a glare). Bright, open rooms feel larger and more inviting. Dark rooms can feel small and gloomy.

LET FRESH AIR IN. Get rid of unpleasant odors (tobacco, pets, cooking, and musty or sour laundry). Fresh flowers and potpourri can be used to your advantage. Other smells that attract positive attention might include fresh baked bread and cinnamon.

PAINT. A fresh coat of neutral paint can improve the value of a home at a minimal cost, and it's often easier to paint a room than it is to scrub it.

FIX ANYTHING THAT IS BROKEN. This could include plumbing, electrical systems, switches, windows, screens, doors, squeaky floorboards and fences; if it can't be fixed or replaced consider getting rid of it.

A buyer may make a much lower offer if your house is in disrepair and will probably still insist that everything be fixed before taking occupancy. You're better off if you leave potential buyers no reason to offer less than you are asking.

SEND PETS AWAY or secure them away from the house when prospective buyers are coming. You never know who will be annoyed or intimidated by your pets or even allergic to them.

SEND THE KIDS TO GRANDMA'S or take them on a walk around the block. Children can become an adorable distraction to someone interested in looking at a home.

KEEP NOISE DOWN. Silence is a restful sound that appeals to most everyone. Turn off the TV, but consider soft instrumental music. If necessary, close the windows to eliminate any street noise.

Get Your Home **SHOW READY**

✓	***EXTERIOR***
	Clean around service areas/trash cans
	Haul away rubbish
	Straighten woodpile
	Repair leaky faucets
	Clean up pet droppings
	Paint or varnish doors
	Polish door hardware
	Make sure doorbell/knocker works
	Paint or replace street numbers on house
	Make sure septic tank is odor free
	Clean oil stains from driveway/street
	Patch/reseal driveway if necessary
Replace, repair, and/or paint any damages:	
	Plaster
	Wood siding
	Trim
	Rain gutters
	Shutters
	Doors
	Window frames
	Glazing
	Screens
	Hardware
	Fences/gates
	Outdoor lighting
Landscaping	
	Mow/edge lawn regularly
	Aerate/feed lawn
	Overseed bare spots in lawn
	Water lawn regularly
	Remove/replace dead plants
	Prune overgrown/diseased/damaged shrubs
	Prune or remove shrubs/trees blocking view from windows (unless view is undesirable)
	Stake up any sagging trees/shrubs
	Keep flower beds free of weeds
	Trim around base of trees/walls/fences
Repair or remove any broken or damaged landscape accessories such as:	
	Fences
	Walls Gazebos
	Fountains
	Trellises
	Planters
	Other

	Replace any broken stepping stones
	Adjust any sprinkler system; repair any broken/leaky heads
	Install fences or shrubs to hide any unsightly views
✓	***CLEAN/WASH***
	Siding
	Windows
	Screen
	Outdoor BBQ
	A/C Unit
	Pool/Spa
✓	***CHECK LIGHT BULBS***
	Porch Lights
	Carport
	Garage
✓	***CLOSETS***
	Keep closets clean and free of clutter
	Throw out or pack away non-essentials
	Adjust/repair sliding doors
	Lubricate sliding door hardware
	Paint, if needed
✓	***ALL ROOMS,*** Clean especially around:
	Doors
	Windows
	Light switches
	Baseboards
	Chair rails
	Wash lace curtains and have draperies cleaned if necessary
	Remove or pull back dark curtains
	Lubricate window slides (soap for wood silicon or a candle stump for metal)
	Make sure doors open smoothly
	Clean ceiling light fixtures
	Check for cobwebs in all corners
	Fix any scratches in wooden floors
	Replace worn/broken flooring
	Remove or replace worn carpet
	Use area rugs where needed
	Empty wastebaskets
✓	***KITCHEN***
	Keep dishes and food out of sight
	Clean appliances
	Clean range hood, including light bulbs
	Clean behind appliances
	Keep floor clean
	Clean light fixture

	Make sure all electrical outlets work
	Eliminate cooking odors
	Deodorize garbage disposal, dishwasher, and refrigerator
	Repair faucets
	Put fresh shelf paper in cabinets
	Organize cupboards
	Clean out under sink
	Replace garbage disposal gasket to reduce noise
✓	***BATHROOMS,*** Keep them spotlessly clean:
	Shine mirrors
	Keep wastebaskets empty and clean
	Clean out cabinets and remove non-essentials
	Keep fresh, clean towels on towel racks
	Clean shower door – if sliding door, keep track lubricated
	Remove soap residue, mildew and mold from sink/tub/shower
	Remove stains from porcelain sink tub toilet
	Replace torn/moldy shower curtain
	Clean tile grout
	Make sure toilet flushes properly – replace mechanism if necessary
	Clean exhaust fan/heater – replace if broken or noisy
✓	***GARAGE/CARPORT/SHED***
	Install 100-watt light bulb
	Keep area clean/uncluttered
	Hang up/put away tools
	Clear away any cobwebs
	Remove oil/paint stains from floor
	Adjust tension rod to eliminate sag from overhead garage door
	Lubricate/adjust/repair garage door opener
	Paint if needed
✓	***LAUNDRY AREA***
	Clean out area behind washer/dryer
	Eliminate any mildew odors
✓	***BASEMENT***
	Eliminate any signs of dampness
	Check for and eliminate cracks
✓	***HEATING/AIR CONDITIONING UNIT***
	Vacuum
	Replace filter
	Clean intake vent
	Remove any stored items

- ✓ Make sure the temperature in your home is comfortable – keep it cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. If it's cooler outside and you have a fireplace, a nice fire can make your home seem cozy and inviting.
- ✓ Provide an written list of the features of your home.
- ✓ Know the distance to schools and shopping centers.

Working with **LENDERS**

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF ALL PROSPECTIVE BUYERS

Each potential buyer should be pre-qualified by a lender.

EFFICIENT FOLLOW-UP AND TEAMWORK

Once the transaction has been negotiated, the lender will work hand-in-hand with other real estate professionals in order to make sure the loan is approved and funded in a timely manner. Experience and knowledge are critical to getting the job done right.

QUALIFICATION

The lender will begin the qualification process by completing an estimate statement of fees and costs to determine the loan amount and by verifying the information provided on the application concerning credit history, employment status and financial situation. The borrower will be required to provide recent financial information and documents.

Having established preliminary qualification, the lender orders a title search, property appraisal and credit report. Usually, the borrower pays for the credit report and property appraisal, which is used to determine the value of the property and, ultimately, the amount a lender is willing to lend. The lender will require a Lender's Policy of Title Insurance to assure the priority of the new loan.

WHY DO YOU NEED A TITLE SEARCH?

The title search will disclose the current condition of the title, according to public records. The lender will be interested in how and in whom title is vested, any special conditions or restrictions affecting the use of the property and existence of voluntary liens (existing loans) and/or involuntary liens/judgments. The search will also show the current status of taxes and assessments and the conditions under which title insurance will be issued.

With the title search, financial and personal qualification and property appraisal completed, the lender will prepare loan documents to be executed by the borrower upon loan approval.

WHAT ARE LOAN DOCUMENTS?

Loan documents will include the formalization of the terms and conditions of the loan, a promissory note and deed of trust and various state and federal disclosure documents. They also provide a breakdown of the financial accounting of the loan, including fees and charges.

The **APPRAISAL**

The appraisal process consists of several steps. The following are the major steps in the sequence normally followed by appraisers:

- Research the subject property as to size, bedrooms, baths, year built, lot size and square footage.
- Gather data of recent sales in the subject's neighborhood. The appraiser needs to locate at least three, preferably more, similar-sized homes that have sold in the neighborhood. The homes should be within one mile of the subject property and sold within the past six months. These homes are considered the "Comparable Properties", or "Comps" for short.
- Field inspection consists of two parts: First, the inspection of the subject property; and second, the exterior inspection of the comparable properties that have been selected to estimate the value of the subject property.

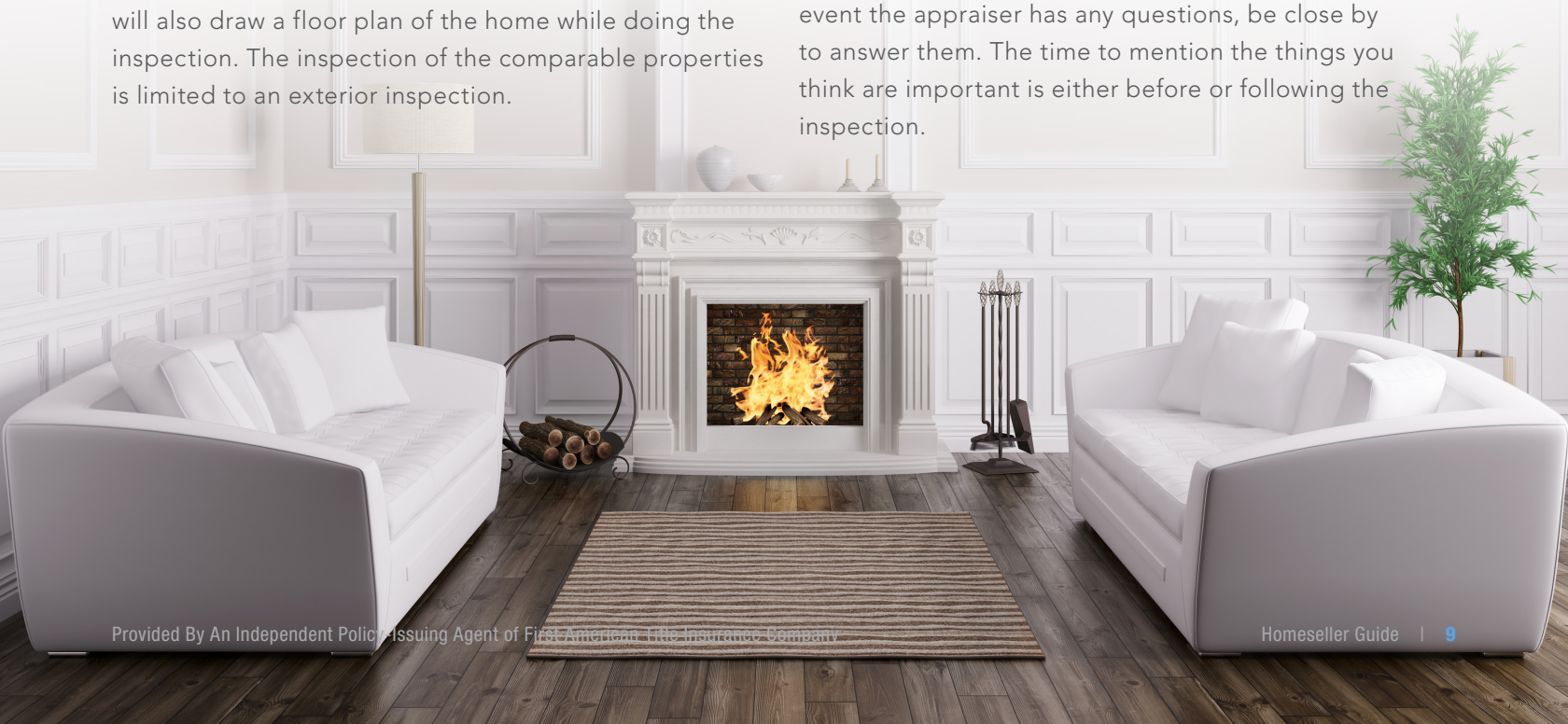
The subject inspection consists of taking photos of the street scene, front and rear of the home that may include portions of the yard. The appraiser will make an interior inspection for condition noting any items that would detract from or add to the value of the home. He will also draw a floor plan of the home while doing the inspection. The inspection of the comparable properties is limited to an exterior inspection.

For features that cannot be seen from the street, the appraiser has reports from Multiple Listing Services (MLS), county public records and appraisal files along with other sources to help determine the condition and amenities of the comparable.

After the field inspection has been completed, the appraiser must determine which comparable properties most resemble the subject, making slight adjustments in value for any differences between them. After making the required adjustments, the appraiser will go through the reconciliation process with three comparable properties to determine a final estimated value.

An appraiser will call in advance to set up an appointment. At that time, offer to supply any information about the home's size, number of bedrooms, bathrooms, pool, enclosed patio, etc. The more that is known about the property prior to the inspection, the better the appraiser can focus on researching the most similar comparable. Doing your homework will maximize your chances of having a good appraisal.

While your home is being inspected, do not follow the appraiser from room to room causing distraction. Instead, allow the inspection to go smoothly. In the event the appraiser has any questions, be close by to answer them. The time to mention the things you think are important is either before or following the inspection.



KEY PROFESSIONALS

Involved in a Real Estate Transaction

Knowledgeable, customer-focused professionals are available to answer your title and settlement questions. Throughout the home selling process, you may also encounter the following industry specialists who are able to professionally answer questions in their area of expertise.

REAL ESTATE AGENT Licensed by the state to represent parties in the transfer of property.

HOME INSPECTOR Objectively and independently provides a comprehensive analysis of a home's major systems and components.

LOAN OFFICER A representative of a bank or other financial institution. They help customers identify their borrowing options and help them understand the terms of their loan.

APPRAISER Works on behalf of a lender and provides a market analysis of the subject property. An appraiser's finding is subjective and combined with market findings of sold properties within the surrounding neighborhood.

INSURANCE AGENT Helps a homebuyer determine the homeowner's protection coverage needed and then finds the right insurance policy to fit those needs.

REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY Can give advice on all legal aspects of the real estate transaction. Additionally, they are able to draft and review contracts, help decide how to take title and assist with the closing process. In some states, real estate closings can only be conducted by attorneys.

ESCROW/CLOSING OFFICER A non-biased third party who works with all participants to facilitate a successful closing of a real estate transaction. At closing, the closing officer will collect the purchase money funds from the buyer and lender as well as the settlement costs from each party. They disburse the funds in accordance with the closing documents and record the necessary documents to transfer ownership of the property.

CLOSING/SETTLEMENT/TITLE AGENT Performs title searches to ensure a clear title so a title insurance policy can be issued. In some states, they facilitate the transfer of real estate.

What is **TITLE INSURANCE**

Title insurance provides coverage for certain losses due to defects in the title that, for the most part, occurred prior to your ownership. Title insurance protects against defects such as prior fraud or forgery that might go undetected until after closing and possibly jeopardize your ownership and investment.

OVERVIEW

When a piece of real property is financed, purchased or sold, a record of that transaction is generally filed in public archives. Likewise, other events that may affect the ownership of a property are also documented and filed. These may include liens, levies, encumbrances, etc. When a buyer purchases title insurance, the title company searches these records to find (and remedy, if possible) issues that may affect the purchaser's ownership.

TITLE SEARCH AND EXAM

That's where title insurance differs from traditional insurance models. When you purchase a policy insuring you for matters relating to your car or health, the insurance company assesses the risk of insuring you, and bases its premium on the risk being assumed. With title insurance, the insurer first works to identify the status of ownership, liens and other matters affecting title by collecting documents affecting title from the public records that are statutorily identified for the recording of real estate transactions. This process is called the search. Once the search is complete, the title insurance underwriter can then determine the insurability of the title and list exceptions from coverage and requirements to insure.

UNDISCOVERED RISKS

Of course, even the most skilled title professionals may not find all title problems. Other risks include matters that are more difficult to identify, such as title issues resulting from filing errors, forgeries, undisclosed heirs, and other unforeseen problems. That's one reason why your title insurance policy can play a key role in protecting your real estate investment.

OWNER'S POLICY

You will have the option of purchasing an Owner's Policy of title insurance, which provides insurance directly to the insured owner listed in the policy, and describes the type of real property interest owned. The insurance in both an Owner's and Loan Policy is subject to the policy provisions, which include the covered risks, exclusions from coverage, the conditions and the exceptions to title listed on a schedule to the policy.

LOAN POLICY

When you purchase a new home or other piece of real property by securing a mortgage, you may be required by your lender to purchase a Loan Policy of title insurance. This policy insures the lender against covered title defects up to the amount of insurance. This coverage in favor of the lender lasts for the life of the loan under limited circumstances stated within the policy.

PREMIUM

If purchased, you will pay a one-time premium for each policy (Owner's Policy and Loan Policy) at the close of your transaction, based on the total value of your home and the amount of your loan. This is another way in which title insurance differs from other insurance models, where premiums are paid on an ongoing basis. The purchase of a home or other real estate may be the largest financial investment you ever make. Title insurance can give you added peace of mind in knowing that the title to your investment is insured.

Common **TITLE PROBLEMS**

Your home may be new to you, but every property has a history. A thorough title search can help uncover any title defects tied to your property. And, subject to the terms of the policy, your title insurance provides protection for you from title problems that may become known after you close your transaction. Common title issues may include:

ERRORS IN PUBLIC RECORDS To err is human, but when it affects your home ownership rights, those mistakes can be devastating. Clerical or filing errors could affect the deed or survey of your property and cause undue financial strain in order to resolve them.

UNKNOWN LIENS Prior owners of your property may not have been meticulous bookkeepers – or bill payers. And, even though the former debt is not your own, banks or other financing companies can place liens on your property for unpaid debts even after you have closed on the sale. This is an especially worrisome issue with distressed properties.

ILLEGAL DEEDS While the chain of title on your property may appear perfectly sound, it's possible that a prior deed was made by an undocumented immigrant, a minor, a person of unsound mind, or one who is reported single but in actuality married. These instances may affect the enforceability of prior deeds, affecting prior (and possibly present) ownership.

MISSING HEIRS When a person dies, the ownership of their home may fall to their heirs, or those named within their will. However, those heirs are sometimes missing or unknown at the time of death. Other times, family members may contest the will for their own property rights. These scenarios – which can happen long after you have purchased the property – may affect your rights to the property.

BOUNDARY/SURVEY DISPUTES You may have seen several surveys of your property prior to purchasing, however, other surveys may exist that show differing boundaries. Therefore, a neighbor or other party may be able to claim ownership to a portion of your property.

FORGERIES Unfortunately, we don't live in a completely honest world. Sometimes forged or fabricated documents that affect property ownership are filed within public records, obscuring the rightful ownership of the property. Once these forgeries come to light, your rights to your home may be in jeopardy.

UNDISCOVERED ENCUMBRANCES When it comes to owning a home, three can be a crowd. At the time of purchase, you may not know that a third party holds a claim to all or part of your property – due to a former mortgage or lien, or non-financial claims, like restrictions or covenants limiting the use of your property.

UNKNOWN EASEMENTS You may own your new home and its surrounding land, but an unknown easement may prohibit you from using it as you'd like, or could allow government agencies, businesses, or other parties access to all or portions of your property. While usually non-financial issues, easements can still affect your right to enjoy your property.

UNDISCOVERED WILL When a property owner dies with no apparent will or heir, the state may sell his or her assets, including the home. When you purchase such a home, you assume your rights as owner. However, even years later, the deceased owner's will may come to light and your rights to the property may be seriously jeopardized.

FALSE IMPERSONATION OF PREVIOUS OWNER Common and similar names can make it possible to falsely impersonate a property owner. If you purchase a home that was once sold by a false owner, you can risk losing your legal claim to the property.

PLAY IT SAFE These and other issues are often covered by an Owner's Policy of title insurance. When you buy a home, make sure you're protecting that investment with title insurance.

What is **ESCROW**

Escrow is a term that describes the neutral third-party handling of funds, documents, and tasks specific to the closing (or settlement, as it is also known), as outlined on the real estate purchase agreement or sales contract. The purpose of escrow is to facilitate the transaction by managing the disbursement of funds.

KEY PLAYERS

In accordance with local custom, the buyer or seller involved in the transaction will select the escrow provider, though they often defer to their real estate agent to make this decision. This provider could be an escrow company, title officer, or title/escrow attorney, depending upon many considerations, including the geographical location of the transaction.

ROLES

The escrow provider may have a duty to arrange and/or track the requirements and contingencies outlined within the purchase contract. These might include home inspections, the purchase of homeowners insurance, the completion of negotiated repairs, and financing requirements.

PROCESS

Once all transaction contingencies are met, including the execution of all documents necessary to complete the transaction, the escrow company will disburse funds to the appropriate parties, all in accordance with the purchase agreement.

COST

The cost of escrow services is covered by the buyer or seller as determined by local custom, market conditions, or contractual agreements made within the purchase offer.

CLOSING/CONSUMMATION

Once all the tasks described within the sales purchase agreement have been completed and the appropriate funds are disbursed, the transaction is complete and the escrow closes.

MAIL-AWAY Closing Tips

As opportunities for real estate transactions expand across county and state lines, the frequency of mail-away closings is increasing. If you are involved in a closing that requires the mailing of documents, here are some tips that can help you avoid delays:

- ✓ Inform your closing/settlement agent of the need to mail documents as soon as possible. This will allow them to better coordinate the document preparation and signing process.
- ✓ Provide your closing/settlement agent with a physical address and the best phone number for each party involved in the transaction. NOTE: Most overnight delivery services will not deliver to a P.O. Box.
- ✓ Not all lenders allow documents to be signed in advance of the closing date, and some require that the documents be signed in the presence of an attorney or at a local settlement agent's office.

Allow sufficient turnaround time for the documents to be signed. This may decrease the chances of funding delays due to errors in the signing process. In order to disburse funds on a transaction, your closing/settlement agent may require the original documents to be returned and in their possession. The minimum time required to send and receive documents is three business days.

Tips For a **TIMELY CLOSING**

Although closing procedures vary from state to state, having an understanding of what may be required at closing and preparing accordingly will help your settlement process go as smoothly as possible.

MORTGAGES ON THE PROPERTY Provide detailed information, including loan number and payment address, for all mortgages on the property. Home Equity lines, even if they have a zero balance, will also require detailed mortgage information in order to satisfy the original loan requirements.

HOME WARRANTY If a home warranty product is being provided and shown on contract, advise the closing/settlement agent of the purchase amount to be collected.

MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS If there are service contracts on equipment or appliances that the purchaser wants to assume, provide the closing/settlement agent with a copy of the service contract.

MAIL-AWAY If you are unable to attend the closing, provide the address where the closing documents should be mailed and a contact phone number. Your signature on certain affidavits, real estate deeds and other documents may require the services of a notary.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) The closing/settlement agent is required to report the sale of the property to the IRS. You will need to provide your Social Security number(s) and forwarding address.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN REAL PROPERTY TAX ACT OF 1980 (FIRPTA) If you are not a United States citizen, the closing/settlement agent may be required to deduct and withhold a tax equal to 15% of amount realized (generally the amount paid for the property).

POWER OF ATTORNEY The use of a power of attorney must be approved in advance of settlement by the closing agent. If you are planning to use a power of attorney, inform the closing/settlement agent as soon as possible to allow time to properly review the document.

MARITAL STATUS Spouses may be required to sign closing documents even though they do not appear to hold title and their name does not appear on the deed. Spouses must always sign the deed when homestead property is being conveyed, even if they are not in title.

Closing **DAY**

VALID PHOTO IDENTIFICATION To help defend against forgery and fraud, state notary laws include requirements that parties signing documents in a real estate transaction to provide acceptable forms of identification. Although specific requirements may vary from state to state, here is a general overview of the type(s) of identification that are typically used to substantiate and affirm identity.

ACCEPTABLE IDENTIFICATION

One or more of the following may be requested to verify identification. The document must be current and contain the document signer's photograph, physical description, signature, and bear a serial or other identifying number.

- ✓ Valid Driver's License or Non-Driver ID Issued by any State
- ✓ United States Passport
- ✓ Valid United States Military ID
- ✓ Veterans Health ID Card
- ✓ Foreign Passport Stamped by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- ✓ Valid Canadian or Mexican Driver's License Issued by the Official Agency*

UNACCEPTABLE IDENTIFICATION

- × Temporary Driver's License
- × Driver's License without a Photograph
- × Social Security Card
- × Employee ID Badge
- × Permanent Resident ID Card

Closing document signatures must match the name that appears on the identification presented. An abbreviated form (John D. Smith instead of John David Smith, for example) may be acceptable. However, deviation is only allowed if the individual is signing with less than and not more than what is on the identification document. If your name has changed, or will change, prior to the closing, documentation must be provided to support the change.

CASHIER'S CHECK, TREASURER'S CHECK, OR WIRE TRANSFER In the event you are required to bring funds to closing, we cannot accept personal checks or cash. If you prefer to wire your funds, contact us for bank routing instructions. If you will be bringing a proceeds check from another settlement, contact us to verify the acceptance of those funds - we do not automatically accept all checks.

HAZARD INSURANCE POLICY AND PAID RECEIPT
A hazard policy, also known as homeowner's insurance, with the lender designated as the insured holder of the mortgage, is required on most loans. Evidence of hazard insurance, including a paid receipt, must be provided prior to closing.

IF POSSIBLE, ALL PARTIES WHO HOLD TITLE TO THE PROPERTY SHOULD ATTEND THE CLOSING
State-specific laws may require the spouse of the parties in title, even though their name does not appear on the deed, to sign certain documents when obtaining a mortgage. If anyone is unable to attend closing, contact us to arrange a power of attorney or closing by mail.

IF APPLICABLE

- ✓ Buyer(s) Pre-Approval Letter
- ✓ Home Warranty Application
- ✓ Payoff Authorization to Release Information
- ✓ Association/Condominium Contact Information
- ✓ Copy of Earnest Money Deposit Check
- ✓ Cashier's Check, Treasurer's Check, or Wire Transfer
- ✓ Power of Attorney (original needed at closing)
- ✓ Divorce Decree and Quit Claim Deed (original needed at closing, if not recorded)
- ✓ Court Order from Bankruptcy Court
- ✓ Corporation Documents: Board of Resolution, Certificate of Good Standing and Articles of Organization
- ✓ Death Certificate (original needed at closing)
- ✓ Prior Owner's Title Policy
- ✓ Trust Agreement and Attorney Contact
- ✓ Letter of Authority for Probated Estate (original needed at closing, if not recorded)
- ✓ Limited Liability Company Documents: Operating Agreement and Articles of Organization
- ✓ Hazard Insurance Policy and Paid Receipt

*Not accepted in all states. Contact your closing/settlement agent for more information.

MOVING Checklist

NOTIFY OF ADDRESS CHANGE

- ☐ Post Office
- ☐ Bank
- ☐ Credit card companies
- ☐ Insurance companies – Medical, auto
- ☐ Automobile – Registration, drivers license
- ☐ Utility companies
  - ☐ Arrange for any refunds of deposits
  - ☐ Arrange for service in new location
- ☐ Home delivery subscriptions
- ☐ School(s)
- ☐ Doctor(s)
- ☐ Pharmacy – Transfer prescriptions
- ☐ Church, clubs, civic organizations

DON'T FORGET TO

- ☐ Empty freezers – Plan use of foods
- ☐ Have appliances serviced for moving
  - ☐ Stay in contact with mover and confirm: insurance coverage, packing/unpacking labor, time/date of move, details of payment

MOVING DAY

- ☐ Carry currency, jewelry, and important documents
- ☐ Let a friend or relative know route, scheduled stops and arrival estimate
- ☐ Double-check closets, attic, shed
- ☐ Leave any keys needed by new owner – Garage, sheds, mailbox, etc.

Tips for MOVING WITH PETS

Moving to a home in a new location can be an exciting adventure, but it can also be the cause of stress and confusion for household pets. To minimize the trauma, here are a few tips that may help make your pet's transition a little easier:

- ✓ **SCHEDULE A VET CHECK-UP** Obtain a copy of your pet's medical history along with rabies certifications that state when/where your pet was vaccinated. Keep an ample supply of current medications to last until a veterinarian in your new location can provide refills.

- ✓ **PROPER IDENTIFICATION IS ESSENTIAL** Be certain that any required license tags are secured properly and the contact information is current.

- ✓ **CONSIDER BOARDING** your pet during the most hectic of moving days. Pets can become anxious with the increase of activity prior to a move.

- ✓ **GATHER CAR SUPPLIES** Kennel and/or safely restraint, favorite toy or two, a leash for when stops are made, and plenty of water to keep your pet hydrated.

- ✓ **KNOW STATE REQUIREMENTS** for the movement of pets across state lines. Contact the State Veterinarian in your new location to obtain the most current information.

- ✓ **PET-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATIONS** Long-distance moves may require an overnight stay. People and pet-friendly accommodations can be found by searching a number of internet sites.

- ✓ **ALLOW TIME TO ACCLIMATE** Once you have arrived in your new location, allow sufficient time for your pet to adjust to the new neighborhood; it could take a few days or a few weeks.

- ✓ **CARRY A CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH** If your pet is lost during the move, a photograph will make it much easier to search effectively.

TERMS to Know

APPRAISAL

An estimate of value of property resulting from analysis of facts about the property; an opinion of value.

ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE (APR)

The borrower's costs of the loan term expressed as a rate. This is not their interest rate.

BENEFICIARY

The recipient of benefits, often from a deed of trust; usually the lender.

CLOSING DISCLOSURE (CD)

Closing Disclosure form designed to provide disclosures that will be helpful to borrowers in understanding all of the costs of the transaction. This form will be given to the consumer three business days before closing.

CLOSE OF ESCROW

Though varied from state-to-state, escrow generally refers to the date the buyer becomes the legal owner and title insurance becomes effective.

COMPARABLE SALES

Sales that have similar characteristics as the subject real property, used for analysis in the appraisal. Commonly called "comps."

CONSUMMATION/CLOSING

Occurs when the borrower becomes contractually obligated to the creditor on the loan, not, for example, when the borrower becomes contractually obligated to a seller on a real estate transaction. The point in time when a borrower becomes contractually obligated to the creditor on the loan depends on applicable State law. Consummation is not the same as close of escrow or settlement.

DEED OF TRUST

An instrument used in many states in place of a mortgage.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

Limitations in the deed to a parcel of real property that dictate certain uses that may or may not be made of the real property.

DISBURSEMENT DATE

The date the amounts are to be disbursed to a buyer and seller in a purchase transaction or the date funds are to be paid to the borrower or a third party in a transaction that is not a purchase transaction.

EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT

Down payment made by a purchaser of real property as evidence of good faith; a deposit or partial payment.

EASEMENT

A right, privilege or interest limited to a specific purpose that one party has in the land of another.

ENDORSEMENT

As to a title insurance policy, a rider or attachment forming a part of the insurance policy expanding or limiting coverage.

ESCROWS/IMPOUNDS

A trust type of account established by lenders for the accumulation of borrower's funds to meet periodic payments of taxes, mortgage insurance premiums and/or future insurance policy premiums, required to protect their security.

HAZARD INSURANCE

Real estate insurance protecting against fire, some natural causes, vandalism, etc., depending upon the policy. Buyer often adds liability insurance and extended coverage for personal property.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

A description of land recognized by law, based on government surveys, spelling out the exact boundaries of the entire parcel of land. It should so thoroughly identify a parcel of land that it cannot be confused with any other.

LIEN

A form of encumbrance that usually makes a specific parcel of real property the security for the payment of a debt or discharge of an obligation. For example, judgments, taxes, mortgages, deeds of trust.

LOAN ESTIMATE (LE)

Form designed to provide disclosures that will be helpful to borrowers in understanding the key features, costs and risks of the mortgage loan for which they are applying. Initial disclosure to be given to the borrower three business days after application.

MORTGAGE

The instrument by which real property is pledged as security for repayment of a loan.

PITI

A payment that includes Principal, Interest, Taxes, and Insurance.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

A written instrument whereby a principal gives authority to an agent. The agent acting under such a grant is sometimes called an Attorney-in-Fact.

RECORDING

Process of filing documents affecting real property with the appropriate government agency as a matter of public record.

SETTLEMENT STATEMENT

Document providing a detailed breakdown of costs involved in a real estate transaction.

TILA-RESPA INTEGRATED DISCLOSURE (TRID)

A rule issued by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) that combines and integrates the disclosures under the Truth in Lending Act (TILA) and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA). Effective in October 2015.

NOTES

An Independent Policy-Issuing Agent of First American Title Insurance Company

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