



Chestnut Park COVID-19 Update

MARCH 25, 2020

Dear Agents,

Following OREA's announcement, questions that require clarification:

Can I continue to show properties to potential buyers or permit buyers to attend my current listing if I follow the Chestnut Park protocols? **No**. There are no further showings, interactions or in person contact whatsoever at current or future listings. This includes staging, removing of staged furniture, appraisals etc.

Can I take a new listing or work with a new buyer? **Yes**, however, only if the entire client interaction, marketing and sales process **can be done virtually**. This includes signing the listing agreement or buyer representation agreement and obtaining marketing materials (i.e. photographs), as you cannot meet in person with the seller or buyer, and photographers etc. are not permitted to visit the property.

How can I market the property since no one can visit the property? A follow-up email with various marketing solutions and options to market a new listing virtually. We will also provide solutions for new listings where you do not have pictures for your marketing materials.

Can I list a property on MLS® even if the property is no longer available for showings due to the COVID-19 emergency restrictions? TREB will not enforce MLS® rule R-345 that requires a property to be available for showings or inspections. This means that you can continue to market or list a property on MLS® even if the property isn't available for showings or other in person activity due to the current emergency protocol.

How long will these measures be in place? These restrictions will be in place until the emergency order is lifted.

In the event that you are confronted with any exceptional situation that may require in person contact or activity of any kind whatsoever, please contact a member of management for guidance.



Chestnut Park COVID-19 Update

MARCH 17, 2020

Dear Clients and Friends,

COVID-19 has created exceptional challenges for our friends, families, communities and businesses. The Chestnut Park team is working together to mitigate these challenges, to the extent possible.

Over the past week, the Chestnut Park team has rallied together to assist one another, and to support our agents and clients by implementing various protocols to reduce risk to our employees, agents and communities. We believe that we have implemented the necessary protocols that will enable us to continue to provide our clients with the up-to-date market insights, service and guidance that they have grown to expect. We will make necessary adjustments to our practices and protocols as more information becomes available.

As difficult decisions are being made, and as people will invariably be affected, I am confident that our communities, our businesses and our friendships will grow stronger and thrive. I encourage everyone to stay supportive of one another, and we will continue to provide services to our clients, agents, and the community that we serve during this difficult and trying time.

Respectfully,
Chris Kapches

CHESTNUT PARK SALESPERSONS/BROKERS

COVID-19 Property Showing Policy



As part of our ongoing efforts to tackle the obstacles posed by COVID-19, we have provided our property showing policy, below, for your use when listing your property and scheduling a property showing.

MLS Listings and Exclusive Listing Advertisements

1. All MLS listings shall include in the Broker Remarks the following: "Please see attached COVID-19 Property Showing Policy ". All advertising for exclusive listings shall also include a reference to the below COVID-19 Policy.
2. Please include the COVID-19 Property Showing Policy provided, below, as an attachment to your listing.
3. Please follow the Policy for Preparing the Home Prior to a Property Showing and the Policy for Preparing a Home After a Property Showing.

Policy for Preparing the Home Prior to a Property Showing

We strongly suggest that, prior to a Property Showing, you prepare the home so that minimal contact is necessary. For example:

1. Disinfect the lockbox, all doorknobs, surfaces, light switches and counters with antibacterial/germ killing cleaners;
2. Open all lights, all closet doors, all bathroom/bedroom and other doors so as to minimize the necessity for any agents/buyers to touch any surfaces;
3. Provide hand-sanitizers or germ killing wipes at the door;
4. Post in a conspicuous location a note that states that the agent/buyers are to clean their hands prior to entering the home/during the visit and that the agent/buyers are not permitted to touch surfaces, doorknobs etc.

Policy for Preparing a Home After a Property Showing

Following the property showing, and after the co-operating agent has left the property, we strongly suggest the following:

1. Disinfect the lockbox, all doorknobs, surfaces, light switches and counters with antibacterial/germ killing cleaners after the co-operating agent has the property showing;
2. When and where appropriate close all lights and doors;
3. Keep a log or written record of the responses you received to questions 2(a) to (c) in the COVID-19 Property Showing Policy below.

CHESTNUT PARK SALESPERSONS/BROKERS

COVID-19 Property Showing Policy



COVID-19 Property Showing Policy

Include in all of your listings, as an attachment, the following:

Thank you for your interest in our property. Given the evolution of the COVID-19 crisis, we have implemented the following protocols in order to prioritize the health and safety of our clients and our community, while also ensuring that buyers are able to obtain the information they need to make an offer:

1. Prior to scheduling a property showing, we urge all buyers to view the photographs/video tour of the property attached to this listing.
2. Prior to confirming the property showing, you must confirm in writing that:
 - a. No one attending the showing (i.e. your clients, you) has recently travelled anywhere outside of Canada or has been in contact with anyone who has travelled outside of the country.
 - b. No one attending the showing (i.e. your clients, you) has had any of the following symptoms in the last 14 days: Fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing.
 - c. No one attending the showing (i.e. your clients, you) have been in contact with anyone with a confirmed, suspected or presumptive COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days.
3. Please be advised that you/your client may be denied access to the property based on your responses to the above.
4. Prior to entering the home or touching the lockbox, we ask that you practice safe hygiene by disinfecting your hands/gloves. Hand sanitizers will be provided in the home whenever possible.
5. During the property showing, we require that you limit touching as much as possible. All interior doors will be open and lights will also be on. We ask that you do not close any doors or turn off the lights.
6. Please do not use the washroom facilities during your viewing.
7. Showings shall be limited to only the buyers and shall not include additional family members, friends or children unless there are exceptional circumstances and other arrangements are made with the listing agent.
8. Following the property showing, we ask that you disinfect the lockbox, all doorknobs, surfaces, light switches and counters that you or your clients may have come into contact with in any way with antibacterial/germ killing cleaners.
9. Please keep a log containing the names of those who have visited the property and their responses to the inquiries in 2(a) to (c), above.
10. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the listing agent.

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Government of Ontario prohibits open houses during COVID-19 pandemic

The Government of Ontario has updated its [list of non-essential businesses](#) in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Although real estate services are still considered essential, the government has prohibited the hosting of open houses, effective 11:59 PM on Saturday, April 4, 2020.

Real estate brokerages, brokers and salespeople must cease hosting and attending open houses. In addition, RECO strongly recommends that brokers and salespeople follow the direction of health officials by limiting showings to situations where they are absolutely necessary.

The government has also added requirements for short-term accommodation rentals: after April 4, 2020, they can only be provided to individuals who need housing during the state of emergency.

Although real estate trading services may continue, this is clearly not "business as usual." Ontario remains under a state of emergency, and registrants have a duty to follow the direction of health officials to minimize direct physical interaction. Embracing digital technology is essential in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

There are many other situations during a real estate trade that typically involve personal contact, such as signing documents and in-person client communications. **We strongly recommend that**

registrants look at technological solutions that can significantly reduce or eliminate the need for these in-person interactions, and discuss alternatives with their clients.

Possible alternatives include:

- Using virtual tours, 360 walk-throughs, mobile measurement applications and digital floorplans instead of in-person viewings
- Using electronic documents and signatures, instead of paper documents
- Using electronic funds transfers instead of certified cheques
- Communicating with clients via written communications, smartphone technology applications, and video conferencing, instead of face-to-face

Am I allowed to continue trading?

Yes, the government has sent a clear signal that real estate trading may continue. However, health and safety remain paramount. Health authorities have asked all Ontarians to reduce or eliminate in-person interactions. We strongly recommend that you work with your clients to find technological alternatives.

Am I allowed to take new listings?

Yes, you may enter into new listing agreements with sellers. However, you are under no obligation to do so.

Before asking your client to sign a listing agreement, make sure they understand the services you are prepared to offer, and how those services will differ compared to what they might have expected from a typical trade prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

How do I deal with tenant occupied properties?

Tenant-occupied properties pose particular challenges. Though tenants and landlords have respective rights under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, administered by the Landlord and Tenant Board, particular attention must be paid to the tenant's health and safety.

Though buyers may want to see the home in-person before committing, you could reduce the number of in-person showings required by asking buyers to assess their interest through virtual options first. If they remain interested, you could work out a plan to

safely view the property. Viewings should only occur with the tenant's consent, however.

Please take great care to discuss with your seller the importance of considering the health and safety of tenants.

Check the [Landlord and Tenant Board's website](#) for ongoing updates related to COVID-19 and tenants.

I heard some salespeople continue to trade real estate in ways that go against the direction of health officials (for example going door to door to prospect clients). What can RECO do about that?

Everyone, including registrants, must take this crisis seriously for their own health and that of the general public. The *Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002* and the Code of Ethics include provisions that require registrants to practice with integrity, to promote the best interests of their clients and to act honourably and professionally. We take these matters very seriously. Registrants who demonstrate a blatant disregard for the protection of the public, by ignoring the direction of health officials during their trading activities, will face serious sanctions, including possible disciplinary prosecution by RECO.

If my client insists, do I have to agree to use paper documents, physical cheques and in-person communications?

No, as a registrant and business operator, you decide which services you are prepared to offer. You should make those decisions based on the most current guidance and direction of health authorities, which at present is to reduce or eliminate direct physical interaction that could promote transmission of the virus. Help your clients understand the importance of following current direction from health authorities and the risks that come with paper documents and in-person meetings.

Can my seller client decline to allow showings in advance, but allow buyers to make their offers conditional on a satisfactory showing?

There is nothing in the *Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002* that would prohibit such a practice. However, you should seek advice from your brokerage and legal counsel about the pros and cons before recommending such a clause to a client. When representing the seller, be sure they understand the risks that may come from this approach. Consider including language that would protect the seller in case the

buyer then refuses to provide or unreasonably delays a final, written decision about whether they will waive the condition or not.

There is no clear alternative to certain in-person aspects of a real estate trade, such as home inspections or measuring the property to confirm dimensions prior to listing. What does RECO recommend?

RECO is considering these sorts of questions, but in this rapidly evolving situation, we don't have all the answers. We are looking to the profession, which continues to develop innovative solutions to these sorts of challenges. We invite brokers and salespeople to share these solutions with their colleagues and their local boards.

How does the government's announcement impact RECO's services?

Though RECO has been identified as an essential workplace, RECO will continue to operate and provide information about COVID-19 and real estate. Please remember that RECO has no authority to direct the cessation of real estate trading in Ontario.

RECO has transitioned all of its staff to working from home, in order to continue to deliver key services while protecting their safety. RECO's core services (registration applications, transfers, Mandatory Continuing Education and complaint handling) are all available online. For the latest information about RECO's service delivery, please visit [RECO's COVID-19 Notices page](#).