



# Welcome

**Buying a home can be a wonderful and exciting time when you are receiving professional guidance and go about it using a logical, informed process.**

We have prepared this comprehensive Homebuyer's Guide that will help you navigate the process of purchasing your new home from the offer to move-in.

Save time, energy and frustration working with an agent who can assist you in moving through the home buying process from search, to decision, to ownership.

Using a refined, efficient process to research and assemble documentation for homes that meet your criteria, we ensure your time will be spent in the homes that you want to see.

## How We Can Help

- Identify your needs
- Find sources of financing
- Obtain accurate information on neighborhoods, schools, and communities
- Select and arrange property showings
- Evaluate properties of interest
- Be knowledgeable about the forms and agreements
- Advise on contract contingencies to protect you
- Negotiate a favorable price and terms of purchase; being prepared with a rationale for everything, thus strengthening your bargaining position
- Monitor the entire purchase process, assisting with issues that arise through closing
- Refer other service providers, such as inspectors, contractors, and exterminators

# CHOOSING A REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL

**When selecting a real estate professional, you want someone who has a thorough understanding and can provide accurate information on neighborhoods, schools, and communities.**

You want someone who can anticipate problems before they occur and offer solutions based on previous results.

The right agent will understand the complexities of the ever changing real estate market and be able to communicate to you crucial market data.



Buying a home involves a significant amount of money and can be emotional; it is important you find someone you like and trust. You must have confidence in knowing your real estate agent understands your concerns and objectives.

Only after we fully understand your position, can we then focus on the areas of importance and meet your objectives.

In addition to finding homes that meet your wants and needs, we have the resources to assist you in finance, insurance, and other related service professionals, such as home inspectors, pest control companies and movers.

## WHY DO YOU NEED A REALTOR?

A Realtor brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the business of buying a home. In fact, a licensed real estate professional provides much more than the service of helping you find the home of your dreams. Realtors are not just sales agents. They are expert negotiators, seasoned financial advisors, and superb navigators around the local neighborhood. They are members of the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and must abide by a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice enforced by the NAR. A professional Realtor is your best resource when beginning your search for your new home.



**The services you receive will vary depending on your agency relationship. It is important you know the agent's ethical and legal responsibilities that exist when working as a buyer's agent and as a seller's agent.**

## A BUYER'S AGENT

A Buyer's Agent acts solely on behalf of the buyer and owes duties to the buyer, which include the utmost good faith, loyalty, and fidelity. The agent will negotiate on behalf of, and act as an advocate for the buyer. The buyer is legally responsible for the actions of the agent when that agent is acting within the scope of the agency. The agent must disclose to sellers all adverse material facts concerning the buyer's financial ability to perform the terms of the transaction and whether the buyer intends to occupy the property. A separate written buyer's agreement is required which sets forth the duties and obligations of the parties.

## A SELLER'S AGENT

A Seller's Agent acts solely on behalf of the seller and owes duties to the seller, which include the utmost good faith, loyalty, and fidelity. The agent will negotiate on behalf of, and act as an advocate for the seller. The seller is legally responsible for the actions of the agent when that agent is acting within the scope of the agency. The agent must disclose to buyers or tenants all adverse material facts about the property known by the broker. A separate written listing agreement is required which sets forth the duties and obligations of the parties.

## WHAT IS THE BUYER'S AGENCY AGREEMENT?

Entering into a Buyer's Agency Agreement has countless advantages and no disadvantages. When you sign a Buyer's agency agreement, you are simply agreeing to "hire" a personal representative who, by law, must represent your best interests to the best of his/her ability.

All of this personal service is available at absolutely **NO COST TO YOU!** The Seller's Agent is responsible for paying your Buyer's Agent fee. As your Realtor, you get a professional devoted to protecting your needs to help you make one of the most important investment decisions of your life -- and you don't even have to pay the fee!



# SELLER'S PROPERTY DISCLOSURE

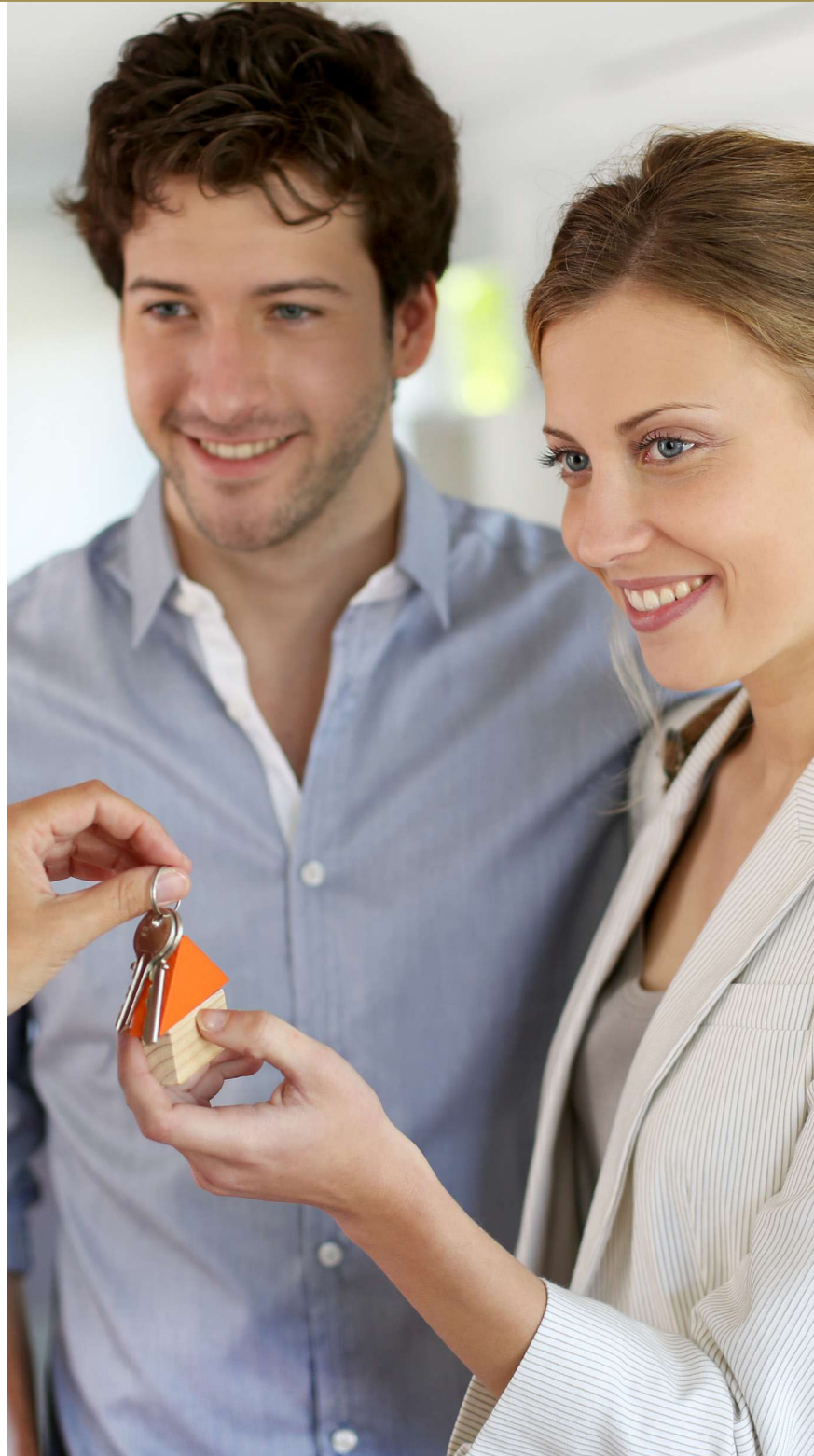
As a buyer, when you make an offer on a home, we will request the seller to provide a Property Disclosure Statement; it is a helpful source of information on what the seller knows about the condition of the property.

The document is a multi-page questionnaire the Seller completes normally at the time they list the house with their agent. It covers in great detail the structural and environmental condition of the home.

The seller must state if they have any knowledge of various conditions or occurrences of their home, for example, if there has ever been a plumbing problem. They can answer if they know, but if they don't know, it doesn't mean it never happened before they bought the home. Or if they never lived in the home but were investors or inherited it, they might not know, and they would mark the "don't know" or "no" box.

What's most important is that you review the disclosure statement with your agent and know what action you can take to negotiate or reject the purchase based on disclosures made.

*You should not rely on the disclosure for your in-detail information, but do a full and complete home inspection in order to thoroughly examine the home and understand any and all conditions, defects or potential trouble spots that come along with it.*



# Home Warranty & Insurance

## WHAT IS A HOME SERVICE CONTRACT? (a.k.a. Home Warranty)

Home Warranty is a descriptive term and was coined because the home service contract industry evolved by offering sellers a service contract to homebuyers as a form of a "warranty." The term home warranty seemed to fit and has persisted. Many home service contract companies still widely use the term "home warranty" in their name or on their contracts.

## ISN'T A HOME SERVICE CONTRACT LIKE INSURANCE?

Actually, a home service contract is nothing like homeowners insurance. Insurance covers you for risk of partial or total loss of your property due to sudden and unpredictable events such as fire, wind, hail, theft, collision or other accidents. Insurance does not cover breakdowns due to normal wear and tear. Service contracts cover breakdowns due to normal wear and tear. The two products complement each other - they do not overlap.

## IS A HOME SERVICE CONTRACT A GOOD CHOICE?

The service contract focuses on major, built-in household appliances and home systems; generally covering things like dishwashers, ovens, disposals, wiring and plumbing systems, and most importantly, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC). Many home service contract providers also offer a menu of optional coverages, such as pool pumps, spas and free standing appliances, i.e. refrigerators, washers/dryers, etc. At an average cost of \$350 - \$500 for a 12-month period, having a home service contract is highly recommended.

## A HOME SERVICE CONTRACT OFFERS YOU:

- Peace of Mind: Knowing you're protected against unexpected repair or replacement costs.
- Budget Protection: From the high cost of home repair.
- Convenience: Most service contract providers have representatives available toll-free 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE

Unless you pay cash for your home, one of the requirements that will be made by your lender is proof of a valid homeowners insurance policy, secured before closing. This policy protects both your investment as well as the lenders from unforeseeable events and covers most home casualties, liability and personal property.

## OBTAINING INSURANCE

Allow plenty of lead time before closing to find homeowners insurance. Costs and coverage can vary, so obtain at least three quotes from different companies. When evaluating policies to find the one that best suits your needs, consider questions such as:

- What is covered?
- What is not covered?
- How much will the insurance cost?
- Are discounts available for such things as smoke detectors and fire alarms, burglar alarms, non-smoking owners, combined auto and home policies, higher deductibles?
- What is the deductible?
- Is the home in an area prone to hurricanes where wind insurance may be a separate policy?
- Is the home in a flood zone where separate flood insurance is required?

**Note:** Some personal items such as expensive jewelry or valuable collectibles may not be covered in standard homeowner policies. When getting your quotes, include an inventory of your possessions to see if riders are required to cover these items.