

29 June, 2020



Mandatory Operational Plans, Open Houses, and other matters.

Dear Members

We would like to take this opportunity to remind members of the **mandatory** requirement to prepare an operational plan, to highlight current guidelines for open houses and to suggest a few other best practices.

We are also advising members of the establishment of a COVID-19 Atlantic Bubble and Campbellton to move to a Yellow Phase of recovery.

Must Have a COVID-19 Operational Plan

We would like to remind members that it is a mandatory **requirement** in the Province of New Brunswick's Mandatory Order to comply with guidelines of WorkSafe NB and the Chief Medical Officer of Health. This includes each agent and REALTOR® having a **written** Operational Plan. REALTORS® may follow the operational plan of their representative agent (firm). **In addition, REALTORS® must have a copy of this operational plan (either hard copy or electronic) on them at all times when conducting business and abide by these plans.**

Failure to comply with the above may result in financial and other punitive consequences. These may include fines imposed by the province in amounts ranging from **\$240 plus surcharges and fees to \$10,200 plus surcharges and fees or fines imposed by other law enforcement organizations**. Equally important are the negative public perception implications for our profession as well as potential for professional misconduct consequences. Every member must be mindful of the impact to the overall profession and the reputation of REALTORS® if they do not complete and abide by an operational plan.

The NBREA has issued an [Operational Plan Guideline](http://www.nbrea.ca) document available at www.nbrea.ca which may help you prepare your own operational plan.

If you have not yet completed your own written operational plan, we advise you to prepare one before conducting any real estate activities.





Open Houses

While the Mandatory Order does not specifically restrict open houses, **NBREA recommends that open houses be completed virtually rather than in-person.**

NBREA wants to remind REALTORS® that the risks associated with hosting a traditional in-person open house in the new normal of COVID-19 remains high.

Each agent (firm) and each REALTOR® must assess whether the benefits of hosting an in-person open house outweigh the potential risks of spreading COVID-19 to REALTORS®, staff, and clients. Other risks may include potential damage to the overall public image and reputation of New Brunswick REALTORS®, the agent (firm) and the individual REALTOR® who hosts the open house.

Should a REALTOR® make the decision to move forward with an in-person open house, the following are guidelines provided to NBREA from WorkSafe NB for conducting in-person open houses. **These WorkSafe NB guidelines should be followed and included in the written operational plan of each agent (firm) and REALTOR®.**

- Every step possible should be taken to ensure physical distancing is followed as this is the most effective precaution. This may include:
 - Marking 2-meter intervals.
 - Passive screening (signage on entrances).
 - Promotion of frequent hand washing by all parties.
 - Rigorous cleaning practices especially with items frequently touched/handled by several people (doorknobs etc..).
 - Ensuring all REALTORS® working at the open house are aware of the necessary precautions they must follow.
- In instances where 2 meters cannot be maintained, additional measures will apply including:
 - Consider installing a physical barrier such as a plastic guard to protect REALTORS® from potential exposure.
 - Active rather than passive screening. This would include conducting temperature checks of all persons using either a non-contact thermometer or disposable thermometer
 - The mandatory use of face coverings which include non-medical masks.
 - Maintaining personnel logs which include who visited, their contact information and time of entry and departure.





In addition to the above required guidance provided by WorkSafe NB, NBREA also suggests that REALTORS® consider implementing the following *best practices* when conducting in-person open houses in this new normal.

- REALTORS® should consult with their agent (firm) if hosting an open house is permitted per their agent (firm)'s own operational plans.
- Consider setting appointment times for attendees of open houses to stagger entry to the property.
- REALTORS® should consider vetting any attendees of open houses to ensure they are serious buyers worthy of the risk of permitting entry into a client's property. This may include:
 - Asking to see photo ID and retaining the information for contract tracing purposes if required by public health.
 - Asking to see pre-qualification financing letter.

Other Best Practices

Given the continued risk of COVID-19, agent (firms) and REALTORS® may want to consider implementing the following additional *best practices* within their written operational plans.

- REALTORS® should consider requiring their prospective buyers to drive by the property to confirm they like the location and the yard PRIOR to going inside the property for a showing.
- REALTORS® should consider requesting pre-qualification financing letters from prospective buyers PRIOR to going inside a property for a showing.

Atlantic Bubble

Effective July 3, 2020, residents of the Atlantic Provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland) will be able to cross interprovincial borders and travel within the four provinces without the requirement to self-isolate for fourteen days provided they can meet the following criteria:

- Have not traveled outside of the Atlantic provinces for any reason, including work or personal travel in the past fourteen (14) days.
- Have not been advised to self-isolate.
- Are not awaiting results of a COVID-19 test.
- Are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.



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Each Atlantic province will choose its own public health process to track and monitor people that enter their province.

NBREA intends to update its COVID-19 Buyer Property Showing Acknowledgement form and COVID-19 Seller Property Showing Acknowledgement form to reflect this new change.

Campbellton progressing to Yellow Zone

Effective Friday June 26, 2020, Zone 5 (Campbellton region) will move into the Yellow Phase of recovery along with the rest of the province.

Thank you for working hard to minimize the risk of further outbreaks of COVID-19. Through cooperation, kindness, and compassion, we will all benefit from increasing the level of professionalism for the REALTOR® brand.

Thank you.

