

Not All Agents Are 'Realtors' — Why You Should Care Whether Yours Is

Maybe you've seen commercials from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and the Colorado Association of Realtors (CAR) urging you to "Make Sure Your Agent Is a Realtor®." It's an important point, but one that I don't believe the average consumer "gets."

The term "Realtor" is too often used by people outside the industry to apply to any licensed real estate agent. In fact, "Realtor" is a registered trademark that only members of NAR are allowed to use. That is why the term is capitalized and followed by the ® symbol. In Colorado and nationally, only half of all real estate licensees are members of a local Realtor association and thereby also members of NAR.

The Realtor associations emphasize that only a Realtor is bound by the Realtor Code of Ethics, which imposes a higher stan-

dard of conduct than the license law. The Code requires us to protect and promote our clients' interests, but also be honest with other parties. We must avoid misrepresentation or concealment of pertinent facts. Realtors accept compensation from only one party to a transaction, except with full disclosure and informed consent. We secure the funds of clients and customers in trust accounts. We are required to be knowledgeable and competent in the fields in which we practice.

Importantly, we have a system to enforce the Code of Ethics. If there is a dispute between a consumer and a Realtor or between Realtors, the associations hear those complaints and take action when a violation has been proven.

Economic hardship has seen the number of Realtors decline. Some

real estate agents have been unwilling or unable to maintain their association membership. Required expenditures for license renewal and E&O insurance have risen while income has gone down, so some of the less successful agents have been tempted to cut the optional expenditure of \$450+ per year to maintain Realtor affiliation.

Don't think that because your agent has MLS access that he must be a Realtor. Although Denver's MLS is Realtor-owned, any real estate licensee can subscribe to the service. The major difference, however, is that only the listings of Realtors are uploaded to realtor.com, the nation's #1 website for listings. If your agent's listings are among the 4% of Metrolist listings that are *not* on realtor.com, he or she may not be a Realtor.

As a seller, I would question any agent's ability to spend money marketing my home if he can't afford to join the Realtor association.

This Week's Featured New Listing:

Patio Home Backs to Creek & Pasture

Imagine a neighborhood of detached single-family homes, many with fenced backyards (like this one), yet the \$220 HOA dues cover homeowners' insurance, exterior maintenance (including roofs and decks), grounds maintenance of all unfenced areas, snow removal, and trash collection. That describes the unique 24-home subdivision known as Meadow Run. This home at **800 Meadow Run** is on Meadow Run's largest lot, one of six homes backing to Tucker Gulch and a pasture. The picture above is taken from the bike path along Tucker Gulch and next to that pasture. North Table Mountain is in the background. The owners love it here and it's rare to find one for sale, in this case by its original owner. Take the video tour on this home's web page, then call for a showing!



REAL ESTATE TODAY



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