

Cornerstone  
Association of REALTORS®

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**REALTOR®**  
**SAFETY**

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# LEARNING GOALS

- Understand exposure to risks.
- Follow safety best practices.
- How to assess & react to a potentially dangerous situation.
- Safeguard your own and your clients' personal data.
- Encourage all to follow safety best practices and company safety policies.





**CHAPTER 1:  
REAL  
ESTATE: A  
HIGH-RISK  
BUSINESS?**

POLL TIME

**REALTOR® SAFETY**



# WHY IS REAL ESTATE RISKY?

- Image of success
- Meeting unknown prospects at properties
- Unfamiliar properties and at odd hours Sitting in open houses alone
- Entering vacant properties
- Driving with strangers and multitasking in cars In the public eye
- Multiple ways to make contact
- Handling a lot of client's personal information





**CHAPTER  
2: SAFETY  
SYSTEMS  
TO LIMIT  
RISK**



# SAFETY: AN ESSENTIAL BUSINESS SYSTEM

- Think about safety as an essential business system.
- Safety systems remind us to apply precautions consistently.
- A Special Message for Men





# SMARTPHONES: SAFETY TOOLS ALWAYS ON YOU

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- GPS tracking SMS
- Alerts and alarms
- Photo sharing
- Surveillance
- Call blockers

POLL TIME





# PROPERTY SHOWING SAFETY

- The riskiest aspect of real estate practice?
- CITO
- Do background checks.
- Office should know where you are, who you are with.
- No showings after dark. Park at the curb.
- Carry only the essentials: keys, phone.
- Never turn your back to a prospect.
- Avoid spaces that could be traps.



**Distress Codes: Secret word or phrase to signal danger.**

What code words do you use?







# SHOWING SAFETY FOR SELLERS

- Staging for safety as part of listing presentation.
- Lock away valuables, drugs, weapons, family information including photos.
- Opportunity for thefts, predators?
- Virtual tours = virtual casing of properties. Extra security while on the market.
- Not every prospect, agent is who they claim to be

Tip: Use  
Sentrilock and  
OTERR for out-  
of-town agents



# OPEN HOUSE & MODEL HOME SAFETY

- No opportunity to screen prospects.
- Model homes in isolated locations. Use the buddy system.
- Learn the property—inside and outside. Keep office, family, or a friend informed of your whereabouts and schedule.
- Inform the neighbors, ask for their help. Visitor sign-in.
- When closing up, never assume that the home is vacant.





# COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

- Schedule showings of vacant commercial sites during daylight hours.
- Thick walls and remote locations may interfere with mobile phone reception.



# LISTING APPOINTMENT SAFETY

- Could be a lure.
- Who referred the caller? Who is the owner?
- History of property.
- Is it a safe neighborhood?
- If it doesn't feel right, leave immediately.





# OTHER SAFETY

- Get to know workers in nearby businesses.
- Locked doors, unobstructed windows.
- Agent sign-in/sign-out board.
- Emergency contact information.
- Don't leave purses, wallets, or small electronics on desks.
- Keep file cabinets locked.





# AUTO SAFETY

- Drive separately or be the driver.
- Keep car in top operating condition.
- Breakdown essentials in trunk.
- Know where you are going.
- Avoid aggressive drivers, road rage situations.
- No texting, multitasking while driving.
- Keys out, ready to open the car door.
- Unlock only the driver-side door.
- Check the back seat.
- Lock all the doors immediately and get moving.
- Car keys on separate ring from house, office keys.

POLL TIME



**CHAPTER 3:  
YOU YOUR  
FIRST LINE  
OF DEFENSE**



# THE CRIME EQUATION



Remove part of the equation to lessen the likelihood of a crime



# **ALL OF US HAVE A BUILT-IN SAFETY SENSE, OUR SURVIVAL INSTINCT**

What does instinct feel like?



# FIGHT OR FLIGHT

Depends on a combination of factors:

- Physical capability
- Proximity of the attacker
- Presence of a weapon
- Knowledge of self-defense

POLL TIME

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# ESCAPE?

- If threatened, act decisively and escape unharmed.
- Don't apologize or announce intention.
- Running away is as courageous as fighting back. Can you make an escape?

# DIFFUSE?

- Buy time to assess the situation, decide what to do. Create a distraction and escape.
- On the other hand...
- May trigger the attacker's emotions
  - Justification for motives for attack



# SHOULD YOU TRY TO DEFEND YOURSELF?

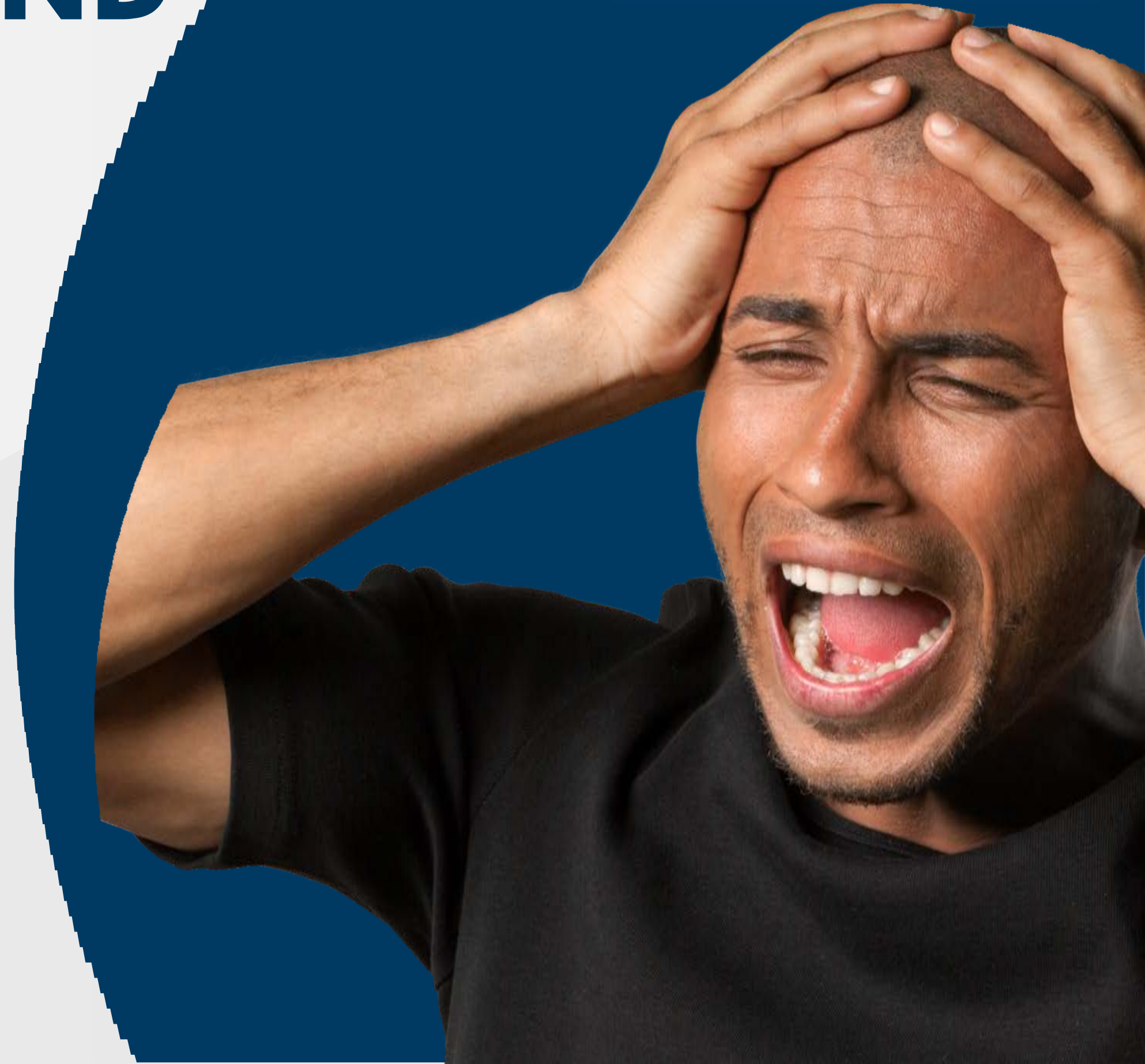
Fighting back: A conscious decision when  
escaping is not an option.

POLL TIME



# HOW WE RESPOND TO THREATS

- Denial and delay: "This can't be happening!"
- Deliberation: "What should I do?"
- Decision: "Okay. Here goes!"
- Recycle through denial, delay, deliberation.
- Physical responses: Stress hormones, Heart rate increases, Dissociation, shutting down; negative panic.
- What can we do? Confidence, Preparation.





# SHOULD YOU TAKE A SELF - DEFENSE CLASS?

## Benefits

- Rehearse simulated confrontations
- Learn to recognize and evaluate threats
- Improve fitness

## Gain confidence to:

- Handle threats
- Choose right response
- Defend yourself
- Calm fear responses





# 911 RESCUE ME!

- Where do 911 calls go?
- Response time?
- Can the emergency system locate you?  
Is the system GPS enabled?
- Can the emergency operator call back?
- Can police provide extra patrols for open house events, around vacant properties?
- How/when to report non-emergencies?





**CHAPTER 4:  
WILD,  
WILD WEB**



# US VS. HACKERS

What is your most vulnerable point?

- Your computer, tablet, or smartphone

Hackers' motives:

- Bragging rights
- Theft
- Fraud

Reduce the crime opportunities:

- Security technology
- Conscientious data handling
- Common sense





# EMAIL SECURITY

- Not a secure communication channel.
- How many emails do you receive every day?
- Every email passes through servers of a 3rd party.
- No control after it's sent.
- Most serious security threats originate from human behavior.



# MALWARE & MORE

- Malware Phishing
- Adware programs
- Often email attachments
- Best defense = common sense.
- Don't click on links, download, or respond.
- Buy robust, regularly updated antivirus software.



# SCAMS

## (EMAIL, TEXT, CALL)

- “Nigerian” email scam
- “National Do Not Email Registry” scam Mail order scam
- FTC pending consumer complaint Masquerade attack, spoofing
- URL or trademark expiration scam “Your computer is infected” alert Fake funeral notice





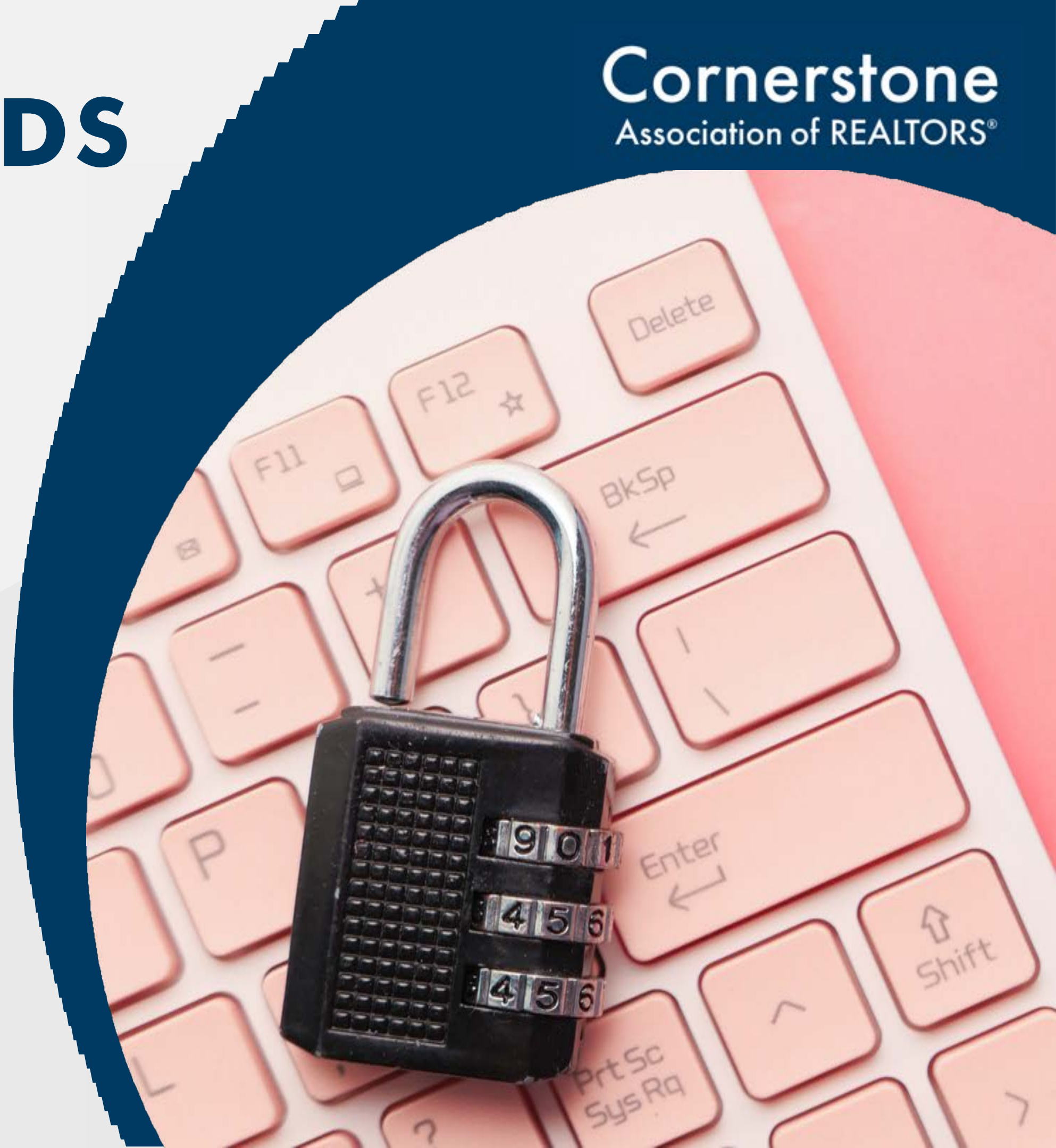
# SMART PASSWORDS

Purpose: slow down hackers so they don't try.

Social media profiles can make guessing easy. Secure passwords:

- Random combinations
- Acronyms
- Picture, Action, Object (PAO)

[www.howsecureismypassword.net](http://www.howsecureismypassword.net) Use a password management app— remember one password.

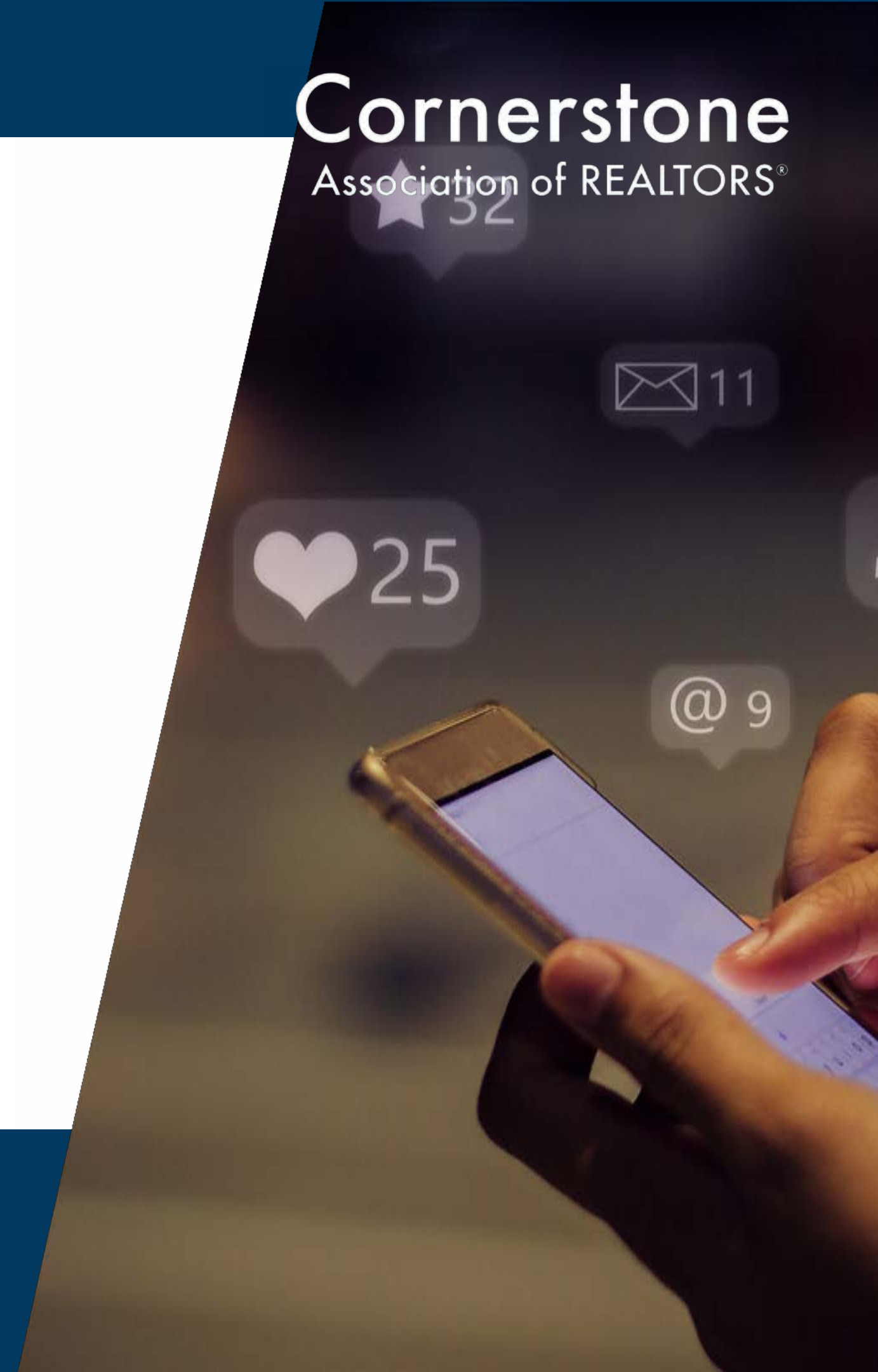




# SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY

- Keep business and personal separate.
- Watch what you say. Use privacy controls. Control friend requests.
- Don't reveal too much information in profiles. Tweets are forever.

POLL TIME





# GEOTAGGING A HIDDEN RISK?

- - Embeds GPS metadata with digital photos. Location data posted with photo.  
Criminals can follow your movements, establish patterns,
  - know when you're on vacation.
  - Disable metadata on phones, cameras. Don't disable GPS location tracking.



# IDENTITY THEFT



- The first line of defense is vigilance and caution.
- Use secure HTTPS connections. Look for the padlock icon.
- Check bills and statements.
- My identification was stolen, now what?
- Place a Fraud Alert (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion) Order Credit Reports from all 3.
- Create an Identity Theft Report with the police.

POLL TIME

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# TRASH OR TREASURE?

Shred anything with personal information:

- Unwanted credit card applications "Convenience checks"
- Credit card receipts and statements
- Outdated financial records

Break down shipping boxes, stuff in trash bags, closed dumpster.



# 5 BEST PRACTICES

**1. TAKE STOCK**

**2. SCALE DOWN**

**3. LOCK IT**

**4. PITCH IT**

**5. PLAN AHEAD**

Free Data Security Toolkit at [www.Realtor.org](http://www.Realtor.org)



**CHAPTER 5:  
COMPANY  
SAFETY  
SYSTEM**



# OUR SAFETY BEST PRACTICES

- How does our company compare?
- You don't have to wait to adopt individual precautions.
- "Company policy" must apply to everyone, every time or it could be discriminatory.
- Company-wide commitment to safety.
- Your actions could put others at risk.





# ARE WE TAKING RISKS?

- What do agents and employees do and not do?
- Individual precautions or company best practices?
- Use checklists in the manual to take stock.
- Decide what best practices to adopt as a company.





# RESOURCES

- Your on-the-job safety is a top priority for the National Association of REALTORS®
- Visit [www.realtor.org/topics/realtor-safety](http://www.realtor.org/topics/realtor-safety)
- Resources you can use today
- Develop your own best practices
- Cornerstone Realtor® Safety Booklet



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## **Top 5 Safety Action Items for REALTORS®**

1. Plan Your Safety Strategy
2. Tips and Best Practices
3. Training Videos
4. Personal Protection Resources
5. Take the REALTOR® Safety Pledge



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**THANK YOU**

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