

CHECKLIST FOR HIRING A REAL ESTATE AGENT

- Have each agent you are considering do a presentation on why you should hire him or her. Keep the information the agent provides to be sure the agent follows through with promises. Ask questions pertinent to the type of transaction you are considering.
- Ask to see the agent's real estate license pocket card and DMV identification. A business card is not enough.
- Check with CalBRE to determine if the license has a disciplinary history. Consider the type and elapsed time of any discipline carefully. Look for an H number, R number, or D&R number in the public comment section of the license record. Call CalBRE for clarification on any discipline taken.
- Ask for personal references of clients (names and phone numbers) and contact the clients.
- Ask about specialization in transactions.
- Ask for professional affiliations with real estate or mortgage organizations. If the agent claims professional affiliation, verify with the organization. If they claim to be a specialist, expert, or have certification, ask for proof. See CalBRE alerts on warnings about false and misleading designations: www.calbre.ca.gov/Consumers/ConsumerAlerts.html.
- Talk to friends, neighbors, and people you trust for referrals.
- Check with the real estate boards, the Better Business Bureau, and chambers of commerce. Consider all ratings and complaints.



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS BUREAU OF REAL ESTATE

1651 Exposition Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95815
Public Information Line: (877) 373-4542
Fax: (916) 263-8943
www.calbre.ca.gov

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Real Estate MATTERS

Finding the Right
Real Estate Agent



Finding the Right Real Estate Agent: What You Should Do

So, you are going to buy or sell real estate and are looking for an agent. Because a real estate transaction is often your biggest and most important investment, we suggest the following to make it a positive experience and to protect yourself. (If you have difficulty, ask someone you trust for help, or visit us!)

General Advice

Use due diligence—once you have a list of agents, **DO YOUR HOMEWORK!**

Contact the California Bureau of Real Estate (CalBRE) and verify the agent is licensed at www.calbre.ca.gov or call (877) 373-4542.

Unlicensed agents are bad news and you should avoid them!

Things to look for on the BRE website:

- Is the agent's license current (not Expired, Surrendered, Revoked, or Licensed NBA)? If not, do not deal with that person.
- If the agent is a salesperson, be sure they work for a broker. If not, do not hire them.
- If a licensed corporation, is there a designated broker?
- Is there a hearing number ("H" number) in the license information? If YES, contact CalBRE for information on the license discipline.
- If performing residential mortgage loan activities, do they have a National Mortgage Licensing System (NMLS) license number. If not, do not deal with them.

Find more information in our Consumers section at: www.calbre.ca.gov/Consumers.

If the information provided by the agent does not match what you find, be cautious. If you have further questions, contact CalBRE.



Check Out the Licensee

- Check for any news stories about them.
- Are there any pending criminal charges, arrests, or civil actions?
- Are there website postings about them from clients?
- Look up county courts online for pending criminal charges or civil actions.
- When possible, look up their name with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) at www.bbb.org.
- Any complaints? How were they resolved by the agent?
- Are they accredited with BBB?
- What is their BBB rating (A–F)?
- How long have they been in business?
- If the agent claims they are an agent in a current transaction, check with the local real estate board.
- Do they have a business license with the city?
- If a corporation, is it registered with the Secretary of State? Verify at <http://kepler.sos.ca.gov/cbs.aspx>.
- Are fictitious business names registered with the county and CalBRE?

Complaint Forms

If you have a complaint against a licensed real estate agent, complaint forms are available at www.calbre.ca.gov or you can call (877) 373-4542 for assistance.

Contact CalBRE

To contact the California Bureau of Real Estate, call (877) 373-4542 toll-free for assistance in English or Spanish.

Bureau of Real Estate District Offices

Sacramento (Principal office)
1651 Exposition Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95815

Fresno
2550 Mariposa Mall, Suite 3070
Fresno, CA 93721-2273

Los Angeles
320 W. 4th Street, Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90013-1105

Oakland
1515 Clay Street, Suite 702
Oakland, CA 94612-1462

San Diego
1350 Front Street, Suite 1063
San Diego, CA 92101-3687