



## Wire Fraud Disclosure

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As real estate professionals, we strongly recommend that all parties to a real estate transaction take caution in transmitting sensitive financial or personal information electronically. If you need to send or request sensitive information (such as Social Security information or numbers, Bank Account information, Credit Card account information, or Wiring Instructions), parties should try to only provide such information in person (if you personally know the party you are speaking to), by trackable mail or courier, or via secure or encrypted channels.

Real Estate transactions across the country have recently been seeing a rise in Wire Fraud scams. These scams affect real estate brokers, lenders, title companies, buyers and sellers.

It usually occurs through email hacking to get the parties to the transaction to unknowingly wire money directly to a hacker's account. These hackers are sophisticated and monitor real estate transactions in online listing sites to obtain information regarding the transaction, when it might be closing, in order to intercept either the buyer's purchase funds, mortgage payoff, or the seller's proceeds from the sale.

Information regarding the real estate brokers, buyers and sellers, can be obtained in order for hackers to gain access to email accounts or create spoof email accounts that can imitate one of the parties to the transaction. Once a hacker has obtained access to an email account or created a spoof email account, they will send "new" or "revised" wiring instructions just before closing to any of the involved parties which might include information and/or instructions regarding a different account to which the funds should be wired. Once funds are unwittingly wired to a hacker's account, the money is instantly gone. A wire transfer once sent, cannot be reversed or stopped.

Whether a buyer or seller, always personally verify wire instructions by calling the title/escrow company to reconfirm information again directly with the title/escrow agent before and even at the closing.

Be suspicious of emails with purportedly updated, revised, or corrected wiring instructions. It is extremely rare that a/the title/escrow agent will change wire instruction during the course of a transaction.

Also, make sure to use very strong passwords for your email accounts, and frequently changing passwords and keeping passwords secure by not writing them down or sharing them.

Client: \_\_\_\_\_

Client: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Licensee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_