

Rural Safety Tips

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Safety involves humans, animals, weather, situations, and more. Below are safety points from land professionals on safety in the rural environment. Some of these suggestions are appropriate for real estate professionals in all areas of real estate.

Driving

1. Don't talk on the phone, write, and drive at the same time. Likewise, don't drive, look at a map, or take photos while driving with your knee.
2. Use DOT construction maps/road updates to save time and prevent ending up in an unfamiliar area, being in an area where one prefers not to be, or being on a road closed due to snow or other natural disaster.
3. Always have car keys easily accessible and lock car doors. All equipment, briefcases, and other items should be placed in the trunk.
4. Don't crest a hill on a gravel road while on a cell phone in the middle of the road.
5. Drive a vehicle that can handle rough terrain and mud.

Dogs

1. When driving into a rural area, wait a bit before getting out of the car to give dogs plenty of time to come to the truck and adjust. Talk to them out of the window before departing the vehicle.
2. Some might find comfort in carrying a weapon to protect themselves in case they encounter an extremely aggressive situation. This might happen in the woods or rural areas.
3. When making an appointment to view a rural property, ask if the owner has dogs, if the animals are friendly, and what their names are. Ask the owner to put the dogs in a barn, kennel, or other shelter if he believes the dogs are not friendly. Consider asking the owners to be on the premises when arriving to property with dogs.

Snakes

1. Wear boots and keep them available in your truck or vehicle to wear for protection.
2. If a rock needs to be turned over, pick up the side facing away.
3. Consider carrying a weapon, such as a firearm.

Ticks

1. During the tick season, apply permethrin to your clothes. [Here is a link](#) to explain what permethrin is. If placed on clothing -- not skin -- it will last through six washings.

Hunters

1. During hunting season, wear bright colored clothing and, at least, a bright hat. Do not go out during firearm deer season. A 30.06 bullet can carry two miles. Wear red, blaze orange or glow-in-the dark green.

Personal Safety

1. Use common sense and do not get close to animals who do not know you.
2. Have a cell phone in hand with safety numbers plugged in for easy dialing.
3. Attempt to obtain names, residence—city and state—cell number, office, home phone numbers, occupation, and make, model and color of vehicles for unknown prospective buyers or lessees land. Inform them in advance of the make, model and color of the practitioner's vehicle.
4. Share this information with someone you work with, including the property location and time of appointments.
5. A female should try not show alone.
6. Always have your phone charged.
7. Carrying a can of hornet spray is a good defense, easy to use, and very effective when sprayed in the face. Carry mace or a weapon.
8. If it doesn't feel right, get out of there!
9. When going into a basement, let the client go downstairs first or let them go alone and stay on the main floor. Always leave yourself an exit strategy.
10. If you feel uncomfortable in doing something -- your intuition is an asset -- don't do it. Trust your instincts.

11. Besides giving a colleague, friend, or partner a map, address, and owner's name, have that person call you 10 minutes after you should have arrived for the appointment; have a code word that would signal a problem, but that wouldn't give away that you are using the code if someone is listening.
12. When working with strangers, have them walk in front of you.
13. Know what some of the materials are to make meth and what they look like. If you see evidence of this type of material, leave and contact law enforcement.
14. If a firearm is carried, make sure that lessons have been taken and the appropriate licenses have been applied for and granted. Only use when you know that your life is in danger.

Weather

1. Have a weather app on our phone that will send a warning in the event of a tornado, hail, blizzard or other weather hazards.
2. Be prepared for winter weather. Have a survival kit in your trunk -- a blanket, extra hats, gloves, boots, non-perishable food, and water.

Take safety seriously!



Terri Jensen, ALC Advanced, 2015 Institute National President of REALTORS® Land Institute, is the Investor Relations and Appraisal Manager for Farmers National Company. She earned the prestigious **Accredited Land Consultant (ALC)** designation in 2005, an indication of the most knowledgeable, productive, and trusted land professional. As a result of her completion of professional development to stay current in the profession, she has earned recognition as an **ALC Advanced**. Jensen has been active in Government Affairs and protection of the 1031 Like-Exchange tax code and has worked together with the National Association of REALTORS® and other professional organizations on the matter.