



Information About Brokerage Services

11-2-2015

Texas law requires all real estate license holders to give the following information about brokerage services to prospective buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords.

TYPES OF REAL ESTATE LICENSE HOLDERS:

- **A BROKER** is responsible for all brokerage activities, including acts performed by sales agents sponsored by the broker.
- **A SALES AGENT** must be sponsored by a broker and works with clients on behalf of the broker.

A BROKER'S MINIMUM DUTIES REQUIRED BY LAW (A client is the person or party that the broker represents):

- Put the interests of the client above all others, including the broker's own interests;
- Inform the client of any material information about the property or transaction received by the broker;
- Answer the client's questions and present any offer to or counter-offer from the client; and
- Treat all parties to a real estate transaction honestly and fairly.

A LICENSE HOLDER CAN REPRESENT A PARTY IN A REAL ESTATE TRANSACTION:

AS AGENT FOR OWNER (SELLER/LANDLORD): The broker becomes the property owner's agent through an agreement with the owner, usually in a written listing to sell or property management agreement. An owner's agent must perform the broker's minimum duties above and must inform the owner of any material information about the property or transaction known by the agent, including information disclosed to the agent or subagent by the buyer or buyer's agent.

AS AGENT FOR BUYER/TENANT: The broker becomes the buyer/tenant's agent by agreeing to represent the buyer, usually through a written representation agreement. A buyer's agent must perform the broker's minimum duties above and must inform the buyer of any material information about the property or transaction known by the agent, including information disclosed to the agent by the seller or seller's agent.

AS AGENT FOR BOTH - INTERMEDIARY: To act as an intermediary between the parties the broker must first obtain the written agreement of *each party* to the transaction. The written agreement must state who will pay the broker and, in conspicuous bold or underlined print, set forth the broker's obligations as an intermediary. A broker who acts as an intermediary:

- Must treat all parties to the transaction impartially and fairly;
- May, with the parties' written consent, appoint a different license holder associated with the broker to each party (owner and buyer) to communicate with, provide opinions and advice to, and carry out the instructions of each party to the transaction.
- Must not, unless specifically authorized in writing to do so by the party, disclose:
 - that the owner will accept a price less than the written asking price;
 - that the buyer/tenant will pay a price greater than the price submitted in a written offer; and
 - any confidential information or any other information that a party specifically instructs the broker in writing not to disclose, unless required to do so by law.

AS SUBAGENT: A license holder acts as a subagent when aiding a buyer in a transaction without an agreement to represent the buyer. A subagent can assist the buyer but does not represent the buyer and must place the interests of the owner first.

TO AVOID DISPUTES, ALL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN YOU AND A BROKER SHOULD BE IN WRITING AND CLEARLY ESTABLISH:

- The broker's duties and responsibilities to you, and your obligations under the representation agreement.
- Who will pay the broker for services provided to you, when payment will be made and how the payment will be calculated.

LICENSE HOLDER CONTACT INFORMATION: This notice is being provided for information purposes. It does not create an obligation for you to use the broker's services. Please acknowledge receipt of this notice below and retain a copy for your records.

_____ Licensed Broker/Broker Firm Name or Primary Assumed Business Name	_____ License No.	_____ Email	_____ Phone
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_____ Designated Broker of Firm	_____ License No.	_____ Email	_____ Phone
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_____ Licensed Supervisor of Sales Agent/ Associate	_____ License No.	_____ Email	_____ Phone
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_____ Sales Agent/Associate's Name	_____ License No.	_____ Email	_____ Phone
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Buyer/Tenant/Seller/Landlord Initials

Date

Regulated by the Texas Real Estate Commission

Information available at www.trec.texas.gov

TAR 2501

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For Brynn



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
GENERAL INFORMATION AND NOTICE TO A BUYER

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Be an informed buyer. Make sure that the property you want to purchase meets your needs. The following information may assist you during your purchase.

ANNEXATION. If the property you buy is outside the limits of a municipality, you should be aware that the property may later be annexed by a nearby municipality. You may find information on the boundaries of nearby municipalities by contacting the municipalities directly.

APPRAISAL. An appraisal is a valuation of the property. An appraiser renders an estimate of value as of a certain date under assumptions and conditions stated in the appraisal report. Typically, a buyer's lender requires an appraisal to verify that the loan is secured by property that is worth a certain amount. An appraisal is not the same as an inspection.

BROKERS. A real estate broker *represents* a party (buyer or seller) in a real estate transaction or may act as an intermediary between the parties. You may work with the broker or with one of the broker's agents. You will be provided a form titled "Information About Brokerage Services" (TAR 2501) which defines agency relationships. The agent may help you locate a property and is obligated to *negotiate* the transaction. The agent may assist you in gathering information and may coordinate many details in the transaction. Brokers and agents are not inspectors. They do not possess the expertise to conduct inspections and therefore do not make any representations, warranties, or guarantees about a property's condition. Agents are not attorneys. You are encouraged to seek the assistance of an attorney to help you understand any of the legal consequences and provisions of your contract or transaction.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.

General. Over the years the market has identified environmental conditions that buyers should know may exist. Environmental hazards include, but are not limited to, conditions such as: asbestos, lead-based paint, mold, pesticides, radon gas, toxic waste, underground storage tanks, urea-formaldehyde insulation, and other pollutants. Wetlands or endangered species on the property may restrict the use of the property.

Environmental Inspections. If you are concerned that environmental hazards, wetlands, or endangered species may be present on the property you wish to buy, you should hire a qualified expert to inspect the property for such items. You may include a promulgated addendum (TAR 1917) in your contract that may address such matters.

Lead-Based Paint. If you buy a property that was built before 1978, federal law requires that you be provided with: (1) the pamphlet titled "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home" (TAR 2511); (2) the records and reports the seller has concerning lead-based paint or hazards; and (3) an opportunity to have the property inspected for lead-based paint or hazards.

Mold. It is not uncommon to find mold spores in a property. The concern about mold increases when there are large amounts of mold found in a property. The Texas Department of Insurance publishes a document titled "Protect Your Home from Mold" (TAR 2507) which discusses mold in more detail.

Oak Wilt and Diseased Trees. There are diseases such as oak wilt and other conditions that may affect trees and other plants. Oak wilt is a fungus that affects certain oak trees. If you are concerned about such matters, have the trees and other plants inspected by a professional of your choice.

Noise. Properties around the property you may buy are used for a variety of purposes. Some of the uses cause noise (for example, airports, railways, highways, restaurants, bars, schools, arenas and construction). You are encouraged to drive to review the area around any property in which you are interested at various times and days.

EXPANSIVE SOILS. Soil conditions vary greatly throughout Texas. Many soils will move; some more than others. This movement will, many times, affect the foundation of homes and buildings and may cause cracks to appear in walls or other parts of the building. Additionally, if you buy a property that is newly constructed, the concrete curing process may also cause the foundation of the building to move. Seasonal changes in the moisture in the soil may also cause foundations to move. Check with your inspector and other experts on preventive methods that you can follow to minimize the risk of such movement.

FLOOD HAZARD, FLOODWAYS, AND FLOOD INSURANCE. Many properties are in flood hazard areas. Lenders who make loans on properties located in special flood hazard areas typically require the owner to maintain flood insurance. Additionally, some properties may lie in the floodway. The Texas Association of REALTORS® publishes a form titled, "Information about Special Flood Hazard Areas" (TAR 1414), which discusses flood hazard areas and floodways in more detail. You are encouraged to buy flood insurance regardless of whether the property is in a high, moderate, or low risk flood area.

HISTORIC OR CONSERVATION DISTRICTS. Properties located in historic or conservation districts may have restrictions on use and architecture of the properties. Local governments may create historic or conservation districts for the preservation of certain architectural appeal. A property owner may or may not be aware if the property is located in such a district. If you are concerned whether the property you wish to buy is located in such a district, contact the local government for specific information.

INSPECTION, REPAIRS, & WALK-THROUGH.

Inspections. You are encouraged to have the property you want to buy inspected by licensed inspectors of your choice. You should have the inspections completed during any option period. You should accompany the inspectors during the inspections and ask the inspectors any questions. Brokers and agents do not possess any special skills, knowledge or expertise concerning inspections or repairs. If you request names of inspectors or repair professionals from your agent, you should note that the agent is not making any representation or warranty as to the ability or workmanship of the inspector or repair professionals.

Repairs. You and the seller should resolve, in writing, any obligation and any timing of the obligation to complete repairs you may request before the option period expires.

Walk-Through. Before you close the sale, you should walk through the property and verify that any repairs are complete. If the condition of the property does not satisfy the contractual provisions, notify your agent before you close.

MANDATORY OWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS. The property you buy may require you to be a member in one or more owners' associations. You may obtain subdivision information (the restrictions applying to the subdivision, the bylaws and rules of the owners' association, and a resale certificate). You may be required to pay for the subdivision information unless you negotiate otherwise in the contract. If membership in an owners' association is required, you will probably be obligated to pay periodic dues or assessments. Failure to pay such dues could result in a lien on and foreclosure of the property.

MINERAL INTERESTS. Determining who owns the mineral interests under a property (for example, rights to oil and gas interests) normally requires an expert to review the chain of title to the property. Many times the mineral interests may have been severed from the property and may be owned by persons other than the seller. Contract forms commonly used in Texas provide that the seller's interest, if any, in the mineral interests convey to the buyer as part of the property. However, a seller may wish to retain all or a part of the mineral interests. The Texas Association of REALTORS® publishes a form titled "Information about Mineral Clauses in Contract Forms": (TAR No. 2509) which discusses this issue in more detail.

MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE. The Multiple Listing Service (MLS) is a database and cooperative tool between brokers. Agents who use the MLS must comply with the MLS's rules. The listing agent is required to timely report the current status of a listing, including when the property is sold or leased or is no longer available, as well as the sales price. Subscribers (other brokers, agents, appraisers, other real estate professionals, and the appraisal districts) have access to the information for market evaluation purposes. Much of the information in the MLS, such as square footage, assessed value, taxes, school boundaries, and year built is obtained from different sources such as the county appraisal district, an appraiser, or builder. The broker or agent who provides you with information from the MLS does not verify the accuracy of the information. You should independently verify the information in the MLS and not rely on the information.

POSSESSION. Most contracts provide that the seller will deliver possession of the property to the buyer at the time the sale *closes and funds or according to a temporary residential lease or other written lease required by the parties*. There may be a short delay between closing and actual funding; especially if the buyer is obtaining funds from a lender. You may need to verify with the lender if the loan will fund on the day of closing. You should also take this potential delay into account when planning your move into the property. Any possession by the buyer before the sale closes and funds (or by the seller after the sale closes and funds) must be authorized by a written lease.

PROPERTY INSURANCE. Promptly after entering into a contract to buy a property and before any option period expires, contact your insurance agent to determine the availability and affordability of insurance for the property. There are numerous variables that an insurance company will evaluate when offering insurance at certain coverage levels and at certain prices. Most lenders require that the property be insured in an amount not less than the loan amount. The failure to obtain property insurance before closing may delay the transaction or cause it to end. The Texas Association of REALTORS® publishes a document titled, "Information about Property Insurance for a Buyer or Seller" (TAR 2508), which discusses property insurance in more detail.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICE CONTRACTS. A residential service contract is a product under which a residential service company, for an annual fee, agrees to repair or replace certain equipment or items in a property (for example, covered appliances, air conditioning and heating systems, and plumbing systems). Co-payments typically apply to most service calls. If you request names of residential service companies from your agent, you should note that the agent is not making any representation or warranty about the service company.

SCHOOL BOUNDARIES. School boundaries may change and are, at times, difficult to determine. The school boundaries that your agent may provide to you or that may be provided through a Multiple Listing Service are only mapped estimates from other sources. You are encouraged to verify with the school district which schools residents in the property will attend.

SEPTIC TANKS AND ON-SITE SEWER FACILITIES. Many properties have septic tanks or other on-site sewer facilities. There are several types of such systems. Special maintenance requirements may apply to certain systems. Please refer to a document titled, "Information about On-Site Sewer Facility" (TAR 1407) for more information. You should also determine if the county requires any registration or other action in order for you to begin using the septic system or on-site sewer facility.

SEX OFFENDERS AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY. If you are concerned about sex offenders who may reside in the area in which you are buying, access www.txdps.state.tx.us. Contact the local police department to obtain information about any criminal activity in the area.

SQUARE FOOTAGE. If you base your purchase price on the size of the property's building and structures, you should have any information you receive about the square footage independently verified. Square footage information comes from other sources such as appraisal districts, appraisers, and builders. Such information is only an estimate. The actual square footage may vary.

STATUTORY TAX DISTRICTS. The property you buy may be located in a utility or other statutorily created district providing water, sewer, drainage, or flood control facilities and services (for example a Municipal Utility District, Water Improvement District, or a Public Improvement District). You are likely to receive a prescribed notice when buying property in such a district.

SURVEY. A survey identifies the location of boundaries, major improvements, fence lines, drives, encroachments, easements, and other items on the property. You should obtain a survey early enough in the transaction to help you identify any encroachments, encumbrances to title, or restrictions. Your contract will typically contain a provision under which you may obtain or be provided with a survey and the right to object to encumbrances to title disclosed in the survey.

SYNTHETIC STUCCO. Synthetic stucco (sometimes known as EIFS) is an exterior siding product that was placed on some properties in the recent past. If the product was not properly installed, it has been known to cause damage to the structure (such as wood rot and moisture). If the property you wish to buy has synthetic stucco, ask your inspector to carefully inspect the siding and ask your inspector any questions you may have.

TAX PRORATIONS. Typically, a buyer and seller agree to prorate a property's taxes through the closing date. Property taxes are due and payable at the end of each calendar year. The escrow agent will estimate, at closing, the taxes for the current year. If the seller is qualified for tax exemptions (for example, homestead, agricultural, or over-65 exemption), such exemptions may or may not apply after closing. After closing the taxes may increase because the exemptions may no longer apply. When buying new construction, the taxes at closing may be prorated based on the land value only and will later increase when the appraisal district includes the value of the new improvements. The actual taxes due, therefore, at the end of the year and in subsequent years may be different from the estimates used at closing.

TERMINATION OPTION. Most contract forms contain an option clause which provides the buyer with an unrestricted right to terminate the contract. Most buyers choose to buy the termination option. You will be required to pay for the termination option in advance. The option fee is negotiable. Most buyers will conduct many of their reviews, inspections, and other due diligence during the option period. You must strictly comply with the time period under the option. The option period is not suspended or extended if you and the seller negotiate repairs or an amendment. If you want to extend the option period you must negotiate an extension separately, obtain the extension in writing, and pay an additional fee for the extension. Do not rely on any oral extensions.

TIDE WATERS. If the property you buy adjoins any of the state's tidal waters, you will be given a prescribed notice titled, "Addendum for Coastal Area Notice" (TAR 1915) at the time you sign a contract. Boundaries of properties along such waters may change and building restrictions will apply. If the property is located seaward of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal, you will receive a separate notice (TAR 1916).

TITLE INSURANCE OR ABSTRACT OF TITLE. You should obtain a title insurance policy or have an abstract of title covering the property examined by your attorney. If you obtain a title insurance policy, you should have the commitment of title insurance reviewed by your attorney not later than the time required under your contract.

UTILITIES. You should evaluate what utilities you will require and check to be sure that the utilities available in the area suit your needs. Some structures may or may not have utilities and electrical facilities to support many modern appliances or equipment.

WATER LEVEL FLUCTUATIONS. State law requires notice to a buyer of a property that adjoins a lake, reservoir, or other impoundment of water with a storage capacity of at least 5,000 acre-feet at its normal operating level that the water level may fluctuate. You can find a list of lakes and reservoirs with at least 5,000 acre-feet storage capacity by accessing <http://texasalmanac.com/topics/environment/lakes-and-reservoirs>.

WATER WELLS. If the property you buy has a water well, you should have, and the lender may require, the equipment inspected and water tested. You should also determine if the county requires any registration or other action in order for you to begin using the water well.

OTHER.

This form was provided by:

By signing below I acknowledge that I received, read, and understand this information and notice.

Broker's Printed Name

Buyer Date

By: _____
Broker's Associate's Signature Date

Buyer Date

(This notice is to be furnished to a prospective buyer/tenant at such time as broker begins assisting buyer/tenant to locate a property.)

BROKER NOTICE TO BUYER/TENANT

As a prospective buyer/tenant, you should know that the listing and cooperating ("selling") brokers and any broker representing you as a buyer's/tenant's broker, possess no special skills, knowledge or expertise concerning the physical or environmental condition of the property or properties introduced to you nor do they represent themselves to be such experts, and, therefore, make no representations, warranties or guaranties regarding the physical or environmental condition of any such property.

Environmental Hazards/Inspection

As the result of concerns regarding environmental hazards (including, but not limited to, asbestos, lead-based paint, mold, urea formaldehyde insulation, radon gas, PCB transformers, underground storage tanks, electromagnetic fields, hazardous or toxic waste and materials, ammonium compounds, solvents, pesticides, acids, DDT, and any other substance on or about the property or forming a component part of the improvements which has heretofore or may in the future be determined to contain toxic or hazardous materials or undesirable substance injurious to the health of occupants of a property), it is recommended that you retain the services of a qualified expert of your choice to inspect and test for the presence of environmental hazards on or about the property as part of the contract between seller and buyer in a sale transaction or a lease between landlord and tenant, if desired. Buyer/Tenant shall be solely responsible for retaining the services of such expert, if any.

Physical Condition/Inspection

You are advised that you should thoroughly inspect the property and have the physical condition of the property inspected by persons of your choice who are licensed as inspectors by the Texas Real Estate Commission or otherwise permitted by law to perform inspections and take whatever other action you deem necessary or appropriate as part of the contract between seller and buyer in a sale transaction or a lease between landlord and tenant. If you request broker to furnish a list of inspectors and/or repairmen, broker is not making any representations or warranties as to the capabilities or workmanship of such persons. You are advised to accompany the inspectors during their inspection of the property and to ask any questions you may have regarding the property. You are advised to walk through and visibly inspect the property immediately prior to the closing in a sale transaction or occupancy in a lease transaction. In the event the condition of the property is not then in accordance with the contract/lease, you should immediately inform the below-named Broker.

MLS/CIE Information

Information contained in the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), or Commercial Information Exchange (CIE) of Houston Realtors Information Service, Inc. ("HRIS"), a subsidiary of Houston Association of REALTORS®, Inc., is furnished by (1) MLS, and CIE participants who acquire the information from sources such as owners of listed properties, appraisers, and builders, and (2) county appraisal districts and tax services. The information is disseminated to MLS and CIE participants for their exclusive use and display to their clients and customers. Certain information in MLS and CIE such as square footage, assessed value, taxes, and year built is obtained from either the county appraisal district, an appraiser or builder. Neither the listing Broker, Broker displaying the information to you, HRIS, MLS, nor CIE represents or verifies the accuracy of the information. You should not rely upon any information contained in MLS and CIE and you should independently verify such information. You are further advised that MLS rules require the listing Broker of a sold/leased property to submit all information the MLS requires for participation, including the sales price/rent of a property purchased/leased by you.

Selling Broker or buyer's/tenant's broker, if any, shall furnish Listing Broker with a signed copy of this notice at the time the contract/lease is submitted.

I certify that I have provided the prospective Buyer/Tenant named herein with a copy of this "Broker Notice to Buyer/Tenant."

I have received, read and understand the information in this "Broker Notice to Buyer/Tenant."

Date

Buyer/Tenant Name

Broker/Sales Agent Name

Signature

Signature

Buyer/Tenant Name

Company

Signature

Address

Address

Phone

Phone

CAUTION

U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development
Federal Housing Administration (FHA)



OMB Approval No: 2502-0538
(exp. 04/30/2018)

For Your Protection: Get a Home Inspection

Why a Buyer Needs a Home Inspection

A home inspection gives the buyer more detailed information about the overall condition of the home prior to purchase. In a home inspection, a qualified inspector takes an in-depth, unbiased look at your potential new home to:

- Evaluate the physical condition: structure, construction, and mechanical systems;
- Identify items that need to be repaired or replaced; and
- Estimate the remaining useful life of the major systems, equipment, structure, and finishes.

You Must Ask for a Home Inspection

A home inspection will only occur if you arrange for one. FHA does not perform a home inspection.

Decide early. You may be able to make your contract contingent on the results of the inspection.

Appraisals are Different from Home Inspections

An appraisal is different from a home inspection and does not replace a home inspection. Appraisals estimate the value of the property for lenders. An appraisal is required to ensure the property is marketable. Home inspections evaluate the condition of the home for buyers.

FHA Does Not Guarantee the Value or Condition of your Potential New Home

If you find problems with your new home after closing, FHA cannot give or lend you money for repairs, and FHA cannot buy the home back from you. Ask a qualified home inspector to inspect your potential new home and give you the information you need to make a wise decision.

Radon Gas Testing

The United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Surgeon General of the United States have recommended that all houses should be tested for radon. For more information on radon testing, call the toll-free National Radon Information Line at 1-800-SOS-Radon or 1-800-767-7236.

Ask your home inspector about additional health and safety tests that may be relevant for your home.

Be an Informed Buyer

It is your responsibility to be an informed buyer. You have the right to carefully examine your potential new home with a qualified home inspector. To find a qualified home inspector ask for references from friends, realtors, local licensing authorities and organizations that qualify and test home inspectors.



HUD-92564-CN (6/14) The FHA Homeownership logo, featuring the text "Your Door to HOMEOWNERSHIP" above a house icon.

CAUTION



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

INFORMATION ABOUT PROPERTY INSURANCE FOR A BUYER OR SELLER

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A. The availability and the affordability of property insurance may affect both the buyer and the seller.

Typically a buyer will seek to insure the property. Most mortgage lenders require that the property be insured in an amount not less than the loan amount. The failure to obtain property insurance at or before closing may delay the transaction or cause it to end, either of which can impose both inconvenience and cost to both the buyer and the seller.

B. There are a number of factors that affect the availability and affordability of insurance.

- (1) The level of coverage will significantly affect the cost of insurance. There are several levels of insurance coverage. For example:
 - (a) a policy may cover the replacement cost of the improvements and the replacement cost of many personal items in the property in the event of most casualties;
 - (b) a policy may cover only value of the improvements and exclude many casualties; or
 - (c) a policy may cover casualties and costs between the two noted extremes under (a) and (b).
- (2) Coverage levels and prices vary from company to company. There are many insurance companies conducting business in Texas who offer a variety of insurance products at various prices.
 - (a) One insurance company may refuse to insure a particular property or person while another insurance company may elect to do so.
 - (b) One insurance company may charge a significantly lower premium than another insurance company for the same or similar coverage.
 - (c) Generally, each insurance company has specific guidelines by which it prices its insurance policies. The following are examples of criteria that an insurance company may use in evaluating an application for insurance. The criteria vary from company to company.
 - (1) Past claims filed against the property to be insured in the 5 years preceding the application.
 - (2) Past claims filed by the applicant to be insured in the 5 years preceding the application.
 - (3) The applicant's insurance credit score.
 - (4) The past relationship between the insurance company and the applicant.
 - (5) The physical characteristics of the property such as condition, age, location, or construction materials.

C. Most insurance companies participate in the Comprehensive Loss Underwriting Exchange (CLUE) and obtain a CLUE report to evaluate the claims history of the property and the applicant.

- (1) Most insurance companies contribute information about claims to an insurance industry database known as CLUE (a registered trademark of Equifax, Inc.). An insurance company obtains a CLUE report when evaluating an application for insurance.
- (2) A CLUE report contains information about the claims history of the property and of the applicant for insurance.
 - (a) The CLUE report contains only data and does not inform the buyer or seller whether insurance is or is not available or at what cost.
 - (b) Insurance companies use the CLUE report in different ways.
 - (c) It is best to speak with an insurance agent with respect to how the information in a particular CLUE report affects the affordability and availability of insurance.

- (3) While CLUE reports are generally accurate, there may be errors in the reports.
 - (a) An event may be listed as a claim even though the insurance company did not pay any proceeds (for example, the cost of repair did not exceed the deductible or an inquiry may be incorrectly classified as a claim).
 - (b) Federal law permits a person to challenge inaccurate information. One may contact the administrator of the CLUE report (Lexis-Nexis) to correct information in a CLUE report.
- (4) A property owner may, for a fee, obtain the CLUE report on his or her property through companies such as Lexis-Nexis (<https://personalreports.lexisnexis.com>, 1-866-312-9076), A-Plus (800-709-8842) or other companies, most of whose services are accessible via the Internet. An owner may also contact the Equifax Insurance Consumer Center at 800-456-6004.

D. Promptly after entering into a contract to buy a property in Texas, the buyer should take the following steps to avoid delays in closing and to avoid additional costs.

If the buyer has the option to terminate the contract, the buyer should make sure that the buyer and the insurance agent have completed the following steps before the option expires.

- (1) Contact one or more insurance agents.
 - (a) The buyer should discuss the various levels of coverage with an insurance agent and ask questions that are necessary so the buyer understands the levels of available coverage.
 - (b) Insurance agents can provide applicants with written summaries of the various coverage levels.
 - (c) Basic summaries are available at the websites noted in Paragraph E.
- (2) **Submit an application** for insurance with the insurance agent of the buyer's choice.
 - (a) Applying for insurance promptly after entering into a contract to buy a property helps avoid surprises or delays in closing the transaction.
 - (b) Prompt application permits the buyer time to evaluate various coverage levels and prices.
 - (c) Delaying the application for insurance may limit opportunities to obtain the most suitable coverage and may limit opportunities to address any unforeseen problems or delays in obtaining coverage.
 - (d) In recent years, many transactions have been delayed or terminated because of problems associated with obtaining insurance.
- (3) Ask for written confirmation from the insurance agent that the insurance company:
 - (a) has received the application;
 - (b) has reviewed the applicant's CLUE report; and
 - (c) has conducted all necessary reviews to issue a policy at the particular price quoted (some insurance companies may ask for specific information or may wish to inspect the property).
- (4) Verify that the insurance coverage the buyer chooses is acceptable to the buyer's lender.

E. If one is not able to obtain insurance at a reasonable price or more information is needed, contact the Texas Department of Insurance (www.helpinsure.com or www.tdi.state.tx.us).

Receipt acknowledged by:

Signature

Signature



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

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CONCERNING THE PROPERTY AT _____

A. FLOOD AREAS:

- (1) The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates areas that have a high risk of flooding as special flood hazard areas.
- (2) A property that is in a special flood hazard area lies in a “V-Zone” or “A-Zone” as noted on flood insurance rate maps. Both V-Zone and A-Zone areas are areas with high risk of flooding.
- (3) Some properties may also lie in the “floodway” which is the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge a flood under FEMA rules. Communities must regulate development in these floodways.

B. AVAILABILITY OF FLOOD INSURANCE:

- (1) Generally, flood insurance is available regardless of whether the property is located in or out of a special flood hazard area. Contact your insurance agent to determine if any limitations or restrictions apply to the property in which you are interested.
- (2) FEMA encourages every property owner to purchase flood insurance regardless of whether the property is in a high, moderate, or low risk flood area.
- (3) A homeowner may obtain flood insurance coverage (up to certain limits) through the National Flood Insurance Program. Supplemental coverage is available through private insurance carriers.
- (4) A mortgage lender making a federally related mortgage will require the borrower to maintain flood insurance if the property is in a special flood hazard area.

C. GROUND FLOOR REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) Many homes in special flood hazard areas are built-up or are elevated. In elevated homes the ground floor typically lies below the base flood elevation and the first floor is elevated on piers, columns, posts, or piles. The base flood elevation is the highest level at which a flood is likely to occur as shown on flood insurance rate maps.
- (2) Federal, state, county, and city regulations:
 - (a) restrict the use and construction of any ground floor enclosures in elevated homes that are in special flood hazard areas.
 - (b) may prohibit or restrict the remodeling, rebuilding, and redevelopment of property and improvements in the floodway.
- (3) The first floor of all homes must now be built above the base flood elevation.
 - (a) Older homes may have been built in compliance with applicable regulations at the time of construction and may have first floors that lie below the base flood elevation, but flood insurance rates for such homes may be significant.

- (b) It is possible that modifications were made to a ground floor enclosure after a home was first built. The modifications may or may not comply with applicable regulations and may or may not affect flood insurance rates.
 - (c) It is important for a buyer to determine if the first floor of a home is elevated at or above the base flood elevation. It is also important for a buyer to determine if the property lies in a floodway.
- (4) Ground floor enclosures that lie below the base flood elevation may be used only for: (i) parking; (ii) storage; and (iii) building access. Plumbing, mechanical, or electrical items in ground floor enclosures that lie below the base flood elevation may be prohibited or restricted and may not be eligible for flood insurance coverage. Additionally:
- (a) in A-Zones, the ground floor enclosures below the base flood elevation must have flow-through vents or openings that permit the automatic entry and exit of floodwaters;
 - (b) in V-Zones, the ground floor enclosures must have break-away walls, screening, or lattice walls; and
 - (c) in floodways, the remodeling or reconstruction of any improvements may be prohibited or otherwise restricted.

D. COMPLIANCE:

- (1) The above-referenced property may or may not comply with regulations affecting ground floor enclosures below the base flood elevation.
- (2) A property owner's eligibility to purchase or maintain flood insurance, as well as the cost of the flood insurance, is dependent on whether the property complies with the regulations affecting ground floor enclosures.
- (3) A purchaser or property owner may be required to remove or modify a ground floor enclosure that is not in compliance with city or county building requirements or is not entitled to an exemption from such requirements.
- (4) A flood insurance policy maintained by the current property owner does not mean that the property is in compliance with the regulations affecting ground floor enclosures or that the buyer will be able to continue to maintain flood insurance at the same rate.
- (5) Insurance carriers calculate the cost of flood insurance using a rate that is based on the elevation of the lowest floor.
 - (a) If the ground floor lies below the base flood elevation and does not meet federal, state, county, and city requirements, the ground floor will be the lowest floor for the purpose of computing the rate.
 - (b) If the property is in compliance, the first elevated floor will be the lowest floor and the insurance rate will be significantly less than the rate for a property that is not in compliance.
 - (c) If the property lies in a V-Zone the flood insurance rate will be impacted if a ground floor enclosure below the base flood elevation exceeds 299 square feet (even if constructed with break-away walls).

E. ELEVATION CERTIFICATE:

The elevation certificate is an important tool in determining flood insurance rates. It is used to provide elevation information that is necessary to ensure compliance with floodplain management laws. To determine the proper insurance premium rate, insurers rely on an elevation certificate to certify building elevations at an acceptable level above flood map levels. If available in your area, it is recommended that you obtain an elevation certificate for the property as soon as possible to accurately determine future flood insurance rates.

You are encouraged to: (1) inspect the property for all purposes, including compliance with any ground floor enclosure requirement; (2) review the flood insurance policy (costs and coverage) with your insurance agent; and (3) contact the building permitting authority if you have any questions about building requirements or compliance issues.

Receipt acknowledged by:

Signature Date

Signature Date



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
INSPECTOR INFORMATION

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TO: _____ (Buyer (Seller)
FROM: _____ (Broker's Firm)
RE: _____ (Property)
DATE: _____

The attached list includes inspectors licensed by the Texas Real Estate Commission and may also include other persons authorized by law to perform certain inspections (for example, termite inspectors, engineers, electricians, or plumbers). The list is not a complete list of all inspectors that may perform inspections. You may also obtain a list from other sources (for example, the local telephone directory or the Internet).

This firm strongly recommends that you hire inspectors to help you evaluate the condition of the Property.

Inspections are of conditions which are *present* and *visible* at the time of the inspections. Property conditions change with time and use. Inspectors are not likely to point out small problems or defects that are not reasonably observable at the time of inspection. Inspectors will not move furniture, appliances, permanent coverings, or other obstructions. Neither inspectors nor real estate licensees can guarantee future performance of any item.

This firm does not recommend any particular inspector and does not warrant the quality of any inspector's inspection.

It is recommended that you accompany the inspectors during the inspections. You should address any questions about an inspection directly to your inspector.

Real estate licensees are not inspectors by virtue of their real estate licenses.

It may be necessary to make certain arrangements for the inspectors, such as providing access and turning on utilities.

Receipt of this notice is acknowledged and: I choose to hire an inspector.
 I choose not to hire an inspector.

Buyer/Seller Date



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

NOTICE OF INFORMATION FROM OTHER SOURCES

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To: _____

From: _____ (Broker)

Property Address: _____

Date: _____

(1) Broker obtained the attached information, identified as HAR.com MLS Print Out, Tax Sheet, from HAR.com

(2) Broker has relied on the attached information and does not know and has no reason to know that the information is false or inaccurate except: none.

(3) Broker does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy of the attached information. Do not rely on the attached information without verifying its accuracy.

Broker

By: _____

Receipt of this notice is acknowledged by:

Signature Date

Signature Date

PROTECTING YOUR HOME FROM MOLD

JUNE 2002

Mold growth problems can adversely affect many homeowners in Texas. Homeowners who act quickly and appropriately can prevent or correct conditions that may cause mold growth. The Texas Department of Health (TDH) and Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) prepared this publication to help you understand the concerns related to mold growth and to provide some effective steps you can take to help prevent mold growth. The following information will help protect your investment in your home and may prevent the possibility of health risks due to mold exposure.

If you are a renter, you should contact your landlord or property manager immediately when you have a maintenance need related to water damage.

WHAT ARE MOLDS?

Molds are microscopic organisms commonly found both indoors and outdoors. Molds, along with mushrooms and yeast, are known scientifically as fungi. Their purpose in nature is to break down dead material and recycle nutrients in the environment. For molds to grow and reproduce, they need a food source - any organic material, such as leaves, wood, paper, or dirt - and moisture. Since molds grow by "eating" the organic material, they gradually destroy whatever they are feeding on. Mold growth on surfaces can often be seen as a colored spot, frequently green, gray, brown, black or white. It commonly appears as a powdery, fuzzy, or hair-like material. Actively growing molds typically produce odors, sometimes described as earthy or moldy, or like mildew, old dirty socks, or ammonia. Molds release thousands of microscopic spores, which are lightweight, easily airborne and carried by air currents to surrounding areas. The spores must have both food and moisture to actually start growing, similar to plant seeds.

WHAT DO I DO IF A LEAK OCCURS?

Whether or not the water damage may be covered by your insurance policy, it is important to act quickly to prevent further damage to your home.

- Immediately stop the source of leak or flooding.
- Remove excess water with mops or a wet vacuum. If the damage is significant, consider contacting a water extraction company for immediate action.
- Whenever possible, move wet items to a secure, dry and well-ventilated area or outside to expedite drying.
- Protect repairable and undamaged items from further damage.
- Move rugs and pull up areas of wet carpet as soon as possible.
- Increase circulation in and around wet areas by opening closet and cabinet doors, moving furniture away from walls and running fans.
- If necessary, remove wallboard and flooring materials to dry out those areas.
- Don't throw away removed or damaged materials until instructed by your insurance company.
- Dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24-48 hours.
- Keep all receipts, photos and other relevant documents.
- Contact your insurance company, if applicable.

NOTE: The sooner the affected areas dry out and the source of the leak is repaired, the better your chances of minimizing damage to your property. If the water cannot be removed and the area dried promptly and efficiently, consider contacting a water extraction company for immediate action.

RESOURCES

For additional information, consult the mold and/or indoor air quality resources at the following:

Texas Department of Health
www.tdh.state.tx.us/beh/iaq/
1-800-572-5548

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/iaq/
1-800-438-4318

Texas Department of Insurance
www.tdi.state.tx.us/commish/mold.html
1-800-252-3439

WHY ARE MOLDS A CONCERN?

Damage to the Home

It is common to find mold spores in the air inside homes, and on most surfaces including clothes, walls, and furniture. Most of the time mold spores found indoors come from outdoor sources. Routine cleaning of your home and furnishings helps keep these levels low. Cleaning small areas of visible mold, such as mold that may occur around your shower, is necessary to prevent unsanitary conditions.

The level of concern greatly increases when there are large amounts of active mold growth in your home. Large-scale mold problems are most likely to occur when there has been an on-going water leak, a flood, or very high levels of humidity in the home. Indoor mold growth may cause very high levels of airborne mold spores, which, in turn, may cause the spread of mold growth from the original source to other areas of the home where high moisture levels exist. Extensive mold growth can damage your home and belongings, such as carpets, sofas and cabinets. In time, unchecked mold growth can cause damage to the structural elements in your home. While there is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment, keeping your home clean and dry can prevent extensive mold growth and its related damage.

Health Effects

The vast majority of people are exposed to small amounts of mold or their spores on a daily basis without evident harm. However, mold growing inside a home is an unsanitary condition that may present potential health risks to occupants. Therefore, it is always best to identify and correct high moisture conditions quickly before mold grows and possible health problems develop.

Potential health effects produced by molds may include allergic, irritating, or toxigenic effects, and rarely, infection. Allergic reactions are generally the most common health effect. Typical symptoms (alone or in combination) reported by people living in moldy homes include:

- respiratory problems, such as wheezing, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath
- sneezing and/or nasal congestion
- eye irritation (itching, burning, watery, or reddened eyes)
- coughing or throat irritation
- skin rashes or irritation
- headaches
- fatigue

The potential health effects depend on the amounts and types of mold present, the length and frequency of exposure, and the sensitivity and health condition of exposed individuals. While many people seldom experience ill effects from mold exposures, some may develop very serious illnesses. Some persons exposed to mold or mold spores may become sensitized and develop allergies to the mold or other health problems. Even "dead" mold (including spores and pieces of mold) may still cause allergy, irritation, or toxigenic reactions. Thus, killing mold without removing the residue may still be a health concern. Complete removal and thorough cleanup of mold is the safest solution.

Individuals at greater risk who may experience more severe symptoms or become ill more rapidly than others include:

- individuals with existing respiratory conditions, such as allergies, asthma, or chemical sensitivities
- individuals with weakened immune systems due to conditions such as HIV infection or cancer treatment
- infants and young children
- the elderly

Anyone with a health problem they believe may be due to mold exposure should consult a medical professional.

Since you cannot remove all food sources for molds, it is important as a homeowner to take sensible precautions to prevent moisture from creating a breeding ground for mold.

MOISTURE CONTROL

- Maintain levels of humidity below 60% (preferably between 30% and 50%) by
 - venting bathrooms, dryers and other moisture-generating sources to the outside
 - avoiding blockage of air conditioning vents
 - using air conditioners and de-humidifiers
 - increasing ventilation by installing additional crawlspace and attic vents, opening windows or installing an air-to-air heat exchanger
 - using exhaust fans when cooking, dishwashing and cleaning
 - avoiding the use of unvented heaters or high heat in confined areas
 - setting the air conditioning thermostat to "auto" to prevent circulation of humid air.
- Add insulation to reduce the potential for condensation on cold surfaces (windows, piping, exterior walls, roof or floors).
- Consider using moisture sensors that sound an audible alarm when a leak occurs.

OTHER PRECAUTIONS

- **Water Valve** - Make sure everyone in the household knows where the main valve is located and how to turn the water off.
- **Rain Gutters and Downspouts** - Direct rainwater away from your home. Keep gutters clear and make sure downspouts are long enough to effectively carry water away from your foundation. Gutters that are filled with leaves and other debris allow water to back up on the roof, which can result in water damage to eaves and roofing material.
- **Insulate Pipes and Outside Faucets** - Minimize the potential for water damage from frozen, broken pipes by insulating supply lines (in attic, crawlspace and exterior walls), protecting exposed outdoor faucets, sealing gaps in exterior walls and maintaining adequate heat in your home.
- **Sump Pump** - The sump pump is the first line of defense in preventing water seepage into basements. Periodically check the sump and remove any debris that could clog the pump. Consider installing a battery-powered backup to protect your basement during power outages.
- **Don't block weep holes** - Weep holes are openings at the foundation level of a brick wall that allow moisture to escape from behind the wall. Do not close or block these openings.
- **Monitor Utility Bills** - An abnormally high water bill could signal a water leak.
- **Before You Travel** - Turn the water off at the main valve or at major appliances. While you are away, consider leaving a house key and contact information with a neighbor or trusted friend and ask the person to check the inside and outside of your home periodically while you are away.

PREVENTION

- Purchase paint with EPA approved mold inhibitors
- Clean bathrooms often with mold killing products and keep surfaces dry
- Do not carpet bathrooms, basements, kitchens or other areas prone to collect moisture
- Repair damages that could lead to water intrusion promptly and properly
- Ensure that the home has adequate ventilation, including exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathrooms

INSPECTION

Inspect your home regularly for the indications and sources of indoor moisture. Establish a maintenance schedule to check the following sources of water leaks on a regular basis. Contact a maintenance or service company with any questions or concerns.

- **Hot Water Heaters** - Over time, these appliances may rust or develop cracks, and the resulting leaks can be very costly. Check your water heater for rust and deterioration every year. Check the drain pan for water and ensure that the drain line for the overflow pan is not clogged. Drain and clean the water heater as recommended by the manufacturer.
- **A/C Drain Lines** - Damage can occur when the line that drains condensation from the evaporator coils becomes clogged and water overflows from the drip pan. To prevent this, periodically check the drip pan for water and consider an annual inspection or service call to reduce the buildup of algae and mold in the drain line.
- **Appliance Hoses** - Broken hoses are among the most common causes of water damage. Regularly inspect hoses and hose fittings on washing machines, icemakers and dishwashers for kinks, cracks, bulges or evidence of deterioration. Replace standard rubber washing machine hoses every two to five years, or more frequently if they are showing signs of water. Consider using steel-reinforced hoses for longer life.
- **Showers, Tubs, Sinks and Toilets** - Water that leaks from around bathtubs, showers, sinks and toilets can cause extensive damage because the leak is often hidden from view. To prevent leaks, make sure you have a continuous watertight seal of caulk around the edges of sinks, toilets, tubs and shower stalls. Cracks or mold on the caulk or on the grout at tiles on walls or shower floors may indicate that you do not have a watertight seal. Remove all caulk or grout, clean and dry the surface thoroughly, and apply fresh caulk. Do not apply new caulk or grout on top of the old materials.
- **Visible Piping** - Routinely check piping under cabinets and sinks for leaks, rust and evidence of deterioration.
- **Waste/Garbage Disposal System** - Routinely check for cracking or other sources of leaks in the waste disposal system.
- **Caulking around Windows, Doors, Penetrations and Cracks** - Windows and doors should have a continuous bead of caulk sealing them to the exterior surface of the home. Penetrations of the exterior walls by pipes, electrical conduit, phone or cable lines, and exhaust ducts should also be caulked. Cracks or mold on the caulk may indicate that you do not have a watertight seal. Remove all caulk, clean and dry the surface thoroughly, and apply fresh caulk. Do not apply new caulk on top of the old caulk.
- **Attic and Ceilings** - Routinely check for wet insulation and water stains.
- **Wallpaper** - Routinely check for bubbling and/or peeling, as well as pink or black stains.
- **Roofs** - Keep roofs free of debris that can damage roofing material and allow water to seep in. Trim tree branches to prevent them from rubbing and damaging the roof. Promptly repair missing or damaged shingles. Properly seal any cracks around chimneys, skylights and vents. Check metal flashing for holes, cracks or other damage. Replace flashing or use silicon caulk to seal any openings.
- **Landscape** - Yards should slope away from the house to prevent puddling near the foundation or under pier and beam houses.
- **Sprinklers and Irrigation System** - Do not allow sprinklers or sprinkler heads to soak the exterior of the home.
- **Check for evidence of water stains or odors, particularly after rains, on areas that could get wet.**

POTENTIAL SIGNS OF MOLD GROWTH

- Unexplained discoloration on any surface
- Musty odor
- Dark spots on or around vents
- Water stains anywhere
- Peeling or curling of vinyl floors or wallpaper



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