



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

C.A.R. Talking Points - March 26, 2020

During these challenging times, the utmost priority is to ensure the health and safety of California REALTORS®, their clients and the general public. We also must do whatever we can within these safeguards to enable our members to conduct business and provide shelter for their communities. On March 19 Governor Newsom issued an executive stay-at-home order, and many local governments have enacted similar orders. Members must abide by the governor's order as well as any stricter orders that may have been put in place by your local government. C.A.R. is working on several fronts with the state to get clarity on the order as it pertains to real estate and find alternative ways for California REALTORS® to continue their businesses in a safe manner, assisting clients virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How C.A.R. is actively focused on helping members:

Electronic Closings

- REALTORS® can and should be doing showings virtually. Real estate transactions can close electronically — C.A.R. has worked to keep county recorder offices fully functional with electronic recording.

Relief for REALTORS® as Independent Contractors

- As independent contractors, REALTORS® do not have access to the safety net of unemployment benefits afforded to millions of salaried and hourly workers.
- From the first round of stimulus (Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act), members can apply online for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) [SBA Disaster Loan Assistance](#)
- On March 19th, C.A.R. sent a letter to the California Congressional Delegation to ask Congress to include forgivable SBA loans for self-employed independent contractors in the next bill providing economic stimulus and relief during the coronavirus crisis. Under California's order, real estate sales, rental leasing and all the ancillary industries directly involved in these activities will come to an immediate halt. An SBA loan, even with a zero percent interest rate, will do most independent contractors no good if they are unable to perform their work to pay the loan back. See: [CAR and NAR ask Congress for aid for REALTORS®](#)
- Last night, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) passed the Senate. The stimulus bill includes REALTOR® supported provisions REALTORS® that may assist our members through this crisis. We will update you with the information you need to seek financial assistance in the coming days. Here are the key provisions for REALTORS® included in the bill:
 - Self-employed independent contractors may qualify for forgivable SBA loans.
 - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance payments to business owners and independent contractors, including most REALTORS®.

- Rebate checks of \$1,200 (\$2,400 married) for individuals with adjusted gross incomes up to \$75,000 (\$150,000 married). They may also receive an additional \$500 per child. The rebate phases out for incomes above those amounts and is completely phased out for incomes exceeding \$99,000 (\$198,000 married).
- Relief for employers in the form of payroll tax credits to employers who continue to pay employees while either fully or partially suspending operations due to the pandemic.
- The bill now must move to the House of Representatives for consideration.
- C.A.R. will continue to work with NAR to ensure these provisions remain in the bill and make it to the President's desk.
- For more information please visit the [REALTOR® Relief](#) efforts on our microsite.

Online Notary Services

- C.A.R. is actively pushing forward legislation to allow for online notary in CA so REALTORS® can continue to do business and serve clients in need. We are working with NAR for a federal solution that will permit the use of online notary services by CA REALTORS®. We have, in coalition with other real estate groups, requested the CA Secretary of State, who is on record having concerns about online notary, to not oppose such efforts.

Real Estate as an Essential Service:

- C.A.R. is working diligently with the governor's office to have real estate classified as an essential service. That will clear up the confusion over what is and is not allowed with respect to real estate activities. If successful, we will be in the company of several other states that already have this classification for real estate.
- However, until we get confirmation of any change from "non-essential" to "essential," our official advice is unchanged. Specifically, for the health and safety of our members and their clients, REALTORS® should cease all in-person marketing or sales activities, including showings, listing appointments, open houses and property inspections. The state executive order supersedes all existing local city and county orders that are less restrictive. The real estate industry is not exempt from this prohibition except as needed to maintain "continuity of operation ... of ... construction, including housing construction. The coronavirus situation and order restricting behavior continue to rapidly shift, so check our microsite (car.org/coronavirus) for any updates. We are committed to keeping you updated immediately as the situation evolves and policies change.
- But please remember that the health and safety of human lives is of the utmost importance as you are continuing to conduct business as safely as possible.

Resources for Members - C.A.R. is working around the clock to help members during this crisis:

Legal Hotline & Legal Webinars

- Call the Legal Hotline: 213-739-8282.
- View recorded webinars on the coronavirus addendum and more here <https://www.car.org/riskmanagement/live>

- The latest Legal webinar was on March 23rd and discussed the Coronavirus Addendum/Amendment.

Transaction Rescue™ Hotline

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing a huge rise in issues related to closing and appraisal timelines, County Recorder's office closures, concerns around rate locks and change in employment status. C.A.R.'s Transaction Rescue™ is a free member benefit providing **one-on-one assistance** with these as well as any other finance related issues in the transaction. Call 213-739-8383.

Ombudsman Hotline

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, many real estate disputes are likely to arise as Californians adjust to the "new normal." The C.A.R. Ombudsman Hotline is a free service that C.A.R. offers to assist both the public and REALTORS®. C.A.R. ombudsmen are REALTORS® who volunteer their time to answer non-legal questions and resolve **non-legal disputes**. Call 213-739-7227.

Coronavirus Microsite/Weekly Newsletter – up-to-the-minute updates on resources for REALTORS®

- Please visit [CAR Coronavirus Updates | CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS](#) for the most up to date information.
- For Brokers: [For Broker/Owners | Coronavirus](#).
- For Relief: <https://www.carcovidupdates.org/realtor-relief>
- Every Tuesday, members will receive the California Coronavirus Weekly Recap with a weekly digest of critical news for you and your clients. Check your inbox for an email from news@car.org on Tuesdays.