

Thank you for your request that the Minnesota Realtors® re-examine their position on urging members not to hold open houses during the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, Governor Walz considered workers who facilitate real estate transactions as Critical Sector workers in his Executive Order (Order 20-48). Critical Sector Workers must comply, to the maximum extent possible, with the MN Department of Health (MDH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines and the restrictions specified in the order while operating during the peacetime emergency. The Stay at Home order currently runs through May 17th 2020. The order states that “all persons who are able to perform their work from home must continue to do so.” This includes Critical Sector Workers.

Within the guidance on EO 20-48 it refers to examples of what non-critical exempt office-based businesses *cannot* do: (See the [DEED Guidance](#).)

- Allow customers into retail stores or the business premises.
- Conduct customer visits in customer workplaces or homes.
- Invite customers into the workplace.
- Conduct meetings in conference rooms that don't allow social distancing.
- Work right next to co-workers.

Although real estate transactions are considered Critical Sector Work, all persons are ordered to stay home except to engage in certain Activities & Critical Sector Work as specified in EO 20-48. Social distancing is a requirement of the MDH and CDC guidelines for Critical Sector Workers. The MDH defines social distancing to include:

- When individuals voluntarily choose to stay home versus going out in public.
- Keeping a distance between you and other people. At least 6 feet of space.
- Do not gather in small, crowded areas.
- If it's not an essential gathering, consider postponing or gathering virtually.

Open houses in residential properties are likely not an essential gathering and may result in people gathering in small crowded areas. For these reasons, the MN Realtors® strongly discourages members from holding any open houses during the stay at home order.

We realize open houses are one of your sales tools in real estate marketing. However, it must be noted that there is a difference between showings and open houses. Brokers can control the number and timing of people entering a property during showings, and they are generally an attempt to facilitate a real estate transaction. Conversely, an open house is holding an event with no control over the number of people who will arrive at the location at any one time. The MDH recommends that if it is not an essential gathering, that events should be postponed or utilize technology to gather virtually. Many consumers are using technology to view homes.

We hope this explains why Minnesota Realtors® has taken this position. We have a web page with useful tips and ways to comply with the Executive Orders:

<https://www.mnrealtor.com/member-services/communications/covid19-resources>

Respectfully,

Chris Galler, CEO Minnesota Realtors®