

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this document is not intended to form professional legal advice or legal opinion on any particular matter.

1. General

1.1 When conducting the sale of a property by auction, members should not engage in any conduct which is misleading or deceptive or is likely to mislead or deceive. This principle applies to conduct prior to, at and after the auction.

1.2 Nothing in this Guide limits or diminishes members' obligations to report suspected misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct of a licensee to the Real Estate Agents Authority as required under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008 and/or its regulations.

2. Before the Auction

2.1 Members should not advertise a property as being for sale by auction unless there is intended to be an auction and unless a written auction authority form has been duly executed by or on behalf of the seller.

2.2 Members should provide a copy of this Best Practice Guide to prospective sellers prior to having them sign the auction authority.

2.3 Sellers should sign an acknowledgment of acceptance of the terms of this Guide, which should form part of the auction authority.

2.4 Prior to the auction, the member should make available for inspection the terms and conditions under which the sale of the property by auction will be undertaken.

2.5 If applicable, the member should specify in such terms and conditions of sale that the seller reserves the right to bid either personally or through an agent.

2.6 The member should make this Guide available for inspection prior to the auction.

2.7 Members should make reasonable endeavours to inform all interested parties if a property is to be withdrawn from auction or is to be sold prior to auction.

3. At the Auction

3.1 The auctioneer should conduct the auction at all times with integrity and in compliance with the law of New Zealand and this Guide.

3.2 The terms and conditions of sale should be on display and available for inspection, together with this Guide, at the auction. Any portion of the terms and conditions of sale relating to the description of the property will be read aloud by the auctioneer at the commencement of the auction of that property.

3.3 Before commencement of the bidding for a property, the auctioneer should announce whether the seller has set a reserve price. The reserve price, if any, should not be disclosed to bidders.

3.4 Before commencement of the bidding for a property, the auctioneer should announce whether the seller has reserved the right to bid one or more times at any level below the reserve price at the auction and, if so:

(a) Whether the member has been appointed to bid on behalf of the seller and, in such case, that all bids made on behalf of the seller will be made and declared by the auctioneer; or

(b) Whether the seller or some other person will be bidding on behalf of the seller and should identify that person in which case any bid made by that person should be declared by the auctioneer.

Neither the member nor any salesperson engaged by the member should make or assist any other person to make any bid on behalf of the seller in contravention of any announcement by the auctioneer pursuant to this clause. The member, or any salesperson engaged by the member, should immediately advise the auctioneer of any bid which they believe to be made in contravention of this clause.

- 3.5 Where the seller does not provide the auctioneer with a written reserve prior to the auction, the auctioneer should announce that the property is to be sold without reserve and no bid should be made by or on behalf of the seller at the auction.
- 3.6 In making a bid on behalf of the seller at the auction, the auctioneer should exercise his/her independent judgement.
- 3.7 Where in advance of the auction, any contractor/employee of the member or the auctioneer has been requested to bid for a prospective buyer, whether that buyer is present or absent, the auctioneer will announce that fact and identify those contractors/employees who will be so bidding.
- 3.8 The auctioneer should ensure that the amount of any bid is clearly stated.
- 3.9 The auctioneer may refuse any bid.
- 3.10 The auctioneer should resolve any disputed bid in accordance with the terms and conditions of sale governing the auction.
- If such terms and conditions do not specify how disputed bids are to be resolved, then the auctioneer should resolve any disputed bid in accordance with the Particulars and Conditions of Sale by Auction 4th Edition (or any document approved by the REINZ in substitution thereof).
- 3.11 Under no circumstances will a bid by or on behalf of the seller be exercised by the auctioneer at or in excess of the seller's reserve price.
- 3.12 The auctioneer will always clearly announce if the property is about to be sold under the hammer.
- 3.13 Subject to the reserve price being reached, the highest bidder should be the buyer.
- 3.14 If the seller so instructs, the auctioneer will announce during the course of the auction that in the event of the property being passed in the highest bidder will have the first right of purchase of the property at the seller's reserve price.

4. After the Auction

- 4.1 If a property is passed in at auction, no post auction advertising for the property should make any reference to any seller bid made for the property at the auction.

Auctions

Information Sheet

What is an auction?

An auction is an open process at which buyers bid against each other to purchase a property. Once the reserve price is reached, the highest bidder becomes the successful buyer.

FOR SELLERS

Should I sell my property by auction?

Your real estate agent¹ (agent) may recommend that you sell your property by auction, rather than by an advertised or negotiated price.

Auctions can be seen as the best way to sell quickly or achieve a higher price, as the auction process creates a sense of urgency and a feeling of competition between potential buyers.

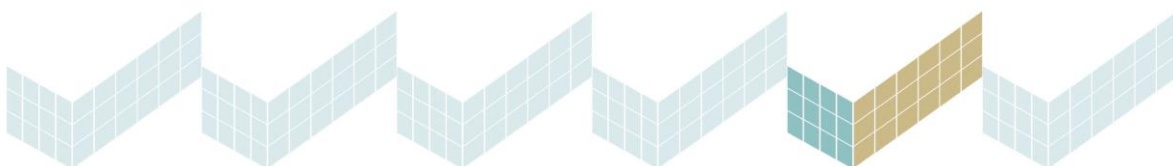
This may or may not be the case and will depend on the property market at the time, how many similar properties are available to potential buyers and how desirable your own property is. Be aware that an auction does not guarantee that someone will offer to buy your property.

Can I have more than one agent if I sell by auction?

No. If you intend to sell by auction you will need to appoint a sole agent. You will need to sign an agency agreement with your agent, and agree on a marketing plan.

For more information on Agency Agreements and Sale and Purchase Agreements visit
www.reaa.govt.nz or call 0800 for REAA (0800 367 7322) or (04) 471 8930.

¹ Real Estate Agent (agent) is a general term and refers to agents, branch managers and salespersons.



Can I sell my property before the auction takes place?

You can do this, but your agent must advertise in their marketing that “offers will be considered prior to auction”. If you do not want to consider offers in advance of the auction, the agent will specify in any advertising that you are “not selling prior”.

There are advantages and disadvantages in either approach. Requiring potential buyers to bid at the auction may get a better price, and a sale at auction is unconditional. However, the property may not sell on the auction day. Accepting an offer prior to the auction means you have a sale, but you may settle for less than an auction could achieve, and the sale may be conditional.

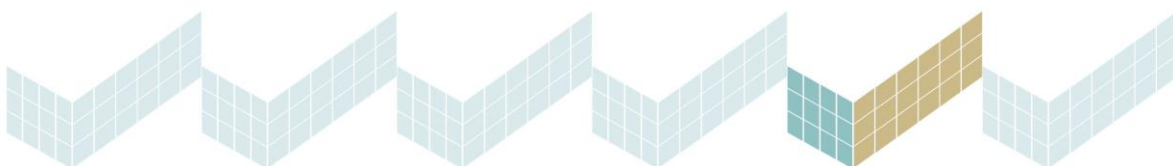
Prior to the auction you will need to establish a reserve price with the auctioneer and your agent. This is the lowest price that you are willing to accept for your property.

What happens at the auction?

Once bidding passes the reserve price, the property is sold to the highest bidder. You will **not** have the opportunity to negotiate further with that person. You therefore need to think carefully and realistically about the reserve price. For example, you may want to think about the price you would be prepared to accept from a buyer if you were not auctioning the property. At the same time, you need to avoid setting the reserve price at such a high level that bidding does not come near it.

If the bidding does not reach the reserve price, the auctioneer will pause the auction and ask you for further instructions. At that stage you can do a number of things:

- If bidding has come close to, but not reached the reserve price, the auctioneer may suggest that you agree that the property be put **on the market**. This means that the reserve price no longer applies, you are willing to accept the highest bid that is made when the auctioneer resumes, and the last bidder before the auction was paused will be held to his/her bid. This approach may result in an immediate sale, but it carries a risk – once you have removed the reserve price and declared the property on the market, you **must** accept the highest bid, even if that is below your reserve price. You cannot negotiate on subsequent bids.
- You can tell the auctioneer that the property is to be **passed in**. This means that the auctioneer will tell the bidders that the auction is concluded, as the reserve price has not been reached. The auctioneer will usually make an attempt to generate further bids before closing the auction.



- If the property is passed in, you can negotiate with the person who made the highest bid, but you should be aware that the offer may not be an unconditional one. This negotiation will continue, through your agent, after the auction has closed. You do not have to accept any offer that is made during the subsequent negotiation, and if you cannot negotiate a price and conditions that are acceptable to you, you can discuss with your agent other options for marketing your property.

FOR BUYERS

What do I need to do before an auction?

If you are going to bid for a property at auction, you need to be prepared in advance. Remember, if you are the successful bidder at an auction, you are immediately committed to buy the property. You will not have the opportunity to take any legal advice, check aspects of the property, arrange a mortgage, or negotiate terms and conditions once the auction is finished.

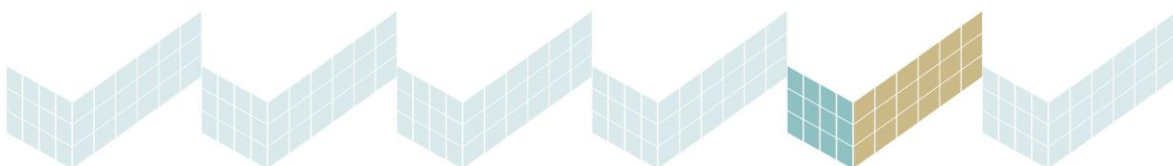
Prior to the auction, you can inspect the property either by appointment or by attending an open home. The agent should provide you with a copy of the terms and Contract of Sale, which will set out what chattels are included with the property, and details such as the amount of deposit to be paid by the successful bidder and when the balance of the payment is to be made.

You may want to arrange a valuation of the property, a building inspection or obtain a Land Information Memorandum (LIM) report. You will also want to get your lawyer to check the title of the property and the Contract of Sale. You need to arrange any finance required in advance. If you are the successful bidder on the day, you will have to pay a deposit immediately and sign the Contract of Sale.

At the auction

The auctioneer will read aloud the terms and conditions of sale and state whether the seller has set a reserve price. The auctioneer will not reveal the actual reserve price.

The auctioneer must also state whether the seller has reserved the right to bid during the auction. You should be aware that the auctioneer or some other person can bid on behalf of the seller, at any point, provided bidding has not reached the reserve price. This is known as “vendor bidding” and is sometimes used by the auctioneer as a way of starting off the bidding or trying to move bidding towards the reserve. The auctioneer has to identify when a vendor bid is



made. If made by the auctioneer, the bid is often identified by saying something like “the bid is with me”.

Bidding will continue until the reserve price is reached or surpassed, at which point the highest bidder will be the successful buyer.

If the reserve price is not reached, the seller can instruct the auctioneer to conclude the auction without selling.

What happens if the auction is concluded without a sale?

If you are the highest bidder you may be able to negotiate with the seller through the seller’s agent after the auction. At this point the terms and conditions of the auction no longer apply and you have the opportunity of introducing different terms and conditions if you wish.

Information sheets that provide further information on the property buying and selling process are available from **www.reaa.govt.nz** or by calling **0800 for REAA** (0800 367 7322) or (04) 471 8930.

Real Estate Agents Authority

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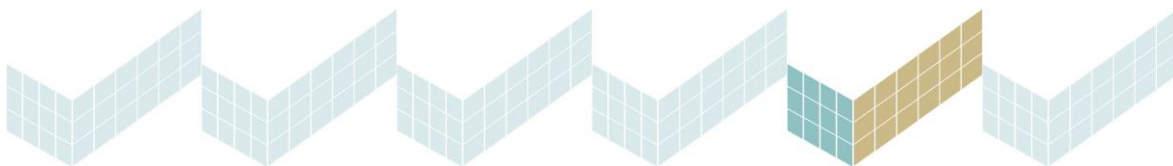
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Website: www.reaa.govt.nz

To the best of the Real Estate Agents Authority knowledge, the information in this guide is accurate at the date shown below. However, the requirements on which this information is based can change at any time and the most up-to-date information is available at **www.reaa.govt.nz** [Version 1.1, 1 July 2011].





Real Estate Agents Act (Professional Conduct and Client Care) Rules 2012



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Important note

The Real Estate Authority (REA) is the operating name of the Real Estate Agents Authority (REAA).

Please note that this publication uses the legal name 'Real Estate Agents Authority (REAA)' due to a requirement to maintain consistency with legislation.

Rules

These Rules make up the Real Estate Agents Authority code of professional conduct and client care. The Rules were made by the Authority and notified in the New Zealand Gazette.¹ The rules set minimum standards of conduct and client care that licensees are required to meet when carrying out real estate agency work and dealing with clients.

¹ Pursuant to section 14 of the Real Estate Agents Act 2008, the Real Estate Agents Authority, with the approval of the Minister of Justice given in accordance with section 17 of that Act, and after consultation in accordance with section 16 of that Act, makes the following rules.

1 Title

These rules are the Real Estate Agents Act (Professional Conduct and Client Care) Rules 2012.

2 Commencement

These rules come into force on 8 April 2013.

3 Scope and objectives

- 3.1 These practice rules setting out a code of professional conduct and client care have been prepared by the Real Estate Agents Authority (**the Authority**). They constitute the Professional Conduct and Client Care Rules required by section 14 of the Real Estate Agents Act 2008.
- 3.2 These practice rules set out the standard of conduct and client care that agents, branch managers, and salespersons (collectively referred to **as licensees**) are required to meet when carrying out real estate agency work and dealing with clients.
- 3.3 These practice rules are not an exhaustive statement of the conduct expected of licensees. They set minimum standards that licensees must observe and are a reference point for discipline. A charge of misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct may be brought and dealt with despite the charge not being based on a breach of any specific rule.
- 3.4 These practice rules must be read in conjunction with the Act and regulations, and do not repeat duties and obligations that are included in the Act or regulations.

4 Interpretation

- 4.1 In these rules,—
 - **Act** means the Real Estate Agents Act 2008.
 - **customer** means a person who is a party or potential party to a transaction and excludes a prospective client and a client.

- **prospective client** means a person who is considering or intending to enter into an agency agreement with an agent to carry out real estate agency work.
- **regulations** means regulations made pursuant to the Act.

- 4.2 Unless the context otherwise requires, terms used in these rules have the same meaning as in the Act.

5 Standards of professional competence

- 5.1 A licensee must exercise skill, care, competence, and diligence at all times when carrying out real estate agency work.
- 5.2 A licensee must have a sound knowledge of the Act, regulations, rules issued by the Authority (including these rules), and other legislation relevant to real estate agency work.

6 Standards of professional conduct

- 6.1 A licensee must comply with fiduciary obligations to the licensee's client.
- 6.2 A licensee must act in good faith and deal fairly with all parties engaged in a transaction.
- 6.3 A licensee must not engage in any conduct likely to bring the industry into disrepute.
- 6.4 A licensee must not mislead a customer or client, nor provide false information, nor withhold information that should by law or in fairness be provided to a customer or client.

7 Duty to report misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct

- 7.1 A licensee who has reasonable grounds to suspect that another licensee has been guilty of unsatisfactory conduct¹ may make a report to the Authority.
- 7.2 A licensee who has reasonable grounds to suspect that another licensee has been

¹ Unsatisfactory conduct is defined in the Act: see section 72.

guilty of misconduct² must make a report to the Authority.

- 7.3 A licensee must not use, or threaten to use, the complaints or disciplinary process for an improper purpose.
- 7.4 If a licensee learns that a person is committing an offence by undertaking real estate agency work without a licence, the licensee must immediately report the matter to the Authority.

8 Duties and obligations of agents

Promoting awareness of rules

- 8.1 An agent who is operating as a business must display these rules prominently in the public area of each office or branch, and provide access to them on every website maintained by the agent for the purposes of the business.
- 8.2 A licensee must make these rules available to any person on request.

Supervision and management of salespersons

- 8.3 An agent who is operating as a business must ensure that all salespersons employed or engaged by the agent are properly supervised and managed.³

Ensuring knowledge of regulatory framework and promoting continuing education

- 8.4 An agent who is operating as a business must ensure that all licensees employed or engaged by the agent have a sound knowledge of the Act, regulations, rules issued by the Authority (including these rules), and other legislation relevant to real estate agency work.
- 8.5 An agent who is operating as a business must ensure that licensees employed or engaged by the agent are aware of and have the opportunity to undertake any continuing education required by the Authority.

9 Client and customer care

General

- 9.1 A licensee must act in the best interests of a client and act in accordance with the client's instructions unless to do so would be contrary to law.
- 9.2 A licensee must not engage in any conduct that would put a prospective client, client, or customer under undue or unfair pressure.
- 9.3 A licensee must communicate regularly and in a timely manner and keep the client well informed of matters relevant to the client's interest, unless otherwise instructed by the client.
- 9.4 A licensee must not mislead customers as to the price expectations of the client.
- 9.5 A licensee must take due care to—
 - (a) ensure the security of land and every business in respect of which the licensee is carrying out real estate agency work; and
 - (b) avoid risks of damage that may arise from customers, or clients that are not the owner of the land or business, accessing the land or business.
- 9.6 Unless authorised by a client, through an agency agreement, a licensee must not offer or market any land or business, including by putting details on any website or by placing a sign on the property.

Agency agreements and contractual documents

- 9.7 Before a prospective client, client, or customer signs an agency agreement, a sale and purchase agreement, or other contractual document, a licensee must—
 - (a) recommend that the person seek legal advice; and
 - (b) ensure that the person is aware that he or she can, and may need to, seek technical or other advice and information; and
 - (c) allow that person a reasonable opportunity to obtain the advice referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b).

² Misconduct is defined in the Act: see section 73.

³ The Act defines what is meant by a salesperson being properly supervised and managed by an agent or a branch manager for the purposes of section 50 of the Act: see section 50(2).

- 9.8** A licensee must not take advantage of a prospective client's, client's, or customer's inability to understand relevant documents where such inability is reasonably apparent.
- 9.9** A licensee must not submit an agency agreement or a sale and purchase agreement or other contractual document to any person for signature unless all material particulars have been inserted into or attached to the document.
- 9.10** A licensee must explain to a prospective client that if he or she enters into or has already entered into other agency agreements, he or she could be liable to pay full commission to more than 1 agent in the event that a transaction is concluded.
- 9.11** On notice of cancellation of an agency agreement being given or received by the agent under the agreement, the agent must advise the client, in writing, of the name of each customer (if any) in respect of whom the agent would claim a commission, were the customer to conclude a transaction with the client.
- 9.12** An agent must not impose conditions on a client through an agency agreement that are not reasonably necessary to protect the interests of the agent.
- 9.13** When authorised by a client to incur expenses, a licensee must seek to obtain the best value for the client.

Conflicts of interest

- 9.14** A licensee must not act in a capacity that would attract more than 1 commission in the same transaction.
- 9.15** A licensee must not engage in business or professional activity other than real estate agency work where the business or activity would, or could reasonably be expected to, compromise the discharge of the licensee's obligations.

Confidentiality

- 9.16** A licensee must not use information that is confidential to a client for the benefit of any other person or of the licensee.

- 9.17** A licensee must not disclose confidential personal information relating to a client unless—
- (a) the client consents in writing; or
 - (b) disclosure is necessary to answer or defend any complaint, claim, allegation, or proceedings against the licensee by the client; or
 - (c) the licensee is required by law to disclose the information; or
 - (d) the disclosure is consistent with the information privacy principles in section 6 of the Privacy Act 1993.

- 9.18** Where a licensee discloses information under rule 9.17(b), (c) or (d), it may be only to the appropriate person or entity and only to the extent necessary for the permitted purpose.

10 Client and customer care for sellers' agents

- 10.1** This rule applies to an agent (and any licensee employed or engaged by the agent) who is entering, or has entered, into an agency agreement with a client for the grant, sale, or other disposal of land or a business.

Appraisals and pricing

- 10.2** An appraisal of land or a business must—
- (a) be provided in writing to a client by a licensee; and
 - (b) realistically reflect current market conditions; and
 - (c) be supported by comparable information on sales of similar land in similar locations or businesses.
- 10.3** Where no directly comparable or semi-comparable sales data exists, a licensee must explain this, in writing, to a client.
- 10.4** An advertised price must clearly reflect the pricing expectations agreed with the client.

Relationship between prospective client's choices about how to sell and licensee's benefits

- 10.5** Before a prospective client signs an agency agreement, the licensee must explain to the prospective client how choices that the prospective client may make about how to sell or otherwise dispose of his or her land or business could impact on the individual benefits that the licensee may receive.

Agency agreements

- 10.6** Before a prospective client signs an agency agreement, a licensee must explain to the prospective client and set out in writing—
- (a) the conditions under which commission must be paid and how commission is calculated, including an estimated cost (actual \$ amount) of commission payable by the client, based on the appraisal provided under rule 10.2;
 - (b) when the agency agreement ends;
 - (c) how the land or business will be marketed and advertised, including any additional expenses that such advertising and marketing will incur;
 - (d) that the client is not obliged to agree to the additional expenses referred to in rule 10.6(c);
 - (e) that further information on agency agreements and contractual documents is available from the Authority and how to access this information.

Disclosure of defects

- 10.7** A licensee is not required to discover hidden or underlying defects in land but must disclose known defects to a customer. Where it would appear likely to a reasonably competent licensee that land may be subject to hidden or underlying defects⁴, a licensee must either—
- (a) obtain confirmation from the client, supported by evidence or expert advice, that the land in question is not subject to defect; or

- (b) ensure that a customer is informed of any significant potential risk so that the customer can seek expert advice if the customer so chooses.

- 10.8** A licensee must not continue to act for a client who directs that information of the type referred to in rule 10.7 be withheld.

Advertising and marketing

- 10.9** A licensee must not advertise any land or business on terms that are different from those authorised by the client.

Contractual documentation and record keeping

- 10.10** A licensee must submit to the client all offers concerning the grant, sale, or other disposal of any land or business, provided that such offers are in writing.

- 10.11** If a licensee is employed or engaged by an agent, the licensee must provide the agent with a copy of every written offer that the licensee submits.

- 10.12** An agent must retain, for a period of 12 months, a copy of every written offer submitted. This rule applies regardless of whether the offer was submitted by the agent or by a licensee employed or engaged by the agent and regardless of whether the offer resulted in a transaction.

11 Client and customer care for buyers' agents

- 11.1** This rule applies where an agency agreement authorising an agent to undertake real estate agency work for a client in respect of the purchase or other acquisition of land or a business on the client's behalf (a buyer's agency agreement) is being entered into, or has been entered into.

- 11.2** Before a prospective client signs a buyer's agency agreement, a licensee must explain to the prospective client and set out in writing —

⁴ For example, houses built within a particular period of time, and of particular materials, are or may be at risk of weathertightness problems. A licensee could reasonably be expected to know of this risk (whether or not a seller directly discloses any weathertightness problems). While a customer is expected to inquire into risks regarding a property and to undertake the necessary inspections and seek advice, the licensee must not simply rely on caveat emptor. This example is provided by way of guidance only and does not limit the range of issues to be taken into account under rule 10.7.

- (a) the conditions under which commission must be paid and how commission is calculated, including an estimated cost (actual \$ amount) of commission payable by the client, based on the average of the estimated price range of the land or business that the client is seeking to purchase;
 - (b) when the agency agreement ends;
 - (c) any additional services that the licensee will provide, or arrange for the provision of, on the client's behalf and the expenses relating to those services payable by the client;
 - (d) that the client is not obliged to agree to the additional expenses referred to in rule 11.2(c);
 - (e) that further information on agency agreements and contractual documents is available from the Authority and how to access this information.
- 11.3** A licensee must not undertake real estate agency work with customers, or other licensees, on terms that are different from those that are authorised by the client on whose behalf the licensee is carrying out real estate agency work.
- 11.4** A licensee must submit all offers that the licensee is instructed by the client to make concerning the purchase or acquisition of any land or business, provided that such offers are in writing.
- 11.5** If a licensee is employed or engaged by an agent, the licensee must provide the agent with a copy of every written offer that the licensee submits.
- 11.6** An agent must retain, for a period of 12 months, a copy of every written offer submitted. This rule applies regardless of whether the offer was submitted by the agent or by a licensee employed or engaged by the agent and regardless of whether the offer resulted in a transaction.

12 Information about complaints

- 12.1** An agent must develop and maintain written in-house procedures for dealing with complaints and dispute resolution. A copy of these procedures must be available to clients and consumers.
- 12.2** A licensee must ensure that prospective clients and customers are aware of these procedures before they enter into any contractual agreements.
- 12.3** A licensee must also ensure that prospective clients, clients, and customers are aware that they may access the Authority's complaints process without first using the in-house procedures; and that any use of the in-house procedures does not preclude their making a complaint to the Authority.
- 12.4** A licensee employed or engaged by an agent must advise the agent within 10 working days of becoming aware of—
- (a) any complaint made to the Authority against them, the decision of the Complaints Assessment Committee made in respect of that complaint, and any order made by the Committee in respect of that complaint; and
 - (b) if the matter proceeds to the Tribunal, the decision of the Tribunal in respect of the matter, and any order made by the Tribunal in respect of the matter.
- 12.5** If a licensee was employed or engaged by a different agent at the time of the conduct relevant to the complaint referred to in rule 12.4, the licensee must also provide the information referred to in rule 12.4(a) and (b) to that agent within 10 working days of becoming aware of the complaint.

13 Revocation

The Real Estate Agents Act (Professional Conduct and Client Care) Rules 2009 (SR 2009/304) are revoked.



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The information in this document is reproduced from the Real Estate Agents Act (Professional Conduct and Client Care) Rules 2012, and this document is accurate as at the time of publication. Subsequent amendments to these Rules may not be incorporated in this version of this document, but can be found at legislation.govt.nz.

Buying or selling your property?



New Zealand Residential Property
Sale and Purchase Agreement Guide





This guide tells you...

what a sale and purchase agreement is

what's in a sale and purchase agreement

what happens after you sign the sale and purchase agreement

what happens if you have a problem

where to go for more information

Where to go for more information

This guide is available in other languages. You can find translated copies of this guide on rea.govt.nz and settled.govt.nz.

The New Zealand Residential Property Agency Agreement Guide is also available on settled.govt.nz. The guide tells you more about the agreement you sign with the agency helping to sell your property.

We welcome any feedback you have on this publication.

The information in this guide was accurate when published. However, the requirements this information is based on can change at any time. Up-to-date information is available at rea.govt.nz.

Key things to know about sale and purchase agreements

- A sale and purchase agreement is a legally binding contract between you and the other party involved in buying or selling a property.
- You must sign a written sale and purchase agreement to buy or sell a property.
- You need to read and understand the sale and purchase agreement before you sign it.
- Even if a standard sale and purchase agreement is being used, you should always get legal advice before you sign the agreement and throughout the buying and selling process.
- You can negotiate some of the terms and conditions in a sale and purchase agreement.
- You can include additional clauses, such as what to do if there are special circumstances. Your lawyer plays an important role in providing advice on what the sale and purchase agreement should say.
- A sale and purchase agreement becomes unconditional once all the conditions are met.
- In most cases, the real estate professional is working for the seller of the property, but they must treat the buyer fairly.
- If your real estate professional or anyone related to them wants to buy your property, they must get your written consent to do this. They must also give you a valuation of your property by an independent registered valuer.
- The sale and purchase agreement is only available in English. You may need assistance interpreting it if English is not your primary language.

What a sale and purchase agreement is

A sale and purchase agreement is a legally binding contract between you and the other party involved in buying or selling a property. It sets out all the details, terms and conditions of the sale. This includes things such as the price, any chattels being sold with the property, whether the buyer

needs to sell another property first or needs a property inspection and the settlement date.

A sale and purchase agreement provides certainty to both the buyer and the seller about what will happen when.



What's in a sale and purchase agreement

Your sale and purchase agreement should include the following things.

Basic details of the sale

Different sale methods like tender or auction might mean the sale and purchase agreement can look different, but all sale and purchase agreements should contain:

- the names of the people buying and selling the property
- the address of the property
- the type of title, for example, freehold or leasehold
- the price
- any deposit the buyer must pay
- any chattels being sold with the property, for example, whiteware or curtains
- any specific conditions you or the other party want fulfilled
- how many working days you have to fulfil your conditions (if there are any conditions)
- the settlement date (the date the buyer pays the rest of the amount for the property, which is usually also the day they can move in)
- the rate of interest the buyer must pay on any overdue payments (such as being late on paying the deposit or the remaining amount at the settlement date).

General obligations and conditions you have to comply with

The sale and purchase agreement includes general obligations and conditions that you will need to comply with. For example, these may include:

- access rights – what access the buyer can have to inspect the property before settlement day
- insurance – to make sure the property remains insured until the settlement date and outline what will happen if any damage occurs before settlement day
- default by the buyer – the buyer may have to compensate the seller if they don't settle on time, for example, with interest payments
- default by the seller – the seller may have to compensate the buyer if they don't settle on time, for example, by paying accommodation costs
- eligibility to buy property in New Zealand – people who have migrated to New Zealand may not be permitted to immediately buy property or may need to get consent from the Overseas Investment Office.

Your lawyer will explain these clauses to you.

Check...

Always check your sale and purchase agreement with a lawyer before signing.

Buying or selling a property where the owner isn't able to participate, like a mortgagee sale or deceased estate, can mean the real estate professional has limited information about the property. It pays to allow for this when deciding what conditions the buyer and seller might need.

Remember...

Before you sign a sale and purchase agreement, whether you're the buyer or the seller, the real estate professional must give you a copy of this guide. They must also ask you to confirm in writing that you've received it.

Specific conditions a buyer may include

Some buyers will present an unconditional offer, which means there are no specific conditions to be fulfilled. Some buyers will include one or more conditions (that must be fulfilled by a specified date) in their offer such as:

- title search – this is done by the buyer's lawyer to check who the legal owner of the property is and to see if there are any other interests over the property such as caveats or easements
- finance – this refers to the buyer arranging payment, often requiring bank approval for a mortgage or loan
- valuation report – a bank may require the buyer to obtain a valuation of the property (an estimate of the property's worth on the current market) before they agree to a loan
- Land Information Memorandum (LIM) – provided by the local council, this report provides information about the property such as rates, building permits and consents, drainage, planning and other important information
- property inspection – a buyer paying for an inspection provides an independent overview of the condition of the property rather than relying on an inspection that has been arranged by the seller

- engineer's or surveyor's report – similar to the above but more focused on the entire section and the structure of the property
- sale of another home – the buyer may need to sell their own home in order to buy another.

The real estate professional helps the buyer and the seller to include the conditions they each want. Even though the real estate professional works for the seller, they also have to deal fairly and honestly with the buyer. While they're not expected to discover hidden defects, they can't withhold information and must tell the buyer about any known defects with the property. If a buyer needs time to check a property for defects, including a property inspection condition may be important.



What happens after you sign the sale and purchase agreement

Signing the sale and purchase agreement is not the end of the sale or purchase process.

Both parties work through the conditions until the agreement is unconditional

A conditional agreement means the sale and purchase agreement has one or more conditions that must be met by a specified date and before the sale goes through.

The buyer pays the deposit. Depending on what the sale and purchase agreement says, the buyer may pay the deposit when they sign the agreement or when the agreement becomes unconditional. If the deposit is made to the real estate agency, it must be held in their agency's trust account for 10 working days before it can be released to the seller.

An agreement for sale and purchase commits you to buy or sell

Once you've signed the sale and purchase agreement and any conditions set out in it have been met, you must complete the sale or purchase of the property.

The length of time between the conditions being met and the settlement date varies. Settlement periods can be lengthy if the property hasn't been built yet or the sale and purchase agreement includes conditions for one party to buy or sell another property. The real estate professional has obligations to keep you informed of important updates that come up during this time.

Pre-settlement inspection

This is the chance for the buyer to check the property and chattels are in the same condition they were when the sale and purchase agreement was signed and to check that the seller has met any conditions, for example, there is no damage to walls or chattels haven't been removed from the property.

It's important to raise any concerns you find at the pre-settlement inspection with your lawyer and the real estate professional as soon as possible to allow enough time for an issue to be resolved. If it's less than 24 hours before settlement, the vendor may not be obligated to set things right.

Payment of a commission

Once the sale is complete, the seller pays the real estate professional for their services. The real estate agency usually takes the commission from the deposit they're holding in their trust account. The seller should make sure the deposit is enough to cover the commission. The real estate professional cannot ask the buyer to pay for their services if they have been engaged by the seller.

The buyer pays the rest

The buyer pays the remainder of the amount for the property on the day of settlement, usually through their lawyer.

Buying a tenanted property

If the property is tenanted, the agreement for sale and purchase should specify this. It may also contain a specific date for possession that may differ from the settlement date.

If the buyer requires the property to be sold with 'vacant possession', it is the seller's responsibility to give the tenant notice to vacate in accordance with the tenant's legal rights.

It is recommended that you seek legal advice if you are buying a property that is currently tenanted.

What happens if you have a problem

If something has gone wrong, first discuss your concern with the real estate professional or their manager. All agencies must have in-house procedures for resolving complaints.

If you can't resolve the issue with the real estate agency or you don't feel comfortable discussing it with them, you can contact the Real Estate Authority (REA). We can help in a number of ways if your complaint is about the real estate professional. For example, we can help you and the real estate professional or agency to resolve

the issue and remind them of their obligations under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008. When you contact us, we'll work with you to help you decide the best thing to do.

Call us on **0800 367 7322**, email us at info@rea.govt.nz or visit us online at rea.govt.nz

About settled.govt.nz



Settled.govt.nz guides you through home buying and selling.

Buying or selling your home is one of the biggest financial decisions you will make. It's a complex and sometimes stressful process with potentially significant emotional and financial impacts if things go wrong.

Settled.govt.nz provides comprehensive independent information and guidance for home buyers and sellers. You can find information about the risks and how they can impact you and get useful tips on how to avoid some of the major potential problems.

Settled.govt.nz will help to inform and guide you through the process from when you're thinking of buying or selling right through to when you're moving in or out. You'll find valuable information, checklists, quizzes, videos and tools. From understanding LIMs, to sale and purchase agreements, to when to contact a lawyer, **settled.govt.nz** explains what you need to know.

Settled.govt.nz is brought to you by the Real Estate Authority – Te Mana Papawhenua (REA).

For more information

For more information on home buying and selling, visit settled.govt.nz or email info@settled.govt.nz



About the Real Estate Authority – Te Mana Papawhenua (REA)

REA is the independent government agency that regulates the New Zealand real estate profession.

Our purpose is to promote and protect the interests of consumers buying and selling real estate and to promote public confidence in the performance of real estate agency work.

What we do

Our job is to promote a high standard of conduct in the real estate profession and protect buyers and sellers of property from harm.

- We provide independent information for people who are buying and selling property through our settled.govt.nz website.
- We provide guidance for real estate professionals and oversee a complaints process.
- We license people and companies working in the real estate industry.

- We maintain a Code of Conduct setting out the professional standards real estate professionals must follow.
- We maintain a public register of real estate professionals that includes information about disciplinary action taken in the last 3 years.

The Real Estate Agents Authority is a Crown agent, established under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008. The Real Estate Authority is the operating name of the Real Estate Agents Authority.

For more information

To find out more about
REA, visit rea.govt.nz,
call us on **0800 367 7322**
or email us at
info@rea.govt.nz



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