

# TEAM TIRY TIDBITS

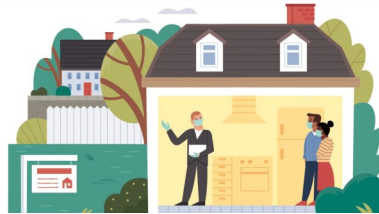
## COVID and what it means to Real Estate today

Our local real estate market has been fortunate for those sellers that have needed to sell because the market has remained very strong. The volume of sales are down due to less parties deciding to list their home due to safety or other concerns. However, those sellers who are listing their homes are having very strong results with high prices and fast sales!

Going into this, we have been in an inventory starved market for multiple years in a row and we are now at historic low inventory and interest rates. This has fueled strong price increases and a shortage of available homes. As we were all taught, supply and demand drives prices and competition for available product.

For over a decade, economists have been saying we have not been building homes fast enough to fill the need of an increasing population and we are still not building enough housing units to fix the shortage in the near future.

Locally we are blessed with many buyers wanting/needing homes and a very strong local economy with many people moving to our area for work or retirement. Recently we have been seeing the majority of listings getting multiple offers within days of being on the market. This is great news for people who want to sell or need to make a change.



One unfortunate consequence of the pandemic is that we will be expecting to see home owners missing home payments due to the job losses and unemployment. They are forecasting many will be going into default on loans in the upcoming months. One of our articles included in this newsletter offers some suggestions to get people started in the right direction to avoid foreclosure. If you know someone struggling to keep up with payments and needs some suggestions, we are here to help. The housing market will continue to move forward and looks strong at this time. If you are considering selling, and are just a bit nervous, give us a call and we can help answer any questions/concerns you may have.

The Realtor Association has come up with some great COVID guidelines on how to show homes to eliminate as much risk to the sellers and buyers as possible. Team Tiry, along with many other agents, have been wearing masks and disposable gloves at showings/listing appointments to help people feel at ease and reduce the risk of potential contamination. As an industry, we are changing our procedures along with many other businesses to get through this as safely as possible.

We pray for everyone's health and each of your families as we pull through this together.

God Bless,  
Aaron & Cheree

## SMALL FLAWS can be a big deal



What may seem like small problems in your home can be a big deal to prospective buyers who will want to discount the price.

Realtor.com names six of the minuscule things that could be big hurdles to closing:

► **An old electrical panel.**

Buyers will want it "up to code." Get bids from multiple electricians to try and get a reduced repair quote, or offer that amount as a credit in lieu of repair at closing.

► **Ripped window screens**

Window screens will wear out over time, but tears should be taken seriously. Either replace them before listing or offer credit at closing.

► **The location of the laundry room.**

The laundry on the 'wrong' level can be a big negative, especially in a three-level house or townhouse. Offer to move the washer and dryer to a new location if possible.

► **The bathtub or shower.**

Some people prefer showers, others want bathtubs, especially parents with small children. A bathtub with a showerhead above is the best option.

► **Kitchen walls.**

Many people prefer open kitchens. If you think your kitchen's walls make it feel cramped and that's stalling your sale, consider opening it up.

► **Small closets.**

There isn't much you can do to ease these concerns, but try to make your closets look roomier by de-cluttering. Hiring a contractor to build or extend closets where needed—or pointing out to buyers that they can do this themselves—is another fix.

# GARAGE STORAGE mistakes



If you use your garage as storage space, you're not alone. Unfortunately, because the space isn't climate-controlled, it's best to keep these items elsewhere, according to Realtor.com:

- ▶ **Family photos.** Pollutants, moisture and heat can quickly destroy your photos. Digitizing all photos is the best practice, or keep printed copies in a dry area inside your home.
- ▶ **Propane tanks.** These should never be kept indoors or too close to your home because they can leak or ignite. Store them outside on a flat surface instead.
- ▶ **Car batteries.** Batteries can be greatly affected by external moisture. Don't store them on the floor; rather, place them on a piece of wood or cardboard.
- ▶ **Artwork and collectibles.** Dampness can cause tarnish and mold to grow. Insects can infest and rodents can feast on certain items. Dirt and dust can cause stains and buildup on almost anything. And car fumes can penetrate textiles and canvases. Keep prized possessions indoors.
- ▶ **Food.** Unless you have a refrigerator or freezer in your garage, fresh food can attract vermin even in a sealed container. Canned foods are best indoors, as sweltering heat can hasten their spoilage and freezing temps aren't great either.
- ▶ **Paint.** If not sealed correctly and exposed to extreme temperatures, paint can actually spoil. Find a space that's dark, dry and cool, like a utility closet, laundry room or mudroom.
- ▶ **Carpet and rugs.** Fresh air is vital for rug fibers and garage spaces aren't usually well-ventilated, which can cause mold and mildew. Store in a place with low-humidity levels. Or if the garage is your *only* option: Block any direct sunlight and place a dehumidifier near it.



Going green at home can not only reduce your carbon footprint, but also save you money in the future. Here are a few ideas you can implement to make your home more energy-efficient.

## ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOMES

### LOW-COST SAVINGS

- ◆ Keep your thermostat low
- ◆ Start a compost heap
- ◆ Use cool water for washing clothes
- ◆ Limit space heater use
- ◆ Switch to low-flow shower heads
- ◆ Seal all windows to prevent air escaping
- ◆ Don't waste water
- ◆ Unplug unused chargers

### LARGER INVESTMENTS

- ◆ Buy Energy Star products
- ◆ Replace your desktop computer
- ◆ Install solar panels
- ◆ Perform an energy audit
- ◆ Tighten connections on your HVAC system
- ◆ Add a storm door
- ◆ Install attic insulation



## 5 DIY TIPS

As a homeowner, there's no landlord or engineer to ask for help. So Realtor.com recommends you learn to handle these five basic problems:

- Change HVAC filters:** Replace quarterly to keep your system running smoothly and cut energy bills.
- Cutting the water supply:** Find and tag the shut-off valve when you first move in. When you need to turn it off, turn the handle 90 degrees.
- Unclogging drains:** Chemical drainers may work, but a drain snake is also an excellent option.
- Resetting a circuit breaker:** Open the panel cover and find the breaker in the "off" position, then turn to "on."
- Clean gutters:** When gutters aren't cleared of debris, water can get trapped, seep into your house and cost thousands in damages. Clean them annually or every two years.

# PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

## A Guide For At Risk Homeowners



### PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

The impact of COVID-19 was swift and unexpected, leaving many people in a financial emergency. If you are a homeowner who is struggling or unable to meet your loan obligations, work with housing experts and your lender to find a solution, now. **Don't wait until you fall behind to seek help. Acting quickly may help you keep your home and the money you have already invested into it.**



### TALK TO YOUR LENDER

Talking to the lender or “loan servicer” that collects the payments should be one of your first steps. Here are some options to discuss:

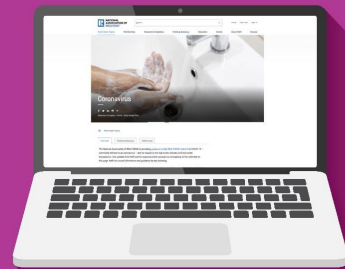
**Forbearance.** Lenders may let you make a partial payment or skip payments. You'll have to repay any missed or reduced payments in the future. Forbearance does not erase what you owe.

**Reinstatement.** Reinstatement refers to making a payment that covers all your late payments, usually at the end of a forbearance period.

**Repayment Plan.** If you can't afford reinstatement, but can start making payments to catch up, the lender may let you pay an additional amount each month until you are caught up.

### RESOURCES FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

The National Association of REALTORS® has up-to-date information for property owners about the federal government's response to COVID-19. Visit the Coronavirus Resources for Property Owners section of [www.nar.realtor/coronavirus](http://www.nar.realtor/coronavirus) for details about how federal agencies, lenders, and bank regulators are working to help to homeowners protect their investment.



**Loan Modification.** Your lender may agree to amend your mortgage.

#### The options include:

- » Adding all the missed payments to the loan amount & increasing the monthly payment to cover the larger loan.
- » Giving you more years to pay off the loan, lowering the interest rate, and/or forgiving part of the loan, to lower your monthly payment.
- » Switching from an adjustable rate mortgage to a fixed rate mortgage, so you aren't exposed to increases in your monthly payment.
- » Requiring amounts for taxes and insurance to be included with your monthly mortgage payment so you avoid big bills in addition to your mortgage.



## WATCH OUT FOR SCAMS AND UNFAVORABLE LOAN TERMS

*Here are some warning signs:*

**Sounds too easy.** “Guaranteed approval” or “no income verification” regardless of borrower’s current employment, credit history, and assets.

**Large future costs.** High-risk adjustable rate mortgages where the payment rises a lot after the “teaser rate” period is seldom appropriate for families who already have had problems repaying other loans.

**Barriers to refinancing.** Prepayment penalties that make it hard for a borrower to refinance in order to pay off a high-cost loan by taking advantage of a low-cost loan.

**No down payment loans.** These loans may be split into two mortgages, with one having a much higher cost. Home buyers should be sure they can afford the payments.

**Unethical document management.** Ethical lenders and brokers never ask you to sign a blank document or a document dated before the date you sign.



## REALTORS® CAN HELP

REALTORS® are in the business of helping people become homeowners and want to do everything they can to make sure you can afford to stay in your home.

» If your current lender isn’t willing or able to help, you may be able to refinance your current mortgage with another lender. REALTORS® may be able to help you find responsible lenders that make fair and affordable loans.

» Be wary of advertisements like “Cash for Houses/ Any Situation” or “We Buy Houses for Cash.” These may be scams that bait homeowners with the promise of rescuing them from imminent foreclosure. Talk with a REALTOR® if you determine that selling your home is your best option.



## COUNSELING RESOURCES

Counseling agencies are in the business of helping borrowers like you. They are non-profit organizations dedicated to helping consumers avoid foreclosure and can be invaluable.

» The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website has a list of HUD-approved counseling organizations, by state ([www.hud.gov/counseling](http://www.hud.gov/counseling)). Use the list as a starting point to find a counselor or call HUD at (800) 569-4287.

» Watch out for questionable companies who advertise that, for a minimal fee, they will assist homeowners by hiring a lawyer to defend the foreclosure in court or negotiate lender assistance on the borrowers’ behalf. You should contact a HUD-approved counseling organization before you pay or sign anything.

Source: Are You Having Problems Paying Your Mortgage? National Association of REALTORS®, NeighborWorks® America, Center for Responsible Lending