

COVID-19 NOTICE TO SVAR

The Southside Virginia Association of REALTORS® has been actively monitoring the developments of the COVID-19 pandemic and believes that all safety measures and recommendations put in place to date have been successful to protect our members and the communities we serve.

However, in light of the recent developments, it is now apparent that we must take additional steps in an attempt to diminish the spread of COVID-19 and to protect our real estate family and the communities where we live and serve. We can no longer be reactive. Rather, we must be proactive.

Yesterday, President Trump and the members of the Coronavirus Task Force impressed upon the United States that we as a nation need to take drastic steps to slow down the spread of COVID-19 through less interaction among people for a period of 15 days. As of this morning it has been reported that COVID-19 has spread to 183,425 cases worldwide with 7,167 deaths worldwide, and is affecting the majority of the world's countries. Our own country is now experiencing a considerable spike in COVID-19 cases, with it affecting 49 states as well as the District of Columbia (<https://www.livescience.com/coronavirus-updates-united-states.html>).

There are now more than 4,600 people affected and 85 deaths reported in the U.S. It is expected that the number of affected people will drastically increase as testing capabilities improve.

President Trump and the task force have requested that, as a nation, we limit gatherings of over 10 people. This comes after all major sporting activities and special events have been shut down across the country. Virginia K-12 schools are closed for at least two weeks. It is the general consensus that isolation is the best tool we presently have available to slow down the spread of this virus. There is no doubt that this is a fluid situation.

As of March 18, SVAR's office will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. We ask that if you or anyone you are close with is experiencing a fever or cough, please refrain from coming to the SVAR office to prevent the spread to other members and staff. If you can handle the business via phone as opposed to in person, please do so. We ask that you use common sense.

Please contact CVR MLS at 804-422-5000 for instructions on how to obtain a lock box. SVAR will cancel all scheduled classes beginning today until further notice. The classes will be rescheduled as soon as possible. The Richmond Association of REALTORS® has also canceled its classes, so if you were scheduled to take a CE class that you need for immediate license renewal, you will most likely need to take it online. In that case, SVAR will refund the full cost of the class.

For those who have paid for classes and wish to take the class when rescheduled, there is no need to request a refund. Effective immediately, all SVAR scheduled social events and regularly scheduled committee meetings are canceled until further notice. We will reassess the situation on March 31 and send notice to membership. The SVAR Board of Directors will continue to monitor and make decisions surrounding COVID-19.

We ask our members to review the safety rules and guidelines set forth by the National Association of REALTORS® in conducting your day-to-day real estate business at <https://www.nar.realtor/coronavirus-a-guide-for-realtors>.

Please remember, whatever practices you as a REALTOR® decide to make as to how you will conduct your business during the COVID-19 crisis, make sure you utilize all the same policies and procedures with all clients and customers to avoid any Fair Housing violations. Also, we requesting cooperation from all our brokerage firm in limiting the necessity for people to come to the office and to cancel weekly scheduled office meetings. Several brokerage firms have already closed their offices and requested that their REALTORS® limit their trips to the office to an as-needed basis.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we do our part to keep you and all of our neighbors in Southside Virginia healthy and safe. We will continue to keep you apprised of any changes. Be smart, use common sense and, most importantly, be safe.

Sincerely,
SVAR Board of Directors