

Buying a House Without a Realtor

What You Risk When You Decide to Go Without Representation

With so much real estate information online, some buyers wonder if they really need an agent. The truth is, you can buy a house without a Realtor — but it's not always a good idea.

While skipping an agent might seem like a way to save time or money, doing so comes with real risks, especially for first-time buyers or anyone unfamiliar with the process.

WHAT A BUYER'S AGENT ACTUALLY DOES

A buyer's agent represents your interests in the transaction. They help you find homes, schedule showings, evaluate prices and handle the paperwork. More importantly, they guide you through negotiations, inspections, deadlines and closing details.

A good agent can:

- Alert you to potential red flags in a listing
- Recommend local lenders, inspectors and contractors
- Spot overpriced homes or questionable terms
- Handle back-and-forth with the seller's agent
- Make sure you don't miss important deadlines

Without an agent, you'll be responsible for reviewing contracts, making offers, managing

legal documents and coordinating all the steps that lead to closing. That's a lot to take on — especially with thousands of dollars on the line.

In most cases, buyers don't pay their agent directly. Instead, the seller pays a total commission, usually around 5 or 6 percent of the sale price, which is split between the listing agent and the buyer's agent. So working with an agent typically costs you nothing out of pocket.

WHY CAUTION HELPS WHEN GOING SOLO

There are situations where some people are tempted to go without an agent. For example:

- You're buying from a friend or family member and already have terms agreed upon
- You're a real estate investor or attorney familiar with the process
- You're purchasing a FSBO where the seller refuses to pay

buyer agent fees

Even then, it's wise to have a real estate attorney review contracts and help you navigate closing. You'll also need to do your own research on comparable sales, disclosures and deadlines, something that a good buyer's agent can do thoroughly.

Be aware that in some transactions, the listing agent may offer to "help" both sides — but remember, their primary responsibility is to the seller.

Dual agency, where allowed, limits the advice you can receive.

The homebuying process involves legal, financial and emotional decisions. While you can technically handle it alone, most buyers find value in professional guidance — especially when it's already built into the transaction.

Before deciding to go solo, weigh the complexity of the deal and how much time you can dedicate to doing it right.



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REAL ESTATE 101



HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

Buyers Usually Don't Pay Commission

In most real estate deals, the seller pays the commission for both their agent and the buyer's agent — meaning buyers typically get expert help at no added cost.

FSBO (For Sale by Owner): A FSBO is a home that's listed for sale directly by the owner without representation from a licensed real estate agent.

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