

MLS STANDARDS MANUAL

Updated 06/01/19

**Columbus and Central Ohio Regional Multiple Listing Service
of the
Columbus REALTORS®, Inc.
2700 Airport Dr
Columbus, OH 43219**

Section 1 – General Policies

Authority: The Columbus REALTORS® shall maintain for the use of its members a Multiple Listing Service (MLS), which shall be subject to the Bylaws of the Columbus REALTORS® Rules and Regulations of the Service and such policies as may be hereinafter adopted.

Section 1 – MLS General Office Policies, Practices and Procedures: Local guidelines established by the MLS Committee for the Multiple Listing Service of the Columbus REALTORS® and approved by the Columbus REALTORS® Board of Directors and the National Association of REALTORS®.

Section 1.1 – MLS System Welcome Screen Messages: The information displayed on the MLS System Welcome Screen (viewed when user first signs onto the system) may contain only data pertaining to Crime and Caution Alert Notices, MLS Information, Columbus REALTORS® announcements and REALTOR® obituary information.

Section 1.2 – MLS System Password Changes: Due to the importance of system security, quarterly password changes are required for the Columbus REALTORS® MLS system. The password changes are customized to occur within 90 days from the date of each user's last password change.

Section 1.3 – MLS Assistant and Office Administrator Policy: Individuals with a valid Ohio real estate license are not eligible for Assistant logins to the MLS. Assistants who become licensed in Ohio must immediately contact MLS to disable their Assistant login and subscribe to the MLS as a licensee. Subscribers to other MLSs who do not want access to the Columbus and Central Ohio Regional MLS can utilize the MLS of Choice Waiver exemption and will not be eligible for Assistant logins. Office Administrators with an active real estate license must also maintain their individual subscription to the MLS. Any account found to violate this policy will, at the discretion of MLS staff, be disabled until the situation is corrected.

Section 2 - Participant Procedures

Section 2 – MLS Membership and Access to the Database and Meetings: Brokers and Agents with access to the MLS shall conform to the policies and procedures allowed in the NAR Policy Handbook and those policies authorized by the MLS and the Columbus REALTORS® leadership.

Section 2.1 – MLS Access: There shall be no courtesy or temporary MLS memberships available for non Columbus REALTORS® MLS REALTORS®. Access to the MLS system shall be for members only.

Section 2.2 – Commercial Practitioners: Commercial practitioners who conduct at least 80% of their real estate activity in property management may request a waiver of their MLS dues with broker approval subject then to the approval of the Directors of the COCIE Governing Board.

Section 2.3 – MLS Committee Attendees: Allowable attendees for MLS Committee meetings include current elected or appointed MLS Committee members, current Columbus REALTORS® officers and directors, Columbus REALTORS® staff, invited guests and those who have been authorized in advance by the MLS Committee chair. (Oct '04)

Section 3 - Display of Listings

Section 3 - MLS Listing Policies: Policies exist that govern how and when certain properties may be placed on the MLS system.

Section 3.1 – Multiple Entry of Similar or Same Property: Property submitted to the Service must be listed based exclusively on its current use. For example, a property currently used as a two-family cannot be displayed in the MLS as a single family or vice-versa, condos cannot be displayed as single-family homes or vice-versa and single-family homes with acreage cannot be displayed simultaneously as both residential land and as a residential home. The REALTOR® may choose to display the home with acreage as either Land/Farm or Residential during the term of the listing contract but if one property listing category (listing worksheet) is withdrawn to enter the other, the list date must remain the same as the first entry. Thus, to help provide accurate computer searches and statistical data for your MLS, please submit property based on its primary use at time of listing and as alternatives (1) use the Agent-to-Agent Remarks' option (A2A) and/or (2) enter the Alternative Use feature group currently found on all but the RES-RENTAL work sheets. Any type or style property in MLS contrary to its data description must verify that type or style with a disclaimer in the remarks' section to substantiate that claim, e.g., property that is residentially zoned but commercial zoning is possible.

Multiple entries of the same property will result in MLS removing the second and subsequent entries of all but the first entry (lowest MLS number) with the following exceptions: (Jan '05).

- a) Any residential or multifamily property that is for sale and/or for lease.
- b) Property that has more than one parcel number may be listed individually by each parcel number.

Section 3.2 – Entry of Condominium Property (1-5 Units): For a condominium to be listed for sale in the MLS, the property must have a Developer's Statement as required by Ohio revised code sections 5311.25 and 5311.26. No more than 5% or a maximum of 5 units per subdivision can be shown as active per broker in the MLS, provided a developer's statement exists. If there is no developer's statement then the property cannot be listed. If a question arises that no document exists, the MLS Director or their designee shall request from the listing broker a copy of the developer's statement for the project and address in question. The listing broker shall provide within seven (7) days the specific Developer's Statement. If none is provided in the prescribed time frame, then the MLS Director or their designee shall immediately remove said listings in question from the MLS system. Once the document is provided then the maximum of 5 units can be listed.

Section 3.2.1 – Entry of Condominium Property (6+ Units): For a REALTOR® to list 6 or more units for sale in a condominium project, then a recorded Declaration of Condominium Property must exist. It must meet the requirements of Ohio revised code section 5311.06 and 5311.07. If the condominium documents are recorded, there shall be no limit on the number of units listed for sale in the MLS, provided there are declaration of condominium property documents for the project and address in question. The listing broker shall provide within seven (7) days the specific declaration of condominium property document. If none is provided in the prescribed time frame, then the MLS Director or their designee shall immediately remove all but five of the listings in question from the MLS system.

Section 3.3 – Property Not Available for Sale and/or Showings: Since all exclusive listings that are required to be filed with the Service within 48 hours of obtaining all signatures must be immediately available for sale and/or showing, any exclusive listing that is listed but not immediately available for sale and/or showing must still be filed with the Service and must include a signed copy of the proper form. The proper

form is "Office Exclusive Waiver Form". By signing the form, sellers are acknowledging that until or unless their property is available for sale and/or showing through the MLS, their property

- (1) Will not appear in any MLS publications
- (2) Will not appear on the MLS computerized site
- (3) Will not appear on realtor.com
- (4) Will not appear on any other public Web sites not affiliated with the listing company

Any property with a Coming Soon sign and that is the type property required to be submitted to the Service, whether or not listed, must also be on file with the Service within 48 hours from when the Coming Soon sign first appears. Property required in MLS that is not available for sale and or showings must either be Temporary Withdrawn on the system or the Office Exclusive Waiver Form must be on file with the Service. The MLS Director or their designee is authorized to temporarily remove (Withdrawn - Temp off Mkt status) any property found to be in violation of this policy and then notify the broker and/or agent. (Jul '04)

Section 3.4 – Property In Contract (all types) Over 90 Days: Property reported in contract will remain in that status for only 90 days (365 days if the new construction features is marked "yes") from the report date. If the property remains in contract (all types) over 90 days it will automatically return to an active or expired status (depending on the expiration date) on the 91st day. REALTORS® who have a registered E-mail address with MLS should receive an electronic E-mail reminder 10 days prior to the automatic change in the property's status to either active or expired. Of course, reporting closings promptly will help avoid making any unnecessary status changes to your in contracts. (Mar '05, Jun '11)

Section 4 - Data for Listings

Section 4 – MLS Data Policies: All data displayed on the MLS system must be as accurate as possible and pertinent to the property for sale, lease or exchange. A primary function of the MLS is to serve as an accurate database for the member Participants and as such the history file maintained by the current computer system is to be respected and its integrity assured without alteration (Mar '99)

- (a) Maintaining an accurate and current database is an intensive daily process considered essential for the daily routines of all real estate practitioners. Factual historical data compiled as a research database contributes greatly to the creation of statistical information and the planning and development of its use in the residential and commercial real estate arenas.
- (b) The MLS staff is authorized to administer standard data integrity practices without exception and therefore insert known missing parcel numbers where possible. (Oct '04)

Section 4.1 – Change of Data: MLS may require authorized verification before making a change to any listing data.

Section 4.2 – Display of Data: Names, phone numbers, Web site addresses, E-mail addresses, showing instructions, any contact resource, instructional statements or sentences structured as commands, company slogans or any language or code that infers identification of a company or individual, etc. shall not appear in the Property Description section of listings or on photos of listings. All data fields are to be populated only with that data field's requested information (Sep '98, Jul '99, Mar '01, Mar '02 and May '11)

Section 4.3 – Property Description: The Property Description for a listing may contain only property specific information wording (i.e., 20x25 walnut paneled recreation room in basement, pool table stays, newer cedar deck, etc.) and not institutional advertising wording aimed at building goodwill, self promotion or advocating the idea or philosophy of an organization. Opinions and statements of encouragement such as "great buy", "must see", "let's co-op today", etc. are permitted.

Section 4.4 – A2A Agent-to-Agent Remarks’ Data Field: This is a separate data field created to allow only other agents to review personal comments about the property Comments are restricted to pertinent information about the property. (Nov ’05)

Section 4.5 – MLS Required Entry Data Fields: Each listing has several required and auto-popped data fields that are important for MLS statistical reports to members and the news media, therefore, inaccurate data found entered in these data fields is a fineable offense.

Section 4.6 – Subdivision/Complex/Community Data Field: REALTORS® may enter a city name, e.g., Bexley, Upper Arlington, etc in the subdivision/complex/community data field on the applicable MLS worksheets. Required entry MLS data fields serve to populate key search data fields on realtor.com.

Section 4.7 – Searches: The Half-bath data field defaults to zero to allow for searches that identify property with no half bath(s).

Section 4.8 – Status Change for New MLS Number: All status changes are subject to the report date (date entered) of such changes No listing will be allowed to have a new MLS number unless it has been:

- (1) In the status of withdrawn, cancelled or expired for 30 consecutive days or longer
- (2) It has been in the status of under contract, contingent on financing and inspection, contingent on sale of home or contingent on lien holder release for 90 consecutive days or longer
- (3) It has acceptable verification documents that can be provided to MLS that serve to identify a new owner

Acceptable verification documents include (a) recorded deed, (b) proof from auditor or (c) legal title change (Jul ’11).

Section 4.8.1 – Status Change for Auction Property: When reported sold in MLS, the auction property is to have the same list and sale price and the days on market (DOM) is to be counted as one (1) The only exception would be property sold before the auction occurs and in that case, it would be the broker’s responsibility to report the accurate list and sale price of the property to MLS or remove the reference to it being an auction property in the remarks and thus avoid the price and DOM change by MLS. (Dec ’04)

Section 4.9 – Status Change for Active Listing: The MLS Director or their designee shall have the authority to immediately change the status of any listing from active to in contract, active to contingent on financing inspection, active to contingent escape or active to contingent subject to lien holder release if that status is found referenced anywhere on the MLS system. The broker and agent will be notified after such change via email, voice mail or in writing. (May ’04)

Section 4.10 – Status Change for Property In Contract: Property in MLS that is in contract and listed before 01/01/2004 will be changed to active or expired (depending on the listing’s expiration date) Property in MLS that is in contract and listed after 1/1/2004 will be changed to active or expired (depending on the listing’s expiration date) within 10 days of electronic notification to the listing agent and broker that their property has been in contract for 90 days (or 365 days for property marked as YES for new construction. (Mar ’05)

Section 4.11 – Days on Market (DOM) and Cumulative Days on Market (CDOM): Once a property is entered in MLS, the system will scan the database within a 365-day period from that property’s list date and search for an identical parcel number. If none is found, both the DOM and CDOM will be identical for that listing. However, for every identical parcel number found that does not have a sold status, the system will then tabulate the DOM figure from each of those listings and display them as CDOM on the new listing. Once the search process finds a sold status for the identical parcel number, it stops the search from continuing and records only those CDOM found (if any).

Note 1: Beginning as soon as possible, all reports that currently have DOM displayed will have both CDOM and DOM displayed.

Note 2: The original list price shall be listed on all agent reports.

Note 3: DOM and CDOM applies to all eight MLS listing categories: (1) residential, (2) res-rental (3) land/farm, (4) multifamily, (5) commercial, (6) office, (7) industrial and (8) business opportunity

Note 4: The current method for computing DOM remains unchanged. The DOM are computed from the date the property was listed until it was reported under contract, contingent on financing and inspection or contingent subject to lien holder release. If the property is placed in any of the following statuses but returns to an active or back on market (BOM) status with the same MLS number, the days on market (DOM) are to exclude the time the listing remained in any of these statuses (Mar '08):

- 1) contingent on financing and inspection
- 2) contingent subject to lien holder release
- 3) under contract
- 4) cancelled
- 5) withdrawn
- 6) expired
- 7) sold

Section 4.12 – Subdivision Data Field: The subdivision data field has prioritized entries of either the subdivision name but if none, then the complex name but if none then the community name (e.g., Clintonville, German Village etc).

Section 4.13 – MLS Reports: No standard or customized report shall be utilized as a part of any company, agent or personal Web site. No linking to any report other than through the MLS system or E-mail sent through the MLS system is permitted. (Apr '07)

Section 4.13.1 – Client Portal: Links for the Client Portal in the MLS system are intended to be used by agents/clients for which the information is specifically generated These links shall not be posted to or used as a portion of any company, agent or personal Web site outside of the Columbus REALTORS® MLS system. (Apr '07)

Section 4.14 – Other Residential without Deeded Land: Structure providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for climate-controlled living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

Section 4.15 – Business Opportunity Listings: For Business Opportunity listings to be in the MLS, they must be tied to land that is owned or actively being leased and is transferrable. Business Opportunity listings in the MLS prior to May 20, 2019 that do not meet this requirement will remain in the MLS until they expire, but these listings cannot be extended.

Section 5 – Photography and Virtual Tours for Listings

Section 5 – MLS Photography Policies: Identifies the allowable routines and authority for MLS photo display and use. These photo policies and procedures were created to promote the actual property for sale rather than for marketing displays or enhancements used in addition to or in lieu of the photograph.

Section 5.1 – Primary Photo: A primary photo is required for all listings entered in MLS May 1, 2009 and thereafter except for property entered as Sold Non MLS, Withdrawn, or unless the seller signs the Photo Waiver Form found on Columbus REALTORS® web site. If the withdrawn listing goes back on market with the same brokerage and agent before the 5-business day policy requirement, the image/photo must be uploaded within that original 5 business day policy requirement period. If the listing goes back on market after the 5-business day policy requirement, the image/photo must be uploaded within 24 hours. Primary image displayed in MLS must be primarily of the property listed. Architectural renderings, plat maps and auditor photos are acceptable to use. Either a photo or copy of the Photo Waiver Form must be on file with MLS prior to the 5-business day deadline from the date the listing was entered.

Section 5.2 – Furnished Photos: MLS furnished photos or images may be used, where appropriate, to replace any existing photo and there is no charge.

Section 5.3 – Number of Photos Allowed: There is no limit on the number of photos that the MLS system accepts. Regardless of the number of photos on the listing one of these must be set as the primary.

Section 5.4 - Display of Photos: All primary MLS photos on the system must reflect real property for sale as the prominent subject matter. (Aug '98)

(a) Photos provided or taken for the MLS database shall only be aerial views, sketches (renderings) and current view(s) of the property for sale, lease or exchange.

(b) Photos provided or taken for the MLS database shall have no enhancements such as, but not limited to, logos, phone numbers, agent or company identifying inserts or markings etc. used as an overlay made to also appear on the image.

Any image submitted for display in the MLS may not be modified in such a manner as to misrepresent the true condition, as it currently exists, of the actual property. Examples would include (but are not limited to) editing out power lines or adding flames to a non-functional fireplace, etc. (Apr '15)

(c) No legible information is to be visible on any photograph sent to clients such as but not limited to a for sale sign that would serve to identify an office or agent. Photos found in violation are subject to a fine and removal and the company or agent notified. (Dec 06)

(d) MLS staff may immediately remove any photo appearing with unauthorized markings and the agent will be notified. (Dec '04)

(e) Photos appearing in the MLS are for authorized use only and are protected by copyright laws. Photos appearing in MLS cannot be transferred to or placed on any other agent's listing without the express, written permission of the listing agent or copyright owner of the photograph(s). Any misuse is subject to an immediate fine.

(f) Only additional photos may reflect nearby community features such as shopping locations, swimming pool, bike path, etc., that are attributable to the listing.

(g) No people may appear in the primary photo for listings in the MLS database. It is permitted for people to appear in secondary photos. (Apr '15)

Section 5.5 – Branded Virtual Tours: Virtual Tours that identify a company, Web site, name or phone number or otherwise serve to promote someone or something other than the property for sale may be uploaded as long as the Virtual Tour is labeled as branded. (Feb '14)

Section 5.6 – Unbranded Virtual Tours: Virtual Tours that serve to exclusively promote the property for sale are permitted. (Oct '05)

Section 6 – Internet Data Exchange (IDX) Guidelines

Section 6 – MLS Adopted (IDX) Guidelines: Please see Section 16 or the MLS Rules and Regulations found on the Columbus REALTORS® web site.

Section 6.1 – MLS Approved Vendors for IDX Development: Participant brokers who choose not to host the data on servers directly under their control must use an IDX provider approved by the Service.

Section 7 - Virtual Office Web site (VOW) Guidelines

Section 7 – MLS Adopted Virtual Office Web site (VOW) Guidelines: Please see Section 17 of the MLS Rules and Regulations found on the Columbus REALTORS® Web site for policies designed for a Participant broker VOW for their company.

Section 8 – MLS, realtor.com and Aggregated Web site Guidelines

Section 8 – MLS, realtor.com and Aggregated Web site Guidelines: MLS will promptly provide basic downloading of all current listing types (ERS, EA, EO and LS) and will not knowingly exclude any listing types from the information that can be downloaded or displayed under IDX except those listings for which a Participant (Broker) has withheld consent.

Amended Policies approved by the MLS Board of Directors