



April 8, 2020

Statement from John Harrison, President, Maryland REALTORS®

The COVID-19 Virus is affecting our lives in unprecedented ways. Our absolute top priority is the health and safety of our community in addition to our members, clients and customers.

Maryland REALTORS® is seeking guidance from the Administration on how to balance the landlord's interest in showing the property (which is generally permitted by a lease) against the tenant's interest in limiting access to the property. Tenants, like all Marylanders, are being encouraged to stay at home to minimize the risk of spreading or being exposed to the virus. In other words, while a tenant may not normally prevent a landlord from showing a property in connection with a sale or lease expiration, we are in a unique situation where the "normal" rules may not apply.

Also, the Governor has issued Executive Orders temporarily prohibiting evictions of tenants suffering a substantial loss of income due to COVID-19. The Maryland Court of Appeals, using its Emergency Powers, has restricted Maryland courts to emergency matters only. These two actions essentially prohibit the landlord from taking any enforcement action against the tenant, at least for the duration of the State of Emergency.

Lastly, the Governor issued an Executive Order on April 7, delegating authority to Local health officials to determine whether a business is operating in a manner that poses an unreasonable risk of spreading the virus. Local Health Officials were granted authority to require the business to modify its operations or to close that business if the business refuses.

It has become apparent that events will require an ever-changing response by government officials. Maryland Realtors will continue to monitor adjust our guidance to reflect best practices.