

Boards and Associations of REALTORS® are responsible for enforcing the REALTORS® Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics imposes duties above and in addition to those imposed by law or regulation which apply only to real estate professionals who choose to become REALTORS®.

Many difficulties between real estate professionals (whether REALTORS® or not) result from misunderstanding, miscommunication, or lack of adequate communication. If you have a problem with a real estate professional, you may want to speak with them or with a principal broker in the firm. Open, constructive discussion often resolves questions or differences, eliminating the need for further action.

If, after discussing matters with your real estate professional or a principal broker in that firm, you are still not satisfied, you may want to contact the local Board or Association of REALTORS®.

Many Boards and Associations have informal dispute resolving processes available to consumers (e.g., ombudsmen, mediation, etc.). If, after taking these steps, you still feel you have a grievance, you may want to consider filing an ethics complaint. You will want to keep in mind that . . .

- Only REALTORS® and REALTOR®-Associates are subject to the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.
- If the real estate professional (or their broker) you are dealing with is not a REALTOR®, your only recourse may be the state real estate licensing authority or the courts.
- Boards and Associations of REALTORS® determine whether the Code of Ethics has been violated, not whether the law or real estate regulations have been broken. Those decisions can only be made by the licensing authorities or the courts.
- Boards of REALTORS® can discipline REALTORS® for violating the Code of Ethics. Typical forms of discipline include attendance at courses and seminars designed to increase REALTORS® ' understanding of the ethical duties or other responsibilities of real estate professionals. REALTORS® may also be reprimanded, fined, or their membership can be suspended or terminated for serious or repeated violations. Boards and Associations of REALTORS® cannot require REALTORS® to pay money to parties filing ethics complaints; cannot award "punitive damages" for violations of the Code of Ethics; and cannot suspend or revoke a real estate professional's license.
- The primary emphasis of discipline for ethical lapses is educational; to create a heightened awareness of and appreciation for the duties the Code imposes. At the same time, more severe forms of discipline, including fines and suspension and termination of membership may be imposed for serious or repeated violations.