



## **Part Two - Use by Members: REALTOR®; REALTORS®; REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®**

### **I. With Member's Name**

#### **A. In Salutations, Addresses, Signatures**

It has become customary in some areas for one Member to address another Member as, for example, "REALTOR Jones". Since such usage of the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® is not inconsistent with either the laws governing the use of registered marks or the objectives of the PROGRAM, such usage has been accommodated by the policies and guidelines adopted by the National Association.

The following salutations are acceptable:

"Dear REALTOR® Jim" (first name)  
 "Dear REALTOR® Smith" (last name)  
 "Dear REALTOR® Jones and Mr. Doe"  
 "Dear REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® Martin"

Spoken use or written use in the following way is permitted:

"I respect the views of REALTORS® Smith and Jones and of Mr. Doe who is a non-member broker."

"According to REALTOR® Smith and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® Martin, interest rates are a major factor."

In signatories, the following are acceptable:

Sincerely,

REALTOR® Smith

Cordially,

REALTORS® Smith and Jones

Yours very truly,

REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® Martin

#### **B. On Business Cards**

Business cards usually carry a firm name and the name of an individual. Depending on the membership status of the individual named and the standing of the firm's principals, it may be appropriate to use one of the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® with either or both names. The guidelines and policies governing use of these terms with the firm name are covered in the next section entitled "With Firm Name". This section focuses only on use of those terms in

association with an individual's name.

If the individual is a REALTOR® Member, the term REALTOR® may be used adjacent the Member's name provided appropriate separating punctuation is also used. The preferred form for the term is all capital letters and the registration symbol "®".

Firm Name  
Street  
City, State

John Doe, REALTOR®

Other information about the individual, such as his status within the firm, a telephone number, or his license status or specialty area of practice, may also be indicated.

Firm Name  
Street  
City, State

John Doe, REALTOR®  
President  
Appraiser/Broker  
Phone:

In some states, licensees must include on business cards their license status (e.g., broker, broker-associate, salesperson, etc.). Under no circumstances should an attempt be made to satisfy such a requirement by use of one of the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®. To do so is to use the terms REALTOR® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® interchangeably with the terms broker or broker-associate or salesperson. Even if the applicable license law, regulations or regulatory body charged with enforcement permit such substitution it is prohibited by these policies for use of the MARKS. The REALTOR® MARKS are not, and may never be used as, a designation of a person's licensed status.

A non-member is never permitted to use the term REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® adjacent his name on a business card or anywhere else, even if he is employed by or affiliated with a REALTOR® firm.

The form of use limitations described above regarding capitalization, separating punctuation, and the registration symbol "®" apply to use of the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® adjacent the individual's name on business cards and must be followed. Provided those requirements are observed, Members are at liberty to design their business cards as they see fit.

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## II. With Firm Name

For purposes of this Manual, the term "firm name" means the local name by which the firm is distinguished from other firms by the Member Board, the state licensing authority and the public. In the case of firms that are affiliated with a franchise organization and independent offices owned by a conglomerate, the local firm name, rather than the franchisor or conglomerate name and logo, serve to distinguish one franchise or conglomerate office from another of the same franchise or conglomerate and operating within the same state or same market area. Use of the firm address may also be useful in identifying franchise and conglomerate offices, but is even more important for multi-office firms and independent firms commonly owned.

With the foregoing in mind, the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® may be used adjacent to, but not as part of, the firm name.

The objective of this limitation is to restrict use of the MARKS to a local firm name, since it is the local firm which has elected to be a member firm and which is therefore subject to the Code of Ethics and requests for arbitration before the Member Board to

whom that firm belongs.

Examples of this requirement are the following:

**Improper Use**

- Blackacre REALTORS®, Inc.
- Smith REALTORS®, Ltd.
- Sunshine REALTORS® Homes

**Proper Use**

- Blackacre, Inc., REALTORS®
- Smith, Ltd., REALTORS®
- Sunshine Homes, REALTORS®

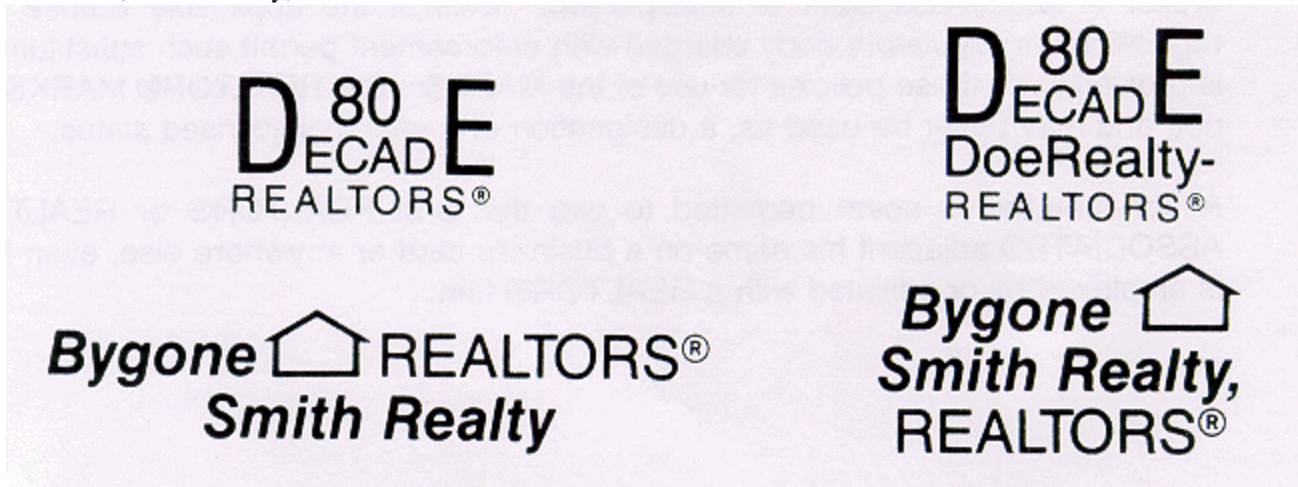
Member John Doe's firm Doe Realty is a franchisee of a franchise named DECADE 80, and Member Jane Smith's firm Smith Realty is an independent office of an interstate conglomerate named BYGONE, are as follows:

**Improper Use**

- Doe Realty, DECADE 80, REALTORS®
- Smith Realty, BYGONE, REALTORS®

**Proper Use**

- DECADE 80, Doe Realty, REALTORS®
- BYGONE, Smith Realty, REALTORS®



When changing a firm name or selecting a new firm name, Members are strongly encouraged to utilize the words "Realty," "Real Estate," or similar terms that indicate the real estate nature of their business. When these words are used in the firm name, the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® are more clearly and easily perceived as indicators of membership and professional commitment.

**Proper Use**

**Preferred**

Jack Jones Realty, Inc., REALTORS®

**Acceptable**

Jack Jones, Inc., REALTORS®

As noted previously, the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® must always be separated from the firm name by punctuation, even when the term appears on a separate line.<sup>1</sup>

**Improper Use**

- Jack Jones Realty, Inc.
- REALTORS®

S.S. Smith  
 REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®

**Proper Use**

Jack Jones Realty, Inc.,  
 REALTORS®

S.S. Smith -  
 REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®

While the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® may be used in connection with a firm name, they may not be used in conjunction with a description of the firm's other lines of business or any other occupation or vocation of the Member, even if the other occupation or vocation is part of or related to the Member's real estate business.

**Improper Use**

Jones, Inc., REALTOR®/Builder

Smith Realty, REALTORS® - Insurance

**Proper Use**

Jones, Inc., REALTOR®  
 Real Estate Broker/Builder

Smith Realty, REALTORS®  
 Real Estate Brokerage-Insurance

Use of words such as Builder or Insurer, when used in conjunction with the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS®, tend to mislead the public into thinking that the term REALTOR® is an ordinary descriptive word which identifies an occupation or vocation, like the word builder or lawyer.

REALTOR® Members who are corporate officers of national real estate brokerage franchise organizations are not authorized to use the REALTOR® MARKS adjacent to, in connection with or as a part of the name of the real estate brokerage franchise organization.

**A. On Letterhead/Business Cards**

The MARKS may be used on the business cards and letterhead of Members provided the rules of form and the guidelines concerning use of the MARKS in connection with a business name are followed. An individual Member's name must be separated from the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® by punctuation. For example:

**Proper Use**  
 J.J. Jones, REALTOR®  
 S.S. Smith, GRI,  
 REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®

A Member firm may use the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS® on business cards or letterhead used by non-member brokers or salespersons provided the term is used in connection with the firm name and not the name of such individual and it is otherwise clear that it is the broker or principals of the firm that hold REALTOR® membership and not the salesperson. For example:

**Proper Use**  
 ABC Real Estate Company, REALTORS®  
 Address  
 City, State  
 S.S. Smith  
 Sales Agent  
 Phone

**B. On Signs/In Advertising**

The MARKS may be used on a Member's office and yard signs and in advertising provided such use conforms to the policies and guidelines set forth in this Manual. Remember that the firm address must accompany uses of the MARKS when such use extends beyond the jurisdiction of the Member's Member Board.

**C. On Incentive Items/Give-Aways**

Members may desire to have various business supply items produced for distribution to and use by their sales force. These items (e.g., desk sets, plaques, memo pads) may be imprinted with the MARKS provided that such items are intended solely for the business use of salespersons that are Members. If any items are to be used also by non-member salespersons, the firm's name and address must appear adjacent the MARKS.

Give-away items (functional promotional items distributed by Members to the public or clients at little or no cost) may also be desirable and may be imprinted with the MARKS provided that the name of the Member or Member's firm name and address is also imprinted adjacent to the MARKS. This is to make clear that the MARKS refer to the membership of the distributor and not the recipient or end user.

**D. Pronouncing the Terms REALTOR<sup>®</sup>, REALTORS<sup>®</sup> and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE<sup>®</sup>**

Irrespective of local dialect and custom, the term REALTOR<sup>®</sup> has but one pronunciation:

REAL' tor

Members are encouraged to carefully train new employees and salespeople, particularly receptionists, on the proper pronunciation of the term REALTOR<sup>®</sup>. Consistent aural use is just as important as consistent visual use to the preservation of the distinctive and recognizable character of the MARKS. Teach employees and salespeople to avoid uses such as:

"Good morning! John Doe, REAL-A-TORS." or

"Good morning! John Doe, REAL-I-TORS." or

"Good morning! John Doe, RE-LA-TERS." or

"Good morning! John Doe, RE-AL-TORS."

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**III. Use on the Internet**

When surfing the Web for real estate homepages, it's quite common to come across sites belonging to REALTORS<sup>®</sup>. If you are looking to add your own electronic presence on the Internet, it is easy to get caught up in designing your own web page and choosing a domain name which will capture the attention of surfers and make you easily identifiable. REALTORS<sup>®</sup> often want to use the REALTOR<sup>®</sup> marks as part of their domain name or address to distinguish themselves, but they must keep in mind that there are rules governing proper use of the REALTOR<sup>®</sup> marks that must be adhered to at all times regardless of the media used. These rules are found in the National Association's Membership Marks Manual, a reference manual explaining proper use of the REALTOR<sup>®</sup> marks including examples of correct and incorrect uses. Here is a brief list of the principle rules affecting use of the REALTOR<sup>®</sup> marks in domain names:

1. The term REALTOR<sup>®</sup>, whether used as part of a domain name or in some other fashion must refer to a member or a member's firm.
2. The term REALTOR<sup>®</sup> may not be used with descriptive words or phrases. For

example, Number1realtor.com, numberone-realtor.com, chicagorealtors.org or realtorproperties.com are all incorrect.

3. For use as a domain name or e-mail address on the Internet the term REALTOR® does not need to be separated from the member's name or firm name with punctuation. For example, both johndoe-realtor.com and johndoerealtor.com would be correct uses of the term as a part of domain names and jdoe\*realtors@webnetservices.com and jdoerealtors@webnetservices.com are both correct uses of the term as part of an e-mail address.

4. The REALTOR® block R logo should not be used as hypertext links at a web site as such uses can suggest an endorsement or recommendation of the linked site by your Association. The only exception would be to establish a link to the National Association's web site, REALTOR.org, or its official property listing site, REALTOR.com.

The public has adopted the use of all lower case letters when writing domain names, even those containing trademarks. Therefore, for purposes of domain names and internet addresses only, there is an exception to the rule on capitalization of the term REALTOR® and it may appear in lower case letters.

Whether you use traditional print media or the Internet, it is essential to use the REALTOR® marks in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the National Association. The REALTOR® marks should only be used to denote membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

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#### **IV. In the Body of Written Material**

When the MARKS are used in the text of brochures, pamphlets, newsletters or otherwise in the body of written material, the first use should be followed by a footnote or other reference to the effect that:

REALTOR® is a federally registered collective membership mark which identifies a real estate professional who is a Member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

The registration symbol "®" should be used in connection with each use of each MARK at least the first time it appears in the body of printed material, and in connection with each subsequent appearance to the extent practical. If all of the copy in the body of the printed material is in capital letters, the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® should be made to stand out by the use of boldface type or by some other means sufficient to distinguish them from words of ordinary use, and in such instances, the registration symbol "®" should be used in connection with every appearance of each MARK. (See examples in Part One, Section IV-D).

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#### **V. Special Cases**

##### **A. In News Releases**

Members may have occasion to inform the public of their activities through the press. Following are guidelines for the use of the terms REALTOR®, REALTORS® and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® which apply only to news releases and not to advertising copy intended for newspaper publication.

Most newspapers follow either the Associated Press ("AP") Style Book or the United Press International ("UPI") Style Book in editing news items for publication. These style books do not call for use of full capitals or a federal registration symbol "®" even for registered marks. Therefore, to avoid presenting news releases in a form which will

require excessive editing, it is recommended that initial capitals only be used when those terms appear in news releases, e.g., "Realtor" and "Realtors", and that the registration symbol "®" be omitted from copy submitted. It is nevertheless critical to be sure the context of usage is proper.

News releases should be submitted on letterhead or paper stock which includes at the bottom of each page the following definition of the term REALTOR®:

REALTOR® is a federally registered collective membership mark which identifies a real estate professional who is a Member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

### **B. In Institutional Advertising**

"Institutional Advertising" as that term is used in this Manual, refers to television, radio and other media advertising, the benefit of which inures to a multitude of firms or offices which are not commonly owned or not commonly managed and which may be found in more than one Member Board's jurisdiction or in different states. The advertising is generalized in the sense that it does not mention the local firm name nor does it provide specific address or telephone information with regard to each office benefitted. An example is a national television ad promoting the services of franchisees of a particular franchise organization. For the reasons set forth below, use of the MARKS in such Institutional Advertising is almost never permissible.

The National Association's Constitution and Bylaws provide for the licensing of the term REALTOR® to Members of the National Association, who are Member Boards and Board Members. By special provision of the Bylaws, firms whose principals, partners and corporate officers hold REALTOR® membership are entitled to use the term REALTOR® or the term REALTORS® and the REALTOR® Logo in connection with, but not as part of, the firm name. No authority is given to Members or their firms to sublicense the right to use the MARKS to parent corporations, franchise organizations or networks. Nor are such Members or their firms authorized to use the MARKS in media advertising which reaches beyond the jurisdiction of their Member Board except when their local firm name and address within that jurisdiction accompanies usage of the MARKS. Thus, it is impermissible and inappropriate for a franchisor organization or a conglomerate to place newspaper, radio or television ads where one or more of the MARKS are used.

Some franchise organizations require that their franchisees maintain membership in the National Association, but no franchise organization is in a position to guarantee such membership since membership may be suspended or terminated as a result of a failure of each local franchise firm to pay dues or for violation of the Code of Ethics. The same is true of some conglomerates. Uses of the MARKS in Institutional Advertising which benefits offices of Members as well as offices of non-members is strictly contrary to the exclusive rights of the National Association in the MARKS, and is also prohibited. Moreover, Members whose offices are owned by or affiliated with conglomerates or franchise organizations have an obligation in furtherance of proper and authorized use of the MARKS to exert their influence in support of the National Association's prohibition on the use of its MARKS in Institutional Advertising.

It is not contrary to the National Association's policy for Members to pool their advertising resources or otherwise share in print, radio or television advertising which does not use one or more of the MARKS and then to include in the ad the local firm name, address and one or more of the MARKS adjacent the local firm name of each participant. For example, a television ad may close with a list of specific firms by local name and address with one or more of the MARKS used in connection with each local firm name whose principals, partners or corporate officers hold REALTOR® membership in the National Association.

Ads prepared by franchises or conglomerates which do not use the MARKS but which provide space for insertion of the local firm name, address and one or more of the MARKS are also acceptable provided the local firm uses the MARKS consistent with

the guidelines and policies of this Manual.

### **C. Use in Connection with Political Activities**

Article V, Section 7 of the Bylaws of the National Association authorizes individual Members to use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® in connection with activities in support of specific candidates in specific elections, provided, however, the definition of REALTOR® as a collective membership mark of the National Association (see page 8, Section D) and the identification of those conducting the activity as Members of a specific Board is included on all letterhead and written campaign literature, in all campaign media aids, and other materials unless not reasonably practical, and all such use of the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® ceases immediately after the election.

The support of state or federal candidates through fund raising committees or election committees involves compliance with state and federal laws and may require careful coordination with the National Association and State Association. There may also be tax law implications. The same is true of lobbying activities. Accordingly, Member Boards are encouraged to seek competent legal counsel and check with the National Association's Legal Affairs Department before implementing any activities in these areas.

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### **VI. Never ... : Uses to Avoid**

The examples below serve to illustrate the rules and requirements discussed above and to emphasize correct use of the MARKS by reference to some common, but incorrect, usages.

#### **Never**

· hyphenate, reconstruct, expand, combine, abbreviate or divide the MARKS:

- REAL-I-TOR
- REALTORrific
- Blue Ribbon Chain, R-E-A-L-T-O-R-S
- Rltr.
- REALTOR - Assistant

#### **Never**

· use the MARKS or parts of them to create or construct more complex designs or new terms:

- BOB's REAL-TORent OF HOMES
- REALTER
- REALRITE
- REALFER

#### **Never**

· use descriptive words or phrases to modify the MARKS. This is explicitly prohibited by Article V, Section 7 of the Bylaws of the National Association. Adjectives may suggest an improper vocational meaning and also tend to distort the consistent understanding and image of these terms, thereby undermining their identifying function:

- Main Street's most qualified REALTOR®
- Consult a professional REALTOR®
- Doe County's leading REALTOR®
- The concerned REALTOR®
- Number one REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®

- Your local REALTOR®
- Your international REALTOR®
- Commercial REALTORS®

**Never**

· use the MARKS to differentiate among Members or in a manner which creates or permits the impression that a firm is an association or subpart of the local Board of REALTORS®, or in a way which suggests that all REALTORS® in a geographic area are part of a single firm:

- The REALTOR® with integrity
- NEW YORK, REALTORS® (as a firm name)
- Suburban, REALTORS® (as a firm name)
- Independent REALTOR®

**Never**

· use the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® in lieu of the phrase "real estate broker," "real estate agent," "real estate salesperson" or in groups or classes of words which describe vocations or professions:

- Local lawyers, REALTORS®, insurance agents and bankers attended the meeting.
- Builders -REALTORS®-Insurers

**Never**

· use REALTOR® as part of a firm name or without using punctuation to separate the individual or firm's name from the terms even when the terms appear on a separate line:

- Blackacre REALTORS®, Inc.
- John Jones REALTOR®
- Sally Brown and Company REALTORS®
- Green, Inc. REALTORS®

**Never**

· use the MARKS without at least initial capitals, even if using the registration symbol:

- realtor®
- realtor-associate®

**Never**

· use an initial capital and lower case letters for the MARKS and omit the federal registration symbol "®" (except for news articles and features - see "In News Releases"):

- Realtor
- Realtor-Associate

**Never**

· use the MARKS in reference to non-members:

- non-REALTOR®
- non-REALTORS®

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<sup>1</sup> An exception to this rule applies to regular "Yellow Pages" listings. Yellow Pages publishers generally will not use punctuation between a firm name and the term REALTOR®, nor will they use full capitals and the registration symbol "®" in regular

listings. Members must nevertheless follow the requirements concerning punctuation, capitalization, and use of the registration symbol "@" when placing display ads in the Yellow Pages directories.

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