
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
SAFETY SURVEY**

SURVEY FINDINGS

PRESENTED TO

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

BY

MARKETING RESEARCH

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

During May 2003, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR) Marketing Research Department used Zoomerang.com, an online survey tool, to reach 561,991 REALTORS®. The survey was available to respondents from May 12th through June 3rd, 2003.

A total of 4,337 REALTOR® respondents participated in this survey. This number is a large enough response rate for answers to be considered statistically significant. At the 95% level of confidence, the statistical error is +/-3.11.

A total of 93 Association Executives(AE) participated in this survey. Due to the finite AE population available for the survey, the typical gage for statistical validity, the confidence interval, is not used for the AEs. Rather, the responses received are deemed to be statistically valid and representative of the entire population. There was a 9% response rate among Association Executives.

This report presents REALTORS® and Association Executives experiences with safety while on the job.

Findings are presented in a **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS** followed by verbatim responses under the **REALTOR® : KEY FINDINGS and Association Executive: KEY FINDINGS** sections. A copy of the invitations and surveys are included in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Sample Size Terminology

As an example: The confidence interval is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in survey results. For instance, if you use a confidence interval of +/-3.11 and 67% percent of your sample picks “answer B”, it is highly likely that if you had asked the question of the entire relevant population between 63.89% (67%-3.11) and 701.11% (67%+3.11) would have picked that answer.

The confidence level provides a percentage of likelihood that the entire relevant population will respond within the percent range of the confidence interval. The 99% confidence level means you can be 99% certain.

In this survey, when you put the confidence level and the confidence interval together you can say that you are 95% sure that between (X% - 3.11) and (X% + 3.11) of the entire relevant population would respond in the same way. ‘X’ equals the percentages reported in this summary for each individual question.

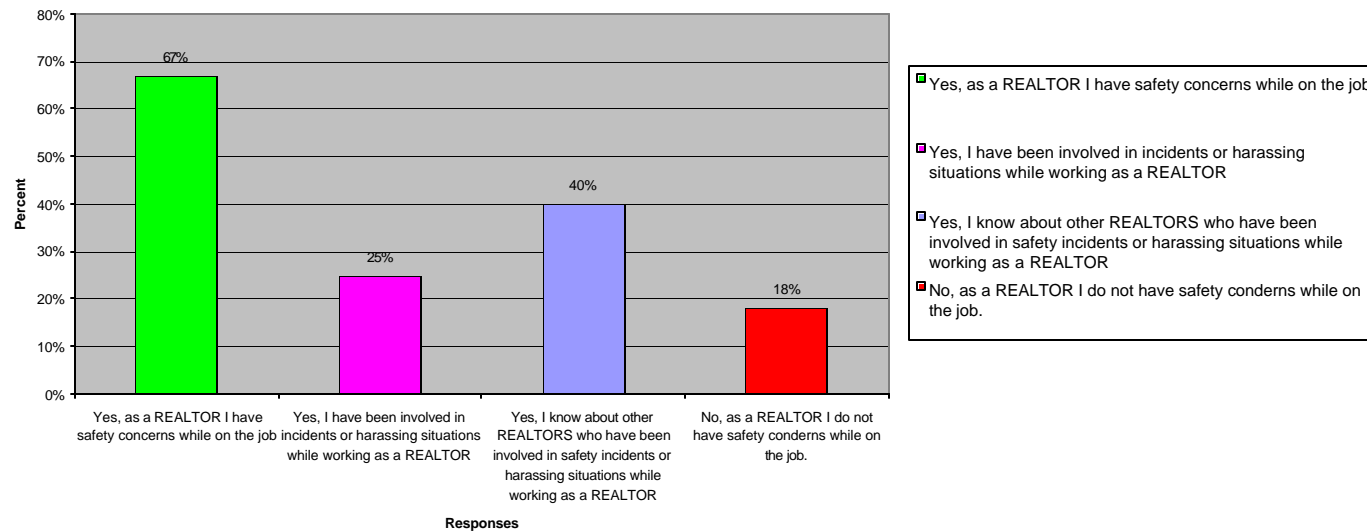
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Findings among REALTORS[®]

Over half (67%) of participating REALTORS[®] have experienced safety concerns, incidents or other harassing situations while working as a REALTOR[®]. Several also know of other REALTORS[®] who have been involved in safety incidents or harassing situations while working as a REALTOR[®] (40%).

Unfortunately one out of four respondents have been involved in incidents or harassing situations while working as a REALTOR[®] (25%). At the opposite extreme, 18% do not have safety concerns while on the job.

Have you had safety concerns, incidents or any harassing situations while working as a REALTOR?



Personal Safety Stories and Experiences

Even though REALTORS® from across the U.S. participated in this survey, the majority of them share similar safety concerns. Almost all of the stories submitted involve 'Open Houses' or vacant property with similar themes and precautionary notes. Each contribution calls for increased awareness regarding REALTOR® Safety.

Open House safety concerns are:

- ✓ Hosting Open Houses alone is always dangerous!
- ✓ Assault and robbery are always a possibility while having an Open House.
- ✓ Suspicious individuals or drunks sexually harassing agents during Open House.
- ✓ Robbery of agent's car keys, agent's purse, or homeowner's prescription drugs.

Vacant Homes safety concerns are:

- ✓ Squatters and vandals are a big threat while attempting to show a vacant property. Many feel that the REALTOR® is intruding on their property, which often results in threats or bodily harm.
- ✓ Suspicious individuals who ask to see vacant properties only.
- ✓ Unwelcome sexual advances can happen at any time. However, most participants have a heightened awareness when showing vacant property because most rapes and assaults among REALTORS® they know happen while showing vacant properties.

A few participants have experienced different safety situations while working as a REALTOR®. These concerns can be found under Other Safety concerns. A breakdown of common themes follows.

Other safety concerns are:

- ✓ The number of individuals who show up to an appointment is unexpected.
- ✓ Harassment while working on the floor alone.
- ✓ Several have experienced harassment from office walk-ins.
- ✓ Unfriendly dogs that live on the property 'for sale' or on adjacent property.
- ✓ Several have been physically hurt while showing unsafe property such as houses under construction, slipping on icy walkway of vacant house, poisoned by carbon monoxide from faulty heating unit at a vacant house, and falling down the stairs of a vacant property.
- ✓ Threatening or harassing phone calls from individuals based on the photo that appears on 'for sale' signs or business cards.
- ✓ Being asked to come alone to a showing.

Suggestions and Safety Tips

Like the safety stories, many of the safety tips provided have a lot in common. Most participants feel that common sense is the best alert device while on the job. However, there are other safety measures that REALTORS® recommend.

Office Procedures

- ✓ Always let someone know where you are going and leave the name and phone number of the client you are meeting.
- ✓ Have someone from your office call you every half hour or check in with your office every half hour. Designate one person in the office as the point of contact for this procedure.
- ✓ Have a code word for cases where you feel that you are in danger. The designated person at the office is in charge of calling 911.
- ✓ Always carry a charged cell phone and program 911 in the speed dial.
- ✓ Establish an alert network among REALTORS® in your office and association. Use this network to report incidents or suspicious individuals.
- ✓ Keep a log of every agent's car make, model and license number.
- ✓ Post 'REALTOR® Watch' signs on vacant or rehab homes.
- ✓ Do not use home phone number on business cards.
- ✓ Wear jewelry conservatively.
- ✓ Never meet clients after dark in limited cell phone areas.
- ✓ Carry pepper spray or mace.

Prospects

- ✓ If a prospect requests to see only vacant property or asks if you are coming alone...these are red flags. Beware.
- ✓ Never meet a prospect at a property site unless you've met before
- ✓ Beware of individuals that walk up to you on the street and ask to see the property you're locking up.
- ✓ Take down the prospect's phone number. Call them to verify that the information is valid. Ask a prospect to come into your office before showing them any properties. Make a copy of their I.D. Place this information in their file.

Showing a property

- ✓ Know your surroundings.
- ✓ Always be aware of your nearest exit.
- ✓ Unless you know your client well, do not go into bedrooms or the basement with them.
- ✓ Work open houses in pairs. If not possible, have someone check up on you throughout the day.
- ✓ Let clients go upstairs and/or into bedrooms by themselves.
- ✓ If there is a need to show a property after dark, travel in pairs.

Repair Workers

- ✓ Never go into a vacant property with repair workers who show up out of the blue. Ask for credentials and call their company to verify the reason why they are asking for access to a property.

Safety Resources

Participants provided information on safety resources that other REALTORS® should know about such as classes, products, organizations, videos, websites, consultants, etc.

Products

- ✓ Pepper spray or mace
- ✓ Stun guns / Tazer guns
- ✓ Whistle
- ✓ Flashlights
- ✓ *The Gift of Fear* a book by Gaven de Becker
- ✓ Personal body alarm that can be set up to notify someone at the office

Organizations/Associations

- ✓ National Rifle Association's *Refuse to be a Victim* course, which does not promote the use of firearms.
- ✓ Defense courses at the YMCA
- ✓ Defense courses at the local Police Academy
- ✓ NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR)
- ✓ Women's Council of REALTORS® (WCR)
- ✓ Ebby Halliday's safety guidelines (<http://dallas.bizjournals.com/dallas/stories/2000/10/30/focus3.html>)

Consultants

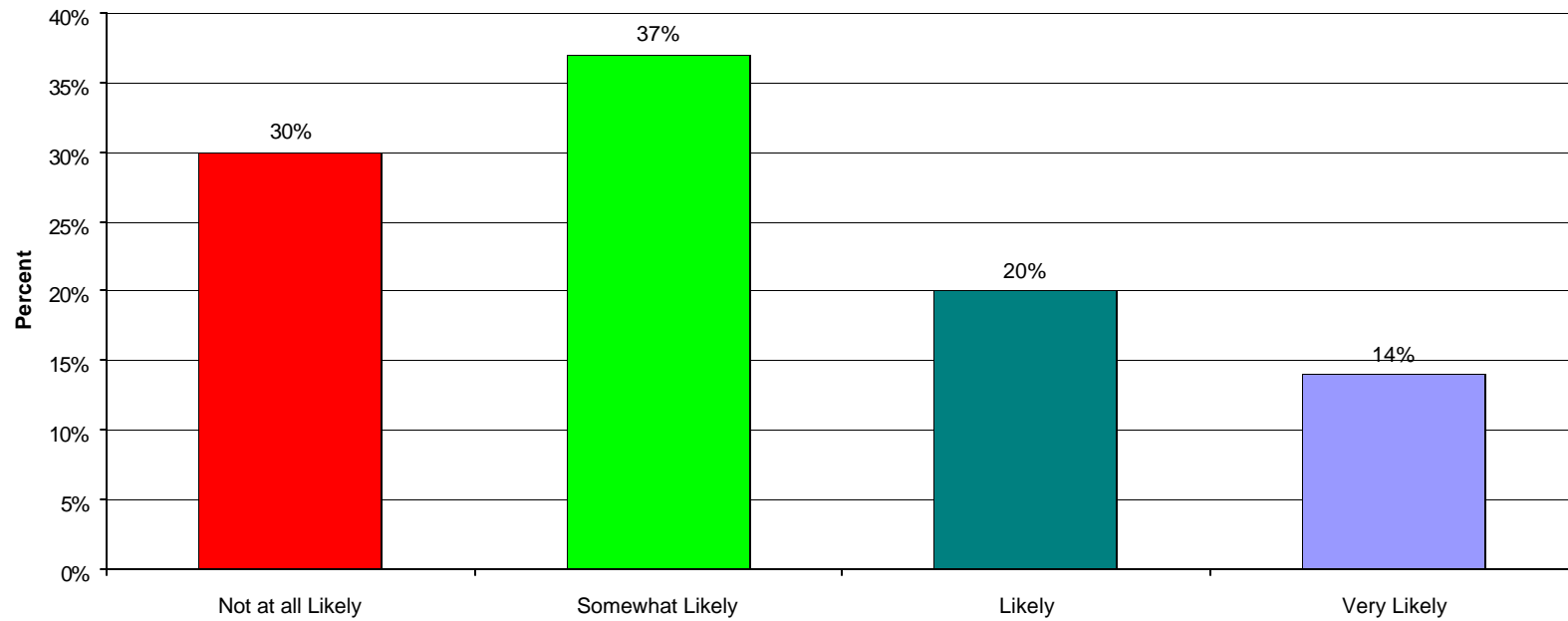
- ✓ Robert Siciliano (<http://www.allstaragency.com/cgi-bin/speaker2001.asp?ID=387>)
- ✓ Dan Starks (<http://www.danstarks.com/>)

Miscellaneous Resources

- ✓ REALTOR® dogs who go into property and search every room to make sure that it is safe
- ✓ NAR Safety video
- ✓ Safety speakers form local police academy
- ✓ Gun permits

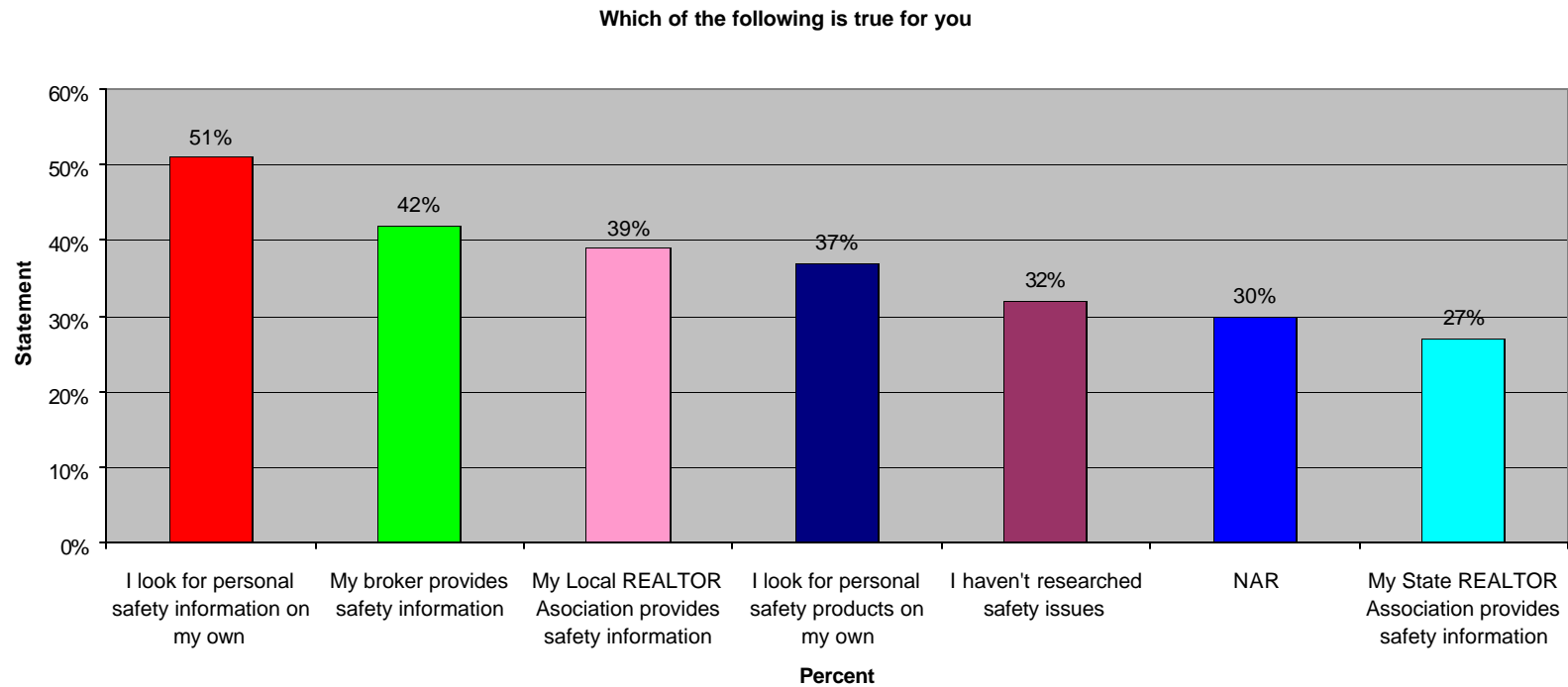
REALTORS® were asked how likely they are to use the Internet to look for safety resources and information. Over one-third (37%) are somewhat likely to turn to the Internet for safety information.

How likely are you to use the Internet to look for safety resources and information



The top three sources where participants are likely to obtain safety information are:

- ✓ look for safety information on their own (51%)
- ✓ from their broker (42%)
- ✓ from their Local REALTOR® Association (39%)



Office, Local or State Safety Resources

Online safety tips, articles, pepper spray and safety alerts were among the most commonly mentioned resources that are offered by the participant's office, Local or State REALTOR® Board. Other resources are:

- ✓ Lockboxes with mace
- ✓ Safety pamphlets from VAR/NVAR
- ✓ Self defense classes sponsored by local association
- ✓ Local website
- ✓ Washington state provides safety poster
- ✓ Greater Louisville Association of REALTORS® offers safety products
- ✓ Seattle has a safety committee
- ✓ Safety video during orientation
- ✓ Office discussions on safety
- ✓ Prospect I.D. forms required by broker
- ✓ Speakers brought in by broker
- ✓ Broker's or Sheriff's tips of the month

Expectations

REALTOR® expectations on safety resources are:

- ✓ met by their office (41%) ; 23% indicate that their office falls slightly short of their expectations
- ✓ met by their Local REALTOR® Association (39%); 28% indicate that their Local REALTOR® Association falls slightly short of their expectations
- ✓ met by their State REALTOR® Association (35%); 29% indicate that their State REALTOR® Association falls slightly short of their expectations
- ✓ met by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (38%); 28% that NAR falls slightly short of their expectations

REALTORS® would like to the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR) to provide:

- ✓ Savings on self defense classes
- ✓ Sponsor safety classes
- ✓ Tips, safety reminders, and articles
- ✓ Case studies on safety issues (do's and don'ts)
- ✓ Rules or safety guidelines for brokers
- ✓ Continue producing a safety video

Participant Demographics

The following is a profile of the REALTORS® who participated in this study.

- ✓ 71% describe their main function in real estate as a sales agent; followed by broker-owners (some selling) (10%)
- ✓ 65% focus on residential properties, exclusively ; 28% have a mixed practice with more than 50% residential transactions
- ✓ 34% have been active in real estate for 6-15 years; 32% have been active in real estate for 1-5 years
- ✓ 71% are female
- ✓ 33% of participants are between 45-54 years old ; 22% are between 35-44 years old
- ✓ California (9%), Florida (8%), Texas (8%) and Illinois (5%) accounted for the greatest numbers of responses.

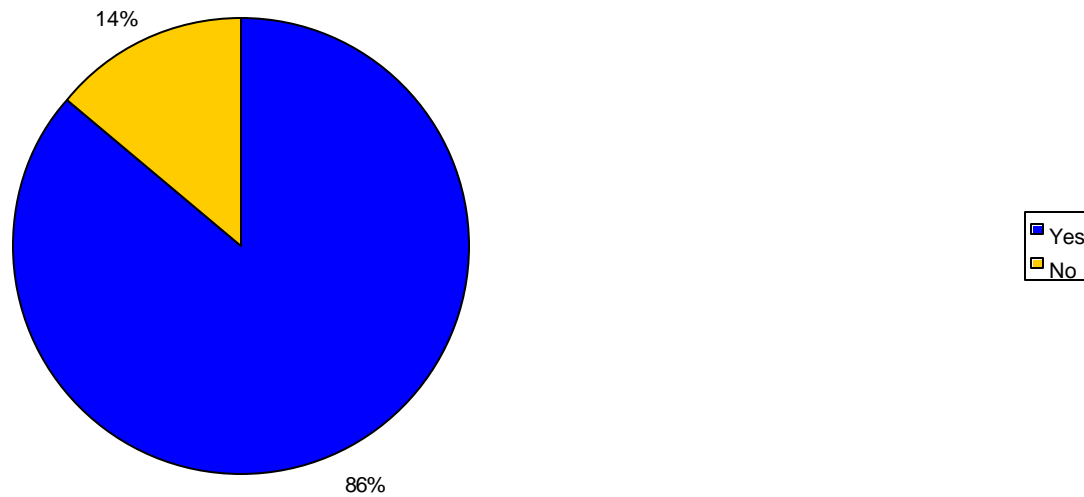
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Findings among Association Executives

NAR invited the Association Executives (AEs) to assist NAR in understanding their members' needs for safety information and resources.

Eighty-six percent (86%) of REALTORS® associations provide personal safety information or resources.

Does your REALTOR Association provides you with perosnal safety information or resources?



Resources

These associations may offer one or more of the following resources:

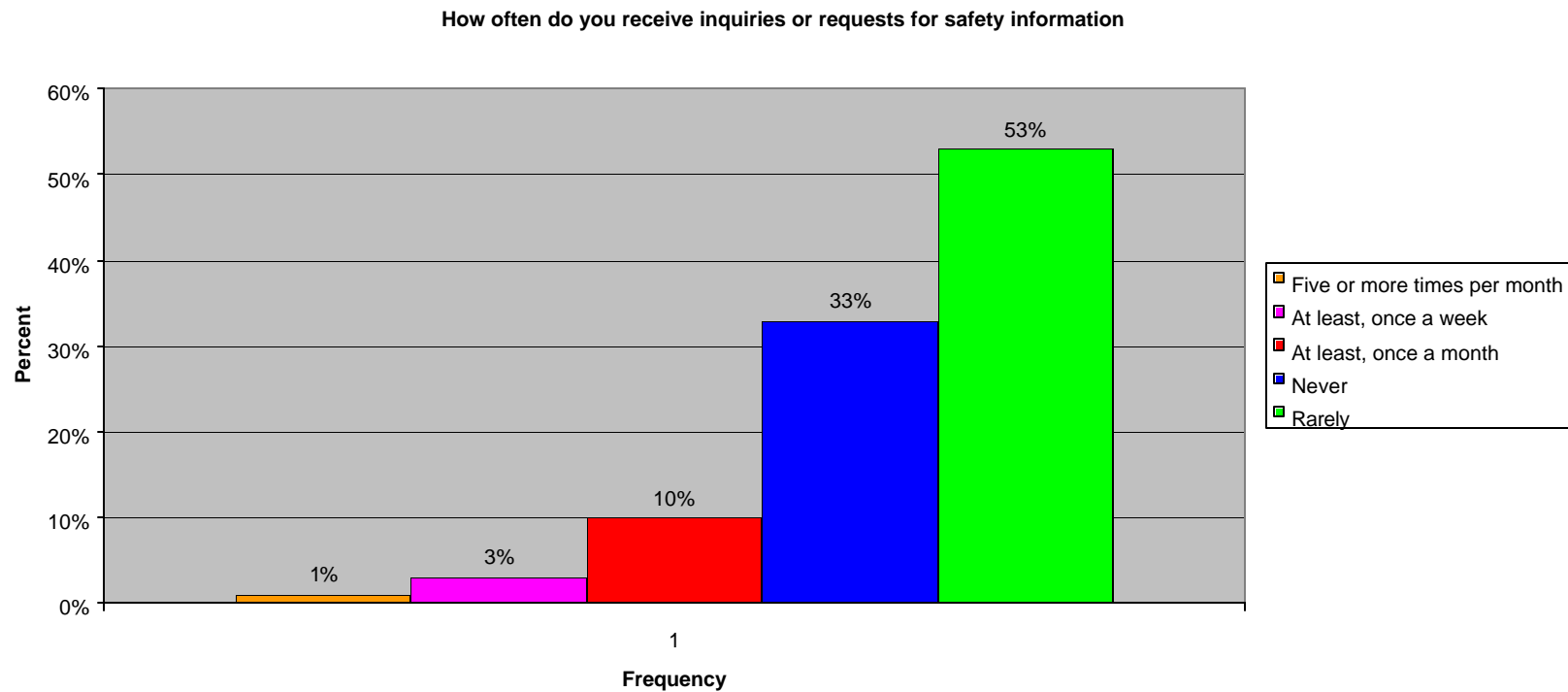
- ✓ Safety information during orientations
- ✓ Provide tips to new agents after showing the NAR safety video
- ✓ Two hour safety course toward continuing education
- ✓ Offer safety discussions at various meetings/events
- ✓ Provide tips and information via articles, e-newsletters and seminars

Participating AEs recommend that besides the items mentioned above, other associations should consider:

- ✓ Self defense classes from local police
- ✓ “Citizens Against Crime” to speak about safety
- ✓ Alert network among their board’s REALTORS® to report suspicious individuals or activity. These work best when displayed via the MLS.

Member Inquiries

Over half of AEs rarely receive inquiries or requests for safety information (53%).



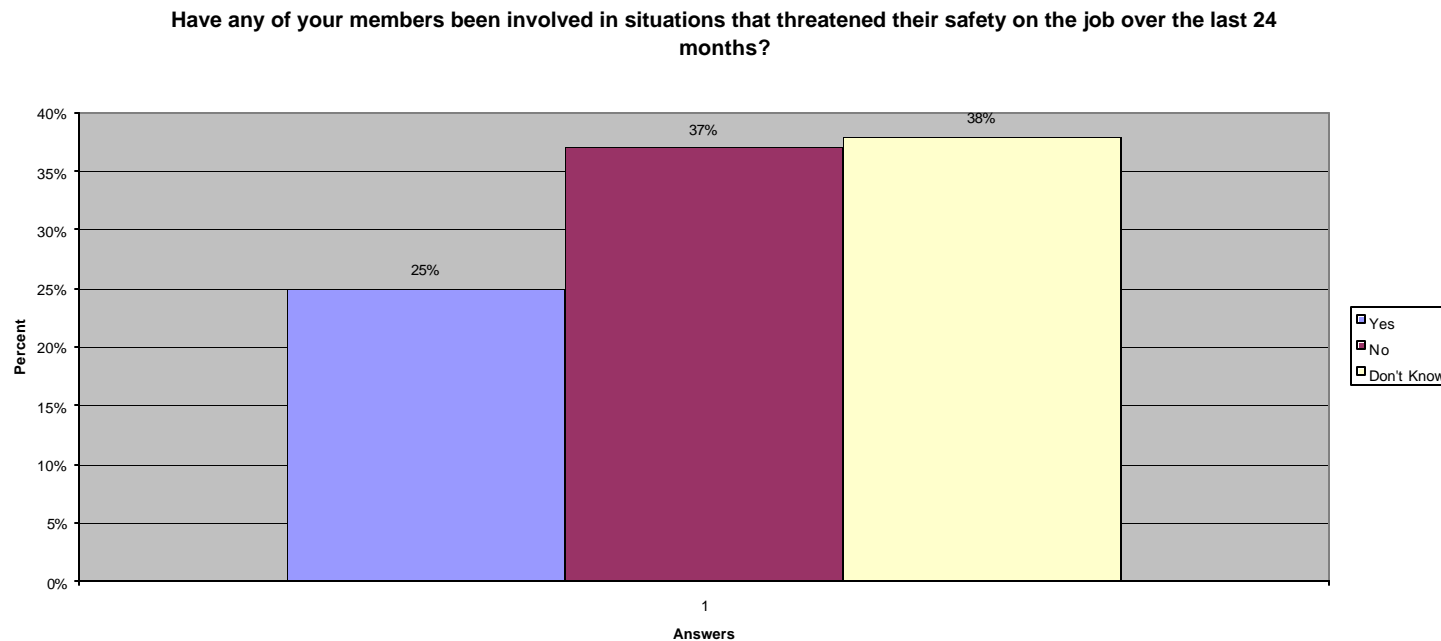
When members ask about safety issues, they are asking about:

- ✓ Safety plans (i.e. what to do if they don't feel comfortable with a client, what to do when faced with a dangerous situation, etc.)
- ✓ Rules / guideline on touring homes
- ✓ How to report theft, harassment or suspicious individuals
- ✓ Lockbox policy
- ✓ Should I have an office policy on safety
- ✓ How to detect an e-mail scam

Awareness

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of respondents do not know if their members have been involved in a situation such as harassment, rape, robbery, burglary or assault in the past 24 months. Thirty-seven (37%) percent state that their members have not been involved in threatening situations while working as a REALTOR® in the last 24 months.

Fifty-three percent (53%) do not have procedures in place for reporting incidents associated with REALTOR® safety.



If a member encounters a safety issue while on the job, the association finds out via:

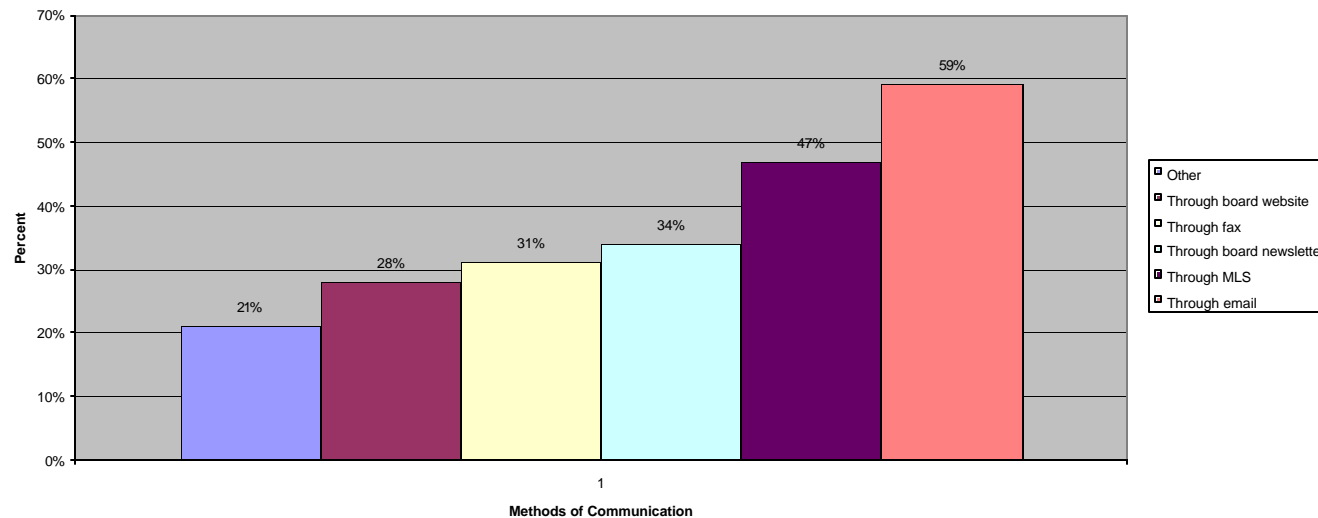
- ✓ the victim calls their local association
- ✓ the broker
- ✓ rumor mill
- ✓ the newspaper

Procedures

If an incident is reported to the association, the following steps may be taken:

- ✓ Encourage the REALTOR® to file a police report
- ✓ Send out an alert or fax to other members about the incident and a description of the individual(s)
- ✓ Post concerns or incidents on the association website
- ✓ 74% publicize the incident to board members
 - 59% disseminate information through e-mail
 - 47% inform their members via the MLS bulletin board
 - 21% use “other” forms of communication such as board meetings or phone calls to each broker office.

How do you publicize REALTOR safety incidents?



Most participants do not have procedures in place because they have not been involved with situations that threatened their REALTORS® safety or safety incidents have been few.

If incidents are tracked, the association uses a board log or paper filing system.

Online Information

The majority of participating Association Executives indicate that their board's website does not provide REALTOR® safety information (82%)

Because safety information is currently not available on their state or local association website, 93% would like to see more REALTOR® safety information on NAR's REALTOR.org website.

Training

One-third of participants indicate that their board offers safety training (32%). Common program details are as follows.

Content:

- ✓ Everyday safety procedures
- ✓ How to work safely
- ✓ General safety tips
- ✓ Self defense tips

Format & Tools:

- ✓ Orientation
- ✓ Luncheon meeting
- ✓ Lectures
- ✓ Live presentation, PowerPoint, or videos
 - 67% use the NAR safety video ; 7% are not sure if the video they use is from NAR.
- ✓ Police Officers lead the discussion

Length:

- ✓ 30 minutes to 4 hours
- ✓ Annually, monthly, quarterly or when requested

Expectations

Associations aren't sure if NAR could provide safety resources on a national level that would meet the needs of their members. However, they provided the following suggestions:

- ✓ Continue to produce the safety video
- ✓ Compliment the video with a list of safety tips, do's / don'ts, safety flyers or brochures
- ✓ Guidance on how to handle safety situations
- ✓ Cases on what's happening in other states
- ✓ Safety training at NAR Midyear or Annual meetings
- ✓ Savings on self-defense , whistles, pepper spray or personal body alarms
- ✓ REALTOR® experiences in the REALTOR® Magazine or other articles on safety
- ✓ Tips and articles on how to work safely in vacant homes
- ✓ Suggestions for broker office meetings

Safety Kit

Most feel that whatever information is provided in a Safety Kit should also reside online. Besides a video or CD, flyers, ad slicks, and tips, AEs would recommend incorporating the following into the kit:

- ✓ Sample of pepper spray
- ✓ A whistle
- ✓ Poster on Safety week
- ✓ Safety decal
- ✓ Suspect identification form

Participant Demographics

The following is a profile of the Association Executives who participated in this study.

- ✓ 94% are Local AEs
- ✓ Florida (13%), California (9%), Texas (5%) and Virginia (5%) accounted for the greatest numbers of responses.