

WIRE FRAUD ADVISORY

Wire fraud has become a wide spread issue impacting real estate transactions. Buyers and sellers need to exercise extreme caution when wiring funds in real estate transactions. Criminals/hackers target email accounts of parties to a real estate transaction, including but not limited to, real estate brokers, title/escrow officers and mortgage brokers. In many cases they have been able to intercept emailed wire transfer instructions, obtain account information and, by altering some of the data, use emails to redirect the funds to a different account. These scams are extremely sophisticated and appear as if they are coming from one of the parties in your real estate transaction.

In each real estate transaction, the Buyer and Seller are advised to:

- Always speak with the intended recipient of a wire transfer in advance of wiring funds. Always confirm the routing number and account number over the phone with the intended recipient.
- Verify that the contact information is legitimate. Buyer and seller should call using a phone number that is independently obtained and not use the phone number that is provided in an email.
- Do not click on links or attachments in an email from one of the parties to the real estate transaction, unless you have verified by telephone from the sender that they did in fact send you a document.
- Never send personal information such as social security numbers, bank account numbers and credit card numbers, unless it is through secured/encrypted email or personal delivery to the intended recipient.
- Because of the sophisticated nature of these scams, often times the email your receive looks like it is coming from someone you are familiar with in your real estate transaction but it is actually coming from a different email address. Never hit reply in an email to one of the parties to your real estate transaction, always start a new email and personally type in the email addresses.
- Take steps to secure the system you are using with your email account such as strong passwords and secure WiFi.
- If you suspect that you have been victimized by wire fraud, immediately contact the FBI field office at 503-224-4181 and file a complaint online at www.ic3.gov.
- If you believe you have received questionable or suspicious wire instructions, immediately notify your bank, the escrow company, your mortgage lender and your real estate professional.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understand that you have received a copy of this Wire Fraud Advisory.

Date: April 10, 2025

Signature: Buyer Seller *Annie L Balzer*
Annie L Balzer

Signature: Buyer Seller _____

Signature: Buyer Seller _____

Signature: Buyer Seller _____