

Why a Mobile Personal Security Service is Useful

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Warning: The following document contains gruesome and violent details on actual attacks on realtors and may be unsuitable for some readers.

Joan Malone gathered up her briefcase, a list of homes and headed to the lobby to meet her client, Carl. Always well-dressed, Carl came in to her office with his wife, mother and brother two months back. This attorney and father of two wanted a home in a good school system so Joan scheduled her tour accordingly.

The tour went well. Carl walked around each property placing furniture, checking out storage spaces and continuing on with pleasantries. Hours later, they reached the final home. She opened the door and let Carl in. He walked confidently through the space, but wasn't saying much. Joan blew it off. He was probably just comparing the space to the homes they'd visited earlier. But her feeling of unease wouldn't settle. She kept her distance from Carl, always walking behind him into new rooms.

Joan's instincts were right. Moments after they entered the final property, Carl attacked her. He punched her in the jaw, broke her back, choked her into unconsciousness and stabbed her repeatedly. Leaving her for dead, Carl fled in Joan's car.

Amazingly, she still had a pulse. She managed to crawl to a phone and dialed 9-1-1. Help was finally on the way.

Sadly, Joan is one of many real estate professionals who have been attacked on the job. Both men and women are assaulted and sometimes murdered. According to the Real Estate Safety Council, "twenty one real estate agents were murdered while on the job in 2000. A total of two hundred and six agents died as a result of violent assaults from 1982 to 2000." Real Estate agents work in a high-risk profession. They travel alone to vacant properties with strangers. In fact, seventy one percent of home sales come from strangers. With this in mind, it is incredibly important for all real estate agents to follow safety procedures.

"We all think it can't happen to us," says Ms. Malone, "especially if you live in a community like mine: mostly professional, average home price of \$190,000, a small-town atmosphere. But bad guys have nice cars, too."

So what are real estate professionals supposed to do to protect themselves from assaults? Some agents try protecting themselves through a buddy system. Others hire off-duty police officers to join them during open houses. But sometimes, these systems aren't enough. Until now, options have been limited, and agents have only been able to rely on luck.

The Mobile Callback system changes that. Now, agents can activate a personal safety service at any time. Once the system is activated, the agent can feel comfortable traveling alone, knowing that a network of law enforcement agents are only minutes away.

In some situations, it may still be necessary to use traditional safety methods, but the addition of the Mobile Callback system adds even more security. If Mobile Callback had been available to Joan, her suffering would not have lasted as long as it did. In fact, notifying Carl that the Mobile Callback System was monitoring her may have completely prevented the confrontation.

Had Joan had access to Mobile Callback, she could have activated the system - reporting her first location before she left. Five minutes later, the system would call Joan and check on the situation. At this time, she would notify Carl that she was being monitored by the Mobile Callback system and explain how the system worked to protect both of them. At intervals Joan decides on, the system would call and check in with her, making sure she hadn't changed locations, and - if she had - would get the new address and information. If this did not prevent Carl from assaulting Joan, the system would still be working to protect her. Once she was attacked, the system would try contacting her three times. If, on the third try, there was still no answer, an emergency operator would be immediately contacted and help would be sent to her exact location.

Now that Mobile Callback is available, agents can feel more comfortable on the job knowing that help is close by and only minutes away. Real Estate agents are vulnerable, and Joan isn't the only victim who could have benefited from this personal safety service. Following are actual cases and the ways Mobile Callback can prevent them from happening to you:

Situation 1:

Maria Garcia was preparing a foreclosed home when a neighbor, Donny Ray Bates, approached her. Donny wanted Maria to take a look at his house and see what she thought about listing it on the market. Eager to get the listing, Maria went inside. Donny beat her and then slit her throat with a knife. She bled to death before anyone knew she needed help.ⁱ

Situation 2:

Norberto Ruvio had an appointment to show a foreclosed home. When he arrived, the attacker put a gun to his head, handcuffed him to a pipe and robbed him of his wallet and cell phone. Several hours later, a neighbor answered his cries for help.ⁱⁱ

Situation 3:

Paula Herrington had an appointment to show Tim several homes. It turns out that Tim was on a crime spree and abducted Herrington (the seventh of his victims), sexually assaulted her and then released her two days later in another state.ⁱⁱⁱ

How Mobile Callback Helps:

Once an agent activates the system, a highly trained staff is on guard to protect them. Mobile Callback is:

A method of prevention: Had Maria, Norberto and Paula activated their Mobile Callback system in the presence of the attackers, it may have prevented their injuries completely.

A way to feel comfortable: If Norberto knew his location had been recorded, his feeling of desperation wouldn't have been as intense. He would be aware that help was on its way.

A way to stop criminals: As Tim's prisoner, Paula was unable to dial 9-1-1. Mobile Callback is designed for situations just like hers. Agents may find themselves in a situation where they cannot call for help, but this personal safety system responds quickly to any unusual situation. Within 15 minutes of her capture, our emergency operators would have dispatched proper authorities and captured Tim before Paula's two-day nightmare.

Criminals often commit crimes only because they believe they can get away with them. Agents need to make a point of following common safety procedures on the job and promoting the fact that they're being monitored by a highly intelligent emergency system. With these steps combined, the number of agents who become victims will decrease, and all professionals can feel more confident on the job.

ⁱ Dougherty, Timothy R., [Cops, victims say real estate can be hazardous to your health](http://www.realtor.org/rmomag.nsf/pages/copsvictimtimarchive1997Jun), On-line posting, Realtor Magazine Online, June 01, 1997, <http://www.realtor.org/rmomag.nsf/pages/copsvictimtimarchive1997Jun>

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Spencer, Mark, [Every Realtor's Nightmare: Part 3](http://realtytimes.com/rtnews/printpages/19980722_nightmare3.htm), On-line posting, Realty Times, July 23, 1998, http://realtytimes.com/rtnews/printpages/19980722_nightmare3.htm.