



**REALTORS<sup>®</sup>**  
**ASSOCIATION**  
of Hamilton-Burlington  
~ Since 1921 ~

## COVID-19 Resources for REALTORS<sup>®</sup>

Updated April 24, 2020

# Financial Assistance During COVID-19

### *Q: What financial assistance is available to individual REALTORS<sup>®</sup> during COVID-19?*

#### **A:** (From Canadian Real Estate Association)

The portal for the Canadian Emergency Relief Benefit (CERB) opened on Monday, April 6. Some REALTORS<sup>®</sup> are concerned they are not eligible for CERB for one of two reasons:

- They closed a deal in the winter, and will be receiving commission in the coming weeks.
- They are still “working” (phoning clients, conducting virtual tours, etc.), though they are not receiving income.

In the first instance, the eligibility criteria states that income cannot have been received in the previous 14 days. If, for example, a member is going to receive payment today for work conducted days or months ago, they will have to wait for 14 days after that income is received in order to apply. The CERB is available from March 15, 2020 to October 3, 2020. The last date to apply is December 2, 2020. Canadians are eligible for a maximum of four months of benefits within that time period.

In the second instance the eligibility requirements state Canadians are eligible: “Who are or expect to be without employment or self-employment income for at least 14 consecutive days in the initial four-week period. For subsequent benefit periods, they expect to have no employment or self-employment income.” Many of our members fall into this criterion.

The Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), which is geared to help employers retain staff, is set to launch soon. Currently, the eligibility requirements state that an employer must show a 30 per cent year-over-year decline in revenue for March, April and May 2020. Given that real estate deals often don't close for several months, we don't believe this method for calculating eligibility will be effective for our brokers. We are working with the government to address this problem.

It is important to note that the eligibility requirements for both programs are a moving target and are likely to evolve as needs and gaps become clear. As recently as April 6, the Prime Minister stated, “We recognize that there are groups of people who aren't benefitting from the CERB who probably should, I think specifically of people who've seen their hours reduced massively. We're going to be announcing in the coming days how people in that situation will be able to apply and receive the CERB.”

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## ***Q: What financial assistance is available for Brokerages during COVID-19?***

**A:** To help businesses keep and return workers to their payroll through the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, proposed the new Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). This would provide a 75 per cent wage subsidy to eligible employers for up to 12 weeks, retroactive to March 15, 2020.

### **Eligible Employers**

Eligible employers would include individuals, taxable corporations, and partnerships consisting of eligible employers as well as non-profit organizations and registered charities.

Public bodies would not be eligible for this subsidy. Public bodies include municipalities and local governments, Crown corporations, public universities, colleges, schools and hospitals.

This subsidy would be available to eligible employers that see a drop of at least 30 per cent of their revenue (see Eligible Periods). In applying for the subsidy, employers would be required to attest to the decline in revenue.

The subsidy amount for a given employee on eligible remuneration paid between March 15 and June 6, 2020 would be the greater of:

75 per cent of the amount of remuneration paid, up to a maximum benefit of \$847 per week; and the amount of remuneration paid, up to a maximum benefit of \$847 per week or 75 per cent of the employee's pre-crisis weekly remuneration, whichever is less.

In effect, employers may be eligible for a subsidy of up to 100 per cent of the first 75 per cent of pre-crisis wages or salaries of existing employees. These employers would be expected where possible to maintain existing employees' pre-crisis employment earnings.

Employers will also be eligible for a subsidy of up to 75 per cent of salaries and wages paid to new employees.

For more information, please visit

[www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/04/the-canada-emergency-wage-subsidy.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/04/the-canada-emergency-wage-subsidy.html).

## ***Q: What is the difference between the Canadian Emergency Relief Benefit (CERB) and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)?***

**A:** "Please see graphic on next page"

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## COVID-19: Government Help for REALTORS®

### CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT (CERB)

VS

### CANADA EMERGENCY WAGE SUBSIDY (CEWS)

**\$2,000 a month** up  
to 4 months

**75% of employee wages** of  
the first **\$58,700** normally  
earned by employees

#### YOU QUALIFY IF YOU:

Must stop work due to COVID-19  
and do not have other income.

Are sick, quarantined or taking  
care for someone who is.

Are a parent who must stay home  
without pay to care for children.

Are still employed but not being paid.

Are a wage-earner, salary-earner, or  
contract worker and self-employed  
individual who would not otherwise  
be eligible for EI who lost their  
income because of COVID-19.

#### YOU QUALIFY IF YOU:

Suffer a drop in gross revenues  
of at least 30% in March, April or  
May, when compared to the  
same month in 2019.

Make best efforts to top up  
salaries to 100% of the maximum  
wages covered.

**PLEASE NOTE: If your employer is paying your wages  
through the CEWS, you will not be eligible for the CERB.**

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## RAHB Information

### *Q: Are the RAHB offices open?*

**A:** As of Thursday, March 19, the physical RAHB office is closed, while RAHB staff work remotely to serve RAHB members. We don't know how long the physical RAHB office will be closed – we will be watching public health agencies at the federal and provincial level to ensure the safety of our staff and members.

### *Q: Is RAHB still operational?*

**A:** Yes. The physical RAHB office is closed, but RAHB staff are working remotely to serve members.

### *Q: How can I contact RAHB right now?*

**A:** You can contact the RAHB office at the usual phone numbers, specifically the main line at 905.529.8101 and the MLS® Help Desk at 905.667.4650 or [support@rahb.ca](mailto:support@rahb.ca).

Thank you for your patience as we all work together, navigating through the COVID-19 situation. We have become aware that some members have been experiencing trouble while trying to get through to RAHB using the regular office phone number and MLS® support number. If you are experiencing troubles, please try the following numbers as an alternative:

**MLS® Support** – 905.481.0354

**Reception** – 905.963.1064

If you have any questions related to COVID-19, you can also e-mail [covid19@rahb.ca](mailto:covid19@rahb.ca). We will do our best to answer your questions.

### *Q: Why can't I sign into my dashboard at my.rahb.ca?*

**A:** Some users have reported being unable to log-in to Matrix via Clarity Security when using Google Chrome as their browser. This is due to Google Chrome rolling out a phased-in update, which has created a conflict for those users who have received the update, leaving them unable to log-in to [my.rahb.ca](http://my.rahb.ca) using the Google Chrome browser.

Below is the work around which will resolve the conflict and allow members to log-in to [my.rahb.ca](http://my.rahb.ca) using Google Chrome:

Open Google Chrome

In the address bar type “chrome://flags”

In the Search Flags area enter “SameSite”

Switch “Samesite by default cookies” from “Default” to “Disabled”

Switch “Cookies without Samesite must be secure” from “Default” to “Disabled”

Should you have any questions, please contact the MLS® Help Desk at 905.667.4650.

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### ***Q: Who do I contact if I am having technical issues?***

**A:** If you have a technical issue related to the RAHB MLS®, please call the RAHB MLS® Help Desk at 905.667.4650 and we will help you in any way we can.

### ***Q: What other services will be disrupted while the RAHB offices are closed?***

**A:** All in-person member meetings, events and education of any kind are postponed or will be conducted via teleconference.

The Realty Shoppe is closed for in-person shopping and in-person account payments; however, we are taking orders via phone and e-mail, which will be fulfilled once the office reopens. You can reach us at 905.52.5979 or [realtyshoppe@rahb.ca](mailto:realtyshoppe@rahb.ca).

Online payments are highly encouraged; cheque payments may be dropped off in the RAHB mailbox, however processing of these payments may be delayed; cash payments are not permitted.

RealTrack service is not accessible.

OREA testing at the RAHB office has been cancelled until further notice.

### ***Q: How will interboarding be affected?***

**A:** Everything is status quo. MLS® staff are able to process any interboards received to appear on RAHB Matrix.

### ***Q: Where should I look for up-to-date information?***

**A:** We have set up a section on our blog that is specific to COVID-19. This can be found at <https://blog.rahb.ca/covid-19/>.

We are also updating resources on our public website at <https://www.rahb.ca/covid-19/>.

There are also the provincial and federal public health agencies:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business/maintaingrowimprovebusiness/resources-for-canadian-businesses.html>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/public-resources>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

We will be sending updates to members via e-mail, and posting regularly to News & Alerts and the member Facebook Group.

### ***Q: What is the impact on MLS® System listings and RAHB Rules & Regulations?***

**A:** RAHB staff are working remotely and so we appreciate your patience if there is any delay in obtaining information or contacting a RAHB staff for assistance. As of March 27, the only change to the MLS® has been the suppression of the open house option in Matrix. This is to align our work with the recommendations by public health. We do not foresee any impacts to the MLS® during this time.

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As for RAHB Rules & Regulations, we are making temporary changes on a case-by-case basis to allow members to conduct their business during this time. For example, we recently relaxed [MLS® Rules and Regulations 2.10 \(i\)](#).

***What does this mean in practice?***

A listing will not be suspended because a property is not available for in-person showings or inspections.

As in-person showings are temporarily prohibited, virtual showings are permitted instead.

By complying with direction from public health agencies at the national and provincial levels, RAHB members are individually and collectively helping to slow the spread of COVID-19, thereby protecting themselves, their families and their communities.

***Q: Will RAHB prohibit REALTORS® from trading in real estate during the shutdown or state of emergency?***

**A:** RAHB does not have the authority to prohibit trading during this state of emergency; however, it could be prohibited by the federal or provincial government if public health guidelines are not followed to slow the spread of COVID-19.

***Q: Why is RAHB not waiving dues?***

**A:** We understand that this is a very uncertain time for everyone. No one is immune to the anxieties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 23, your Board of Directors met virtually to discuss how RAHB can support members during this uncertain time. As is currently being done by other boards and associations across Canada, the RAHB Board of Directors is waiting to make a decision on any changes to membership dues and fees. The delay in a decision is because the effects of COVID-19 are unknown, as is the length this emergency will take place.

**There are several reasons for this:**

1. RAHB has a reserve of funds for a “rainy day”; however, a waiver or reduction of fees too early in this state of emergency may mean that RAHB will run out of these reserves, and possibly other accounts. We don’t know how long this emergency will last, and the RAHB Board of Directors need to be diligent stewards of the Association’s finances, and always have the future in mind when making decisions.
2. The RAHB MLS® is still operational and members are able to conduct essential business. The business aspect of real estate may look different during this state of emergency – i.e. virtual – however, it is possible to trade during this time, if necessary. The MLS® continues to receive listings and report sales.
3. Other RAHB business is continuing during this time, such as webinars, MLS® support, communications, and planning for when this state of emergency is over. RAHB dues and fees fund the operation of the Association as a whole.
4. The extent to which the federal and provincial governments are providing financial support to citizens during this state of emergency is still evolving, as is the interpretation of the circumstances under which REALTORS® may qualify for this assistance. It is important to gain an understanding of these details and the impact of government assistance before committing to utilizing RAHB’s reserve funds to assist members.

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5. RAHB has not yet received word that payment collection will be deferred or waived by any of our service providers, and as such RAHB has a responsibility to meet our contractual obligations at this time.
6. Many RAHB dues and fees have already been processed, and we are not in a position to offer refunds at this time. To allow some members to not pay their fees would be unfair. This was taken into consideration by the Board of Directors, and so deferring decision for the next installment of fees, at the earliest, is what is most equitable for all RAHB members.

It is the Board of Directors' duty to secure the future of the Association on behalf of members, and with this comes the onus of having to make very difficult decisions at important junctures.

If you are unable to pay your RAHB dues & fees due to COVID-19, please contact RAHB staff at 905.529.8101 and we will work with you to ensure your business and life is not interrupted due to financial difficulties.

We want you to know that, as always, if you have any questions about your billing or would like to discuss the status of your account, please don't hesitate to contact RAHB staff at 905.529.8101.

## Government Direction and Guidelines

**Q:** *What does it mean that real estate is considered “essential” and is exempt from the “closing at-risk workplaces” order under the provincial shutdown?*

**A:** First and foremost, the buying or selling of a property should be vital. For example, a home is already bought or a home is already sold, or a client needs to find a home or sell a home to avoid major hardship. If the buying or selling of a property is not considered vital, then REALTORS® should be following the direction of public health officials. Please also speak with your Brokerage for guidance on their position.

OREA cautions that this is not business as usual, and the government can remove real estate as an essential workplace if public health direction is not followed. They also acknowledge that they cannot mandate or enforce this direction, but they are asking brokerages and REALTORS® to work within these guidelines in the best interest of public health and safety.

OREA asked for the essential service designation and for the Land Registry Office to stay open because there are thousands of transactions in Ontario right now that have yet to close officially. Every one of them is different. While some may not require the help of a REALTOR® to close, others will. OREA was concerned that if REALTORS® were not permitted to support these transactions, those families and businesses could have been left high and dry.

### What does this mean for REALTORS®?

Most importantly, it means that REALTORS®, following the advice of health officials, will be able to support families in this difficult time who need to close on a home.

What it doesn't mean is that REALTORS® are at liberty to conduct business as usual.

OREA is taking the position – and RAHB agrees – that all REALTORS® should stop face-to-face business, including open houses, in-person showings, and maintaining agents and public office hours. In fact, on Friday, April 3, the provincial government banned open houses.

The government gave the “essential” label to real estate to permit transactions to close – NOT to allow members to carry on with normal business practices during a crisis.

All members should be working remotely – full stop.

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## ***Q: How about the impact on municipalities, planning matters, committee of adjustment delays & property taxes?***

**A:** We are currently reviewing municipal services related to real estate transactions that could be impacted by the state of emergency and provincial shutdown. It is now very possible that municipalities may close their offices or work with reduced staff and that delays in receiving compliance information, permits and municipal agreements may be experienced.

We will keep members up-to-date via e-mail, News & Alerts and our blog.

It is good to follow the four main municipalities within the RAHB market area for updates:

- **Hamilton** - <https://www.hamilton.ca/>
- **Burlington** - <https://www.burlington.ca/en/index.asp>
- **Haldimand** - <https://www.haldimandcounty.ca/>
- **Niagara North** - <https://www.niagararegion.ca/>

## **Open Houses & Showings**

### ***Q: Can I host an open house right now?***

**A:** On Friday, April 3, the provincial government banned open houses.

We are relying on members to do the right thing for their communities. We all have to do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19, and help to maintain the health of our communities.

### ***Q: Are REALTORS® permitted to engage in showings?***

**A:** First and foremost, the buying or selling of a property should be vital. For example, a home is already bought or a home is already sold, or a client needs to find a home or sell a home to avoid major hardship. If the buying or selling of a property is not considered vital, then REALTORS® should be following the direction of public health officials. Please also speak with your Brokerage for guidance on their position.

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OREA is taking the position - and RAHB agrees - that all REALTORS® should stop face-to-face business, including open houses, in-person showings, and maintaining agents and public office hours.

We recognize that RAHB cannot police this; however, RAHB can say don't undertake in-person activities. The message we have received from OREA is that if REALTORS® don't act responsibly, there is great potential the provincial government will take away the "essential workplace" designation for real estate. If this happens, then REALTORS®, as well as buyers and sellers, will not have a choice.

In fact, on Friday, April 3, the provincial government banned open houses.

We are relying on members to do the right thing for their communities. We all have to do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19, and help to maintain the health of our communities. continued on page 9



***Q: What should I do if I learn that a visitor to a property tested positive to COVID-19 – is disclosure required or recommended?***

**A:** This information could be material to anyone at risk for potential exposure, but raises the question of whether it's a property concern or a people concern. Is the concern that the property site itself might have been or is contaminated? Or is it the risk of having been around a particular person? And was this person on the property or off-site?

Legally, known material conditions related to the property should be disclosed. According to Health Canada, it's possible the virus can spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects on a property, meaning a person could get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

To be on the safe side, a disclosure could be made. If making a disclosure, it should be done in a generic way so as not to invade privacy or implicate personal information. This would mean not using names but a general description along the line of "a visitor to the property on "X date" has tested positive for COVID 19."

***Q: May I ask clients or others I interact with in my real estate business if they have travelled recently, or have any signs of respiratory illness?***

**A:** Yes, you may ask clients or others about their recent travel, particularly to areas identified as having an increased risk of COVID-19. Be sure to ask all clients the same screening questions based on current, factual information from public health authorities.

***Q: I have a client that has sold their house and need to buy a new one. What will happen if they are not allowed to go see houses in the meantime and therefore can't buy something to move into? My clients do not feel they can buy a house virtually. Will they be held to their current closing date?***

**A:** There are virtual resources available for a seller to show a property and a buyer to see a property. If the buyer wants to make an offer without physically seeing the property, it is recommended that the buyer put a clause in the offer that the deal is dependent upon viewing the property in-person once the state of emergency in Ontario is over.

If they have concerns regarding their closing date, they should work with their REALTOR®, Brokerage and lawyer, as well as the buyer's representation to discuss options during this unprecedented time. We also recommend speaking with your lender if any situations change that affect your financial position.

We understand that there may be situations where a buyer or seller need the transaction to take place before the state of emergency in Ontario is over. In these extreme circumstances, an in-person viewing/showing can take place; however, all hygiene/sanitary precautions should take place before and after. Also, all Public Health guidelines should be followed, such as direction for those who show symptoms or have recently returned from international travel.

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***Q: I have a client who just put their house on the market. It is vacant and they have to sell. Do no showings apply to vacant homes?***

**A:** We recommend virtual showings whenever possible.

We understand that there may be situations where a buyer or seller need the transaction to take place before the state of emergency in Ontario is over. In these extreme circumstances, an in-person viewing/showing can take place; however, all hygiene/sanitary precautions should take place before and after. Also, all Public Health guidelines should be followed, such as direction for those who show symptoms or have recently returned from international travel.

***Q: How do I notify other REALTORS® that I have a virtual open house/showing option?***

**A:** First and foremost, the buying or selling of a property should be vital. For example, a home is already bought or a home is already sold, or a client needs to find a home or sell a home to avoid major hardship. If the buying or selling of a property is not considered vital, then REALTORS® should be following the direction of public health officials. Please also speak with your Brokerage for guidance on their position. OREA cautions that this is not business as usual, and the government can remove real estate as an essential workplace if public health direction is not followed. They also acknowledge that they cannot mandate or enforce this direction, but they are asking brokerages and REALTORS® to work within these guidelines in the best interest of public health and safety.

- Let other REALTORS® know about your virtual showings by including this information within the REALTOR® or public (Client) remarks section of a listing.
- Remember that REALTOR® contact information is not permitted within the REALTOR® or public (Client) remarks section of a listing – as per RAHB's MLS® Policies Miscellaneous #5 and #6.
- There are a variety of online and virtual tools that can easily be accessed to conduct business remotely with REALTORS®, buyers and sellers.

***Q: What are some tips and best practices for hosting a virtual open house?***

**A:** First and foremost, the buying or selling of a property should be vital. For example, a home is already bought or a home is already sold, or a client needs to find a home or sell a home to avoid major hardship. If the buying or selling of a property is not considered vital, then REALTORS® should be following the direction of public health officials. Please also speak with your Brokerage for guidance on their position.

- Stick to a schedule – start planning now for your current listings and future virtual tours. FaceTime, Google Hangouts, or Zoom are great options. If you want your open house to be viewed by the public, social media offers “Live” features that are a great way to reach a wide audience (i.e., Facebook Live or Instagram Live).
- Practice – trial runs are crucial to make sure both your technology is working and your virtual open house layout is perfect. Walk and pan around the room slowly to reduce pixilation on your video.
- There is no such thing as being too descriptive – be sure to use as many descriptive words as possible to help a home buyer envision themselves living in the space.
- If you have any questions, please contact the MLS® Help Desk at 905.667.4650 or [support@rahb.ca](mailto:support@rahb.ca).

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***Q: Are all in person showings prohibited? I currently have a vacant house; would agent still be able to show?***

**A:** First and foremost, the buying or selling of a property should be vital. For example, a home is already bought or a home is already sold, or a client needs to find a home or sell a home to avoid major hardship. If the buying or selling of a property is not considered vital, then REALTORS® should be following the direction of public health officials. Please also speak with your Brokerage for guidance on their position.

OREA cautions that this is not business as usual, and the government can remove real estate as an essential workplace if public health direction is not followed. They also acknowledge that they cannot mandate or enforce this direction, but they are asking brokerages and REALTORS® to work within these guidelines in the best interest of public health and safety. OREA is taking the position - and RAHB agrees - that all REALTORS® should stop face-to-face business, including open houses, in-person showings, and maintaining agents and public office hours.

We recognize that RAHB cannot police this; however, RAHB can say don't undertake in-person activities. The message we have received from OREA is that if REALTORS® don't act responsibly, there is great potential the provincial government will take away the "essential workplace" designation for real estate. If this happens, then REALTORS®, as well as buyers and sellers, will not have a choice.

***Q: If a buyer insists that they want to see a property in person, how can we deny this for the seller and the buyer feel it's their right to exercise this?***

**A:** First and foremost, the buying or selling of a property should be vital. For example, a home is already bought or a home is already sold, or a client needs to find a home or sell a home to avoid major hardship. If the buying or selling of a property is not considered vital, then REALTORS® should be following the direction of public health officials. Please also speak with your Brokerage for guidance on their position.

The current situation, with so much information and the need to stay safe/healthy, can be difficult to navigate. Our recommendation is that if any party (REALTOR®, buyer or seller) has any trepidation to an in-person showing, then that should be the deciding factor. So, if someone has any doubt or issue with an in-person showing, then the in-person showing should not take place. There are virtual resources available for a seller to show a property and a buyer to see a property. If the buyer wants to make an offer without physically seeing the property, it is recommended that the buyer put a clause in the offer that the deal is dependent upon viewing the property in-person once the state of emergency in Ontario is over.

We understand that there may be situations where a buyer or seller need the transaction to take place before the state of emergency in Ontario is over. In these extreme circumstances, an in-person viewing/showing can take place; however, all hygiene/sanitary precautions should take place before and after. Also, all Public Health guidelines should be followed, such as direction for those who show symptoms or have recently returned from international travel.

***Q: Does "As in-person showings are temporarily prohibited, virtual showings are permitted instead" mean that a buyer's agent can book a showing, go alone, and virtually show their clients the home?***

**A:** First and foremost, the buying or selling of a property should be vital. For example, a home is already bought or a home is already sold, or a client needs to find a home or sell a home to avoid major hardship. If the buying or selling of a property is not considered vital, then REALTORS® should be following the direction of public health officials. Please also speak with your Brokerage for guidance on their position. OREA cautions that this is not business as usual, and the government can remove real estate as an essential workplace if public health direction is not followed.

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All REALTORS® should be working remotely/virtually as much as possible in order to slow the spread of COVID-19. We understand that this is not always possible – as in the situation noted above. Our first recommendation is to contact the seller’s REALTOR® to see if there is a virtual showing already available, and use that. If there is not yet a virtual showing available – with the permission of the seller and their REALTOR®, and if you follow all public health guidelines – it may be possible for a single REALTOR® to enter a property for the purpose of showing it to clients virtually (i.e. with phone camera or other technology).

## Brokerages

### *Q: Are REALTORS® permitted to go to their brokerage office?*

**A:** The new provincial guidelines clearly state that groups of larger than five persons are not allowed, and will be enforced – with exemptions for essential businesses, such as grocery stores, health care, etc. Although real estate was listed as an essential workplace, the government gave the “essential” label to real estate to permit transactions to close – NOT to allow members to carry on with normal business practices during a crisis. Please speak with your Brokerage for guidance on their position.

All members should be moving to remote work – full stop.

### *Q: If all brokerages are closed, how are we managing commission payments? Are there people in each brokerage assigned to continue processing deals as usual so that cheques are mailed out? If so, where are those cheques going and is anyone at the brokerages to get them?*

**A:** We are unaware of what is happening at each individual brokerage to continue business, but we hope each are doing their part to slow the spread of COVID-19 and are conducting business virtually.

Each brokerage may have an arrangement for oversight of their physical office. It is RAHB’s recommendation that members contact the brokerages to see how commissions are being processed and handled.

## Real Estate-Related Business Information

### *Q: What is the impact on business insurance, including errors and omissions?*

**A:** Many Registrants, both individuals and brokerages, have been asking about how the Professional Liability Program administered by RECO responds to claims related to COVID-19. To that end, the insurance program administrated by RECO has prepared a document to help clarify coverage in these new and evolving times.

To access the document, please visit <http://www.reco-claims.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-and-the-Professional-Liability-Ins-Program-Administered-by-RECO-March-26-2020.pdf>.

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### **Q: Are land registry offices and closings impacted?**

**A:** Land registry is considered essential, so real estate closings should not be impacted. We will provide further updates as they become available.

### **Q: How about related businesses such as movers, lawyers, financial institutions and construction?**

**A:** (Answer adapted from TRREB)

A number of businesses directly related to real estate are on the list of essential services. They include:

- Moving services
- Institutional, Residential, Commercial and Industrial Maintenance – Businesses that provide support and maintenance services, including urgent repair, to maintain the safety, security, sanitation and essential operation of institutional, commercial industrial and residential properties and buildings, including, property management services, plumbers, electricians, custodial/janitorial workers, cleaning services, security services, fire safety and sprinkler systems, building systems maintenance and repair technicians and engineers, mechanics, (e.g., HVAC, escalator and elevator technicians), and other service providers who provide similar services
- Professional Services - including lawyers, paralegals, accountants.
- Construction - construction work and services, including demolition services, in the industrial, commercial, institutional and residential sectors.
- Financial Activities
  - Capital markets (e.g., the TSX);
  - Banking & Activities related to Credit Intermediation; credit unions;
  - Insurance;
  - Businesses that provide pension services and employee benefits services; and
  - Businesses that provide financial services including payment processing, the payroll division of any employer (as defined by the Employment Standards; and Act/Occupational Health and Safety Act), any entity whose operation is the administration of payroll, banks and credit unions.
- Businesses that support the safe operations of residences and essential businesses.

For the complete list of essential workplaces please visit

<https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/list-of-essential-workplaces.html>.

### **Q: Will title insurance be impacted?**

**A:** To minimize the impact to your business during these uncertain times, groups, such as FCT, are offering Extended Gap Coverage for commercial and residential transactions at no additional cost. As information is still developing surrounding title insurance and closing processes during COVID-19, please visit the FCT website at <https://fct.ca/covid-19/>.

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## **Q: What are lenders doing?**

**A:** Many of our major lenders are providing options to help alleviate some of the financial stress. Depending on your lender, there may be options available such as:

- Deferral of payments
- Re-amortization of the loan
- Capitalization of outstanding interest & costs
- Special payment arrangements

Below is a list of financial institutions that are providing financial aid for those who are experiencing a loss during this time:

- *Business Development Bank of Canada*
- *Scotia Bank*
- *Royal Bank Canada*
- *CIBC*
- *UNI / Caisse Populaire Desjardins*
- *Bank of Montreal*
- *Credit Union*
- *National Bank*
- *TD Canada Trust*
- *HSBC*
- *The Bank of Canada*
- *Opportunities Agency*

## **Q: What are mortgage insurers doing?**

**A:** Canada Guaranty, are working to help homeowners who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Starting now, they have increased their flexibility and are allowing payment deferral of up to six months for homeowners who, primarily, but not exclusively, purchased with less than 20 per cent down.

# **| Miscellaneous**

## **Q: If I leave my home to engage in real estate services, how do I prove I'm doing so if stopped or asked by police or others?**

**A:** It's not clear how this will be enforced at this time; however, RAHB supports the position of OREA, which states that all REALTORS® should stop face-to-face business, including open houses, in-person showings, and maintaining agents and public office hours.