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Adrienne Augustus, Investigative Reporter

Las Vegas Realtor Recovers After Rape and Assault

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Realtor Harmoni Sandlin said, "Selling real estate I find that you work with people on an intimate basis and most of these people you don't know at all."

A Las Vegas realtor is recovering after she was raped and assaulted Thursday. She was showing a vacant house alone when the man attacked.

The news of her attack shot like wildfire through realty offices around the valley. It's a major concern for many realtors. Are they safe when going to a home?

Whether they are with a potential buyer or alone checking out a house, realtors must always be on guard. But some say it's easy to become too comfortable with their surroundings.

Linda Rheinberger, president of the Greater Las Vegas Association of Realtors, said, "We see it as a wake-up call for all of us."

Area real estate agents were alerted to the crime with an Internet bulletin that stated an agent had been raped and assaulted in a vacant northwest house.

Realtor Harmoni Sandlin said, "Selling real estate I find that you work with people on an intimate basis and most of these people you don't know at all."

A lot of her clients come from listings on the Internet. "As a precautionary measure, often times we ask people to meet us at the office first," she continued.

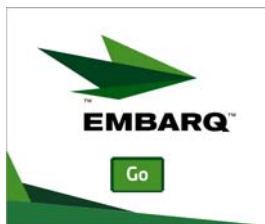
That's one of the safety measures Linda Rheinberger advocates. She is the president of the Greater Las Vegas Association of Realtors.

Rheinberger advocates, "Read the safety tips and adhere to them. Don't let your guard down."



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Tips to keep realtors safe on the job include: check in with colleagues, pre-screen interested house hunters, ask for a driver's license and photocopy it.

Using those rules *and* her intuition may have kept Harmoni Sandlin out of danger. Last week a client from the Internet hesitated when she asked him for personal information. She canceled their appointment.

"I don't regret that at all. I'd rather err on the side of caution and be safe than have something happen," Sandlin explained.

The [Nevada Association of Realtors](#) Web site has more safety tips for realtors.

Linda Rheinberger has another tip: don't assume you are safe because you work during the day. Thursday's attack happened in the afternoon when it was still light outside.

Police aren't releasing much information now. But they are working with the victim to create a composite sketch of the attacker.

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