



How to Tour Homes without a Buyer's Agent

In today's world, many homebuyers don't utilize real estate agents in their home search. With new technology and an abundance of information at buyers' fingertips, buyers may find property listings, research neighborhoods, attend open houses and set up individual property tours easily on their own.

Moreover, with the recent change in California law requiring a buyer's agent to have a written agreement in place with a buyer - which includes the fees the buyer will be obligated to pay the agent - in place prior to showing the buyer a home, buyers are even less inclined to work with an agent during their home search.

This free resource will empower you to tour homes on your own, without a buyer's agent.

Background: There is No Requirement to Work with a Buyer's Agent!

Perhaps contrary to popular belief, **you do not need to be represented by a real estate agent for any part of the homebuying process**, including touring homes. There is no law or other rule that requires it, so don't be misled by any agent who tells you otherwise. You may choose not to work with an agent at all, and to instead represent yourself, just as you would with any other purchase (e.g., buying a car). It is also not an all-or-nothing proposition – you are free to decide which parts of the process you'd like professional help with, which professional(s) you'd like to work with, and on what terms. All real estate commissions and fees are not set by law and are fully-negotiable.

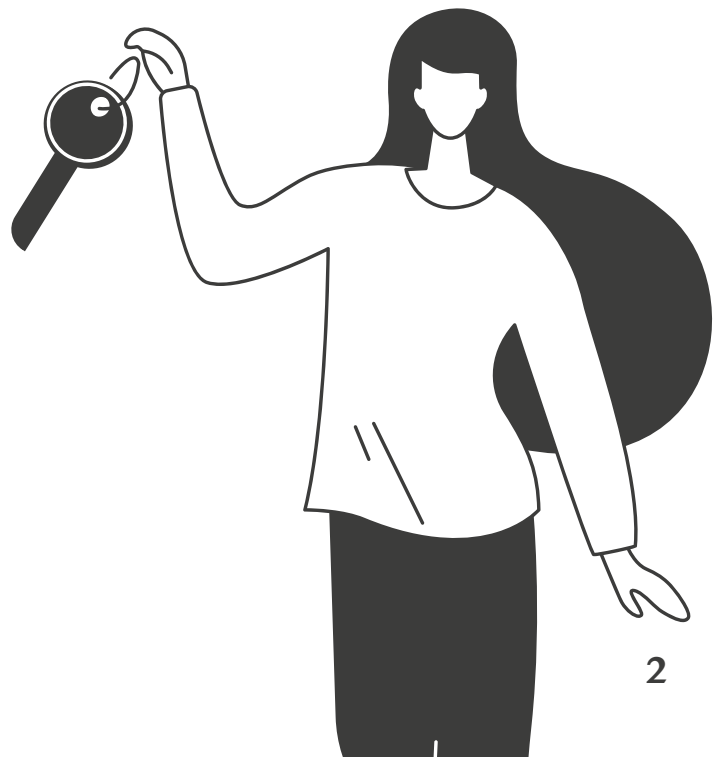
Regardless of whether you as the buyer decide to work with a real estate agent in

your home purchase, the seller of the home typically has hired an agent to help them sell their home. The seller's agent is called the "Listing Agent" since they list the seller's home for sale. The seller pays them a fee (often 3% of the home's sale price) for their services, which may include things like staging the property, arranging photos, marketing the property, hosting open houses, arranging showings for buyers, negotiating the purchase contracts (on behalf of the seller), and coordinating with third parties during the closing process.

You can tour homes without your own agent by attending open houses and/or setting up individual property tours directly with the Listing Agent.

Attending Open Houses

Attending open houses is an easy way to tour homes. The Listing Agent may ask you to sign a short, standard form provided by the California Association of Realtors to make it clear that the Listing Agent does not in fact represent you (and only represents the seller). However, **you do not need to sign any representation agreement requiring you to hire the Listing Agent or any other agent to represent you.**



Arranging Individual Property Tours

1. Find the Listing Agent's Contact Info

When browsing homes on third party sites, **avoid using buttons like “contact agent,” “request a tour,” “connect with an agent,” etc.**, as those will connect you with a buyer's agent who will require you to sign a representation agreement with them in order to show you the home. These buttons are misleading because their design makes it appear as though they will connect you with the Listing Agent, when in reality they connect you with a buyer's agent the website is trying to sell you.

Instead, make sure you find the contact info listed specifically for the “Listing Agent.” It should say “listed by: __” or similar. If the website only includes partial contact information, google that information in order to find the full contact information.

Below are examples to show you how this typically appears on some of the more popular sites so you know what you are looking for:

REDFIN

About this home

This newly transformed, single-story 4-bedroom, 2-bath home blends classic mid-century charm with thoughtful modern touches. Vaulted ceilings and an open-concept layout creates a bright, airy feel and

Show more ▾

2 days
On Redfin

\$796
Price/Sq.Ft.

6,446 sq ft
Lot Size

1954
Year Built

Single-Family
Property Type

1 car garage
Parking

Listed by: Jane Doe DRE #12345678
Name of Brokerage

← usually at the very bottom of “About this home”

Zillow

What's special

INVITING KITCHEN NEWER GARAGE DOORS NEWER LVP FLOORING
PRIME CUL-DE-SAC LOCATION COOL AND RELAXING PATIO LARGE ESTABLISHED BACKYARD

A Welcome Home! This is it. Good-Looking Home sitting on a prime Cul-De-Sac Location! Features include ...2-Car Attached Garage, Newer LVP Flooring, Newer Garage Doors, Ample Storage/Flex Space. Inviting Kitchen with All Appliances included.

▾ Show more

2 days on Zillow | 1,005 views | 130 saves
Likely to sell faster than 96% nearby

Zillow last checked: 15 hours ago
Listing updated: July 24, 2025 at 02:03am

Listed by: Jane Doe DRE #12345678, Name of Brokerage 123-456-7890
Source: Local MLS#: 123456789, Originating MLS: Local County

← usually at the very bottom of the home description

Homes.com

About this home

Extraordinary offering! Custom-built 1 owner home on grand 12,000sqft. lot with territorial views in Leschi. Unique multi-level design, tongue & groove ceilings, hardwood & parquet flooring, sunroom, skylights, huge Primary bedrm w/ privt bath. Expansive yard & wrap around decks for entertaining, mini-splits for A/C. Secure parking in 2car garage + guest parking in driveway. All within short hop to nearby Leschi shops, eateries, Lk WA, parks & bike paths. Metro #27 just 2 blocks away goes downtown Seattle, Judkins Light Rail approx. 1 mile for UW, International District, SeaTac International and beyond. Golden opportunity to reinvent/renovate, live on a rare estate lot in dream location. Any development potential to be verified by Buyer.

Listings Agent Jane Doe
Name of Brokerage
License #12345678
Listed on: Date

← usually immediately below “About this Home”

realtor.com

5 bed 3.5 bath 2,777 sqft 6,534 sqft lot
5844 Dupont Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55419

Est \$5,869/mo Get pre-approved

Single family
Property type

3 days
On Realtor.com

\$324
Price per sqft

2 Cars
Garage

1941
Year built

Listed by: Jane Doe
#12345678
Brokered by Name of Brokerage
123-456-7890

← usually buried somewhere towards the bottom of the page

Broker location: San Francisco, CA
Data source: Bareis
Source's property ID: 325060647
Data source Copyright: © 2025 Bay Area Real Estate Information Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

2. Contact the Listing Agent Directly

Call, text or email the Listing Agent directly asking to set up a time to see the property, letting them know you are currently unrepresented by an agent. Remember that despite how they may react, **you do not need to be represented by anyone in order for them to set up a home tour for you.**

The Listing Agent owes a fiduciary duty to their seller to act in the seller's best interests, which includes obtaining the best possible sale outcome for the seller. Unless the seller has specifically asked the Listing Agent not to show the home to unrepresented buyers (which is unlikely), this would include showing the home to all qualified, serious buyers in order to generate the best offer.

If the Listing Agent is unresponsive, you may want to send them your pre-approval letter to demonstrate that you are a qualified buyer, remind them of their fiduciary duty to the seller, ask for the seller's contact info so that you can reach out to them directly, ask for the person above the Listing Agent, or as a last resort, ask which realtors' association they belong to so that you can report that they are discriminating against you as an unrepresented buyer and attempting to force you into agent representation when that is not something that is actually required.

Avoiding “Double-Dipping” by the Listing Agent

When you share with the Listing Agent that you are unrepresented, they may see this as an opportunity to sell you on why they should represent you, in addition to representing the seller, so that they can make double the commission. This is called “dual agency,” which is permitted in California, but is not allowed in many states due to the **inherent conflict of interest issues and challenges to representing two parties on opposite sides of a transaction.** Many buyers are not comfortable paying the Listing Agent to also represent the buyer,

because it is impossible for the agent to fully advocate for the best interests of both parties simultaneously. Be sure to make clear that you are not interested in having the Listing Agent represent you unless you are comfortable with the conflicts of interest inherent to dual agency, as well as the fees the Listing Agent will charge you. Even if the Listing Agent tells you that the seller will “cover” their fees, **you will indirectly pay the cost because that amount is subtracted from your offer price when the seller evaluates your offer.**

Ready to make an offer?

When you're ready to make an offer, WiseBuy will guide you through the offer and negotiation process, providing you the combined advantages of a Realtor® with legal expertise. For a one-time flat-fee of \$5,000, we'll prepare your offer, negotiate on your behalf, and finalize the purchase agreements, ensuring you feel guided and supported throughout the entire process.

Once the purchase agreements are finalized, we'll walk you through a comprehensive step-by-step homebuyer's checklist so you can confidently handle the administrative items that need to happen between signing and closing, saving you thousands.

If you decide you want additional support or guidance during the closing process, you can elect to pay for additional consulting advice on an hourly basis, so that you stay in control and pay only for what you need.

Contact Us to Learn More

