

# Firelands Association of REALTORS®

Revised August 2023

## Rules and Regulations for an MLS Operated as a Committee of a Board of REALTORS®

### Listing Procedures

#### Section 1 Listing Procedures

Listings of real or personal property of the following types, which are listed subject to a real estate broker's license, and are located within the service area of the multiple listing service, and are taken by participants on Exclusive Right to Sell & Exclusive Agency forms shall be delivered to the multiple listing service within 3 calendar days after all necessary signatures of seller(s) have been obtained: *(Amended 11/17)*

- a. single family homes for sale or exchange
- b. vacant lots and acreage for sale or exchange
- c. two-family, three-family, and four-family residential buildings for sale or exchange

**Note 1:** The multiple listing service shall not require a participant to submit listings on a form other than the form the participant individually chooses to utilize provided the listing is of a type accepted by the service, although a property data form may be required as approved by the multiple listing service. However, the multiple listing service, through its legal counsel:

- may reserve the right to refuse to accept a listing form which fails to adequately protect the interests of the public and the participants
- assure that no listing form filed with the multiple listing service establishes, directly or indirectly, any contractual relationship between the multiple listing service and the client (buyer or seller)

The multiple listing service shall accept exclusive right-to-sell listing contracts and exclusive agency listing contracts, and may accept other forms of agreement which make it possible for the listing broker to offer compensation to the other participants of the multiple listing service acting as subagents, buyer agents, or both. *(Amended 11/96)*

The listing agreement must include the seller's written authorization to submit the agreement to the multiple listing service. *(Amended 11/96)*

The different types of listing agreements include:

- exclusive right-to-sell
- exclusive agency
- open
- net

The service may not accept **net listings** because they are deemed unethical and, in most states, illegal. **Open listings** are not accepted, except where required by law, because the inherent nature of an open listing is such as to usually not include the authority to cooperate and compensate other brokers and inherently provides a disincentive for cooperation. *(Amended 4/92)*

The **exclusive right-to-sell** listing is the conventional form of listing submitted to the multiple listing service in that the seller authorizes the listing broker to cooperate with and to compensate other brokers. *(Amended 4/92)*

The **exclusive agency** listing also authorizes the listing broker, as exclusive agent, to offer cooperation and compensation on blanket unilateral bases, but also reserves to the seller the general right to sell the property on an unlimited or restrictive basis. Exclusive agency listings and exclusive right-to-sell listings with named prospects exempt should be clearly distinguished by a simple designation such as a code or symbol from exclusive right-to-sell listings with no named prospects exempt, since they can present special risks of procuring cause controversies and administrative problems not posed by exclusive right-to-sell listings with no named prospects exempt. Care should be exercised to ensure that different codes or symbols are used to denote exclusive agency and exclusive right-to-sell listings with prospect reservations. *(Amended 4/92)*

**Note 2:** A multiple listing service does not regulate the type of listings its members may take. This does not mean that a multiple listing service must accept every type of listing. The multiple listing service shall decline to accept open listings (except where acceptance is required by law) and net listings, and it may limit its service to listings of certain kinds of property. But, if it chooses to limit the kind of listings it will accept, it shall leave its members free to accept such listings to be handled outside the multiple listing service.

**Note 3:** A multiple listing service may, as a matter of local option, accept exclusively listed property that is subject to auction. If such listings do not show a listed price, they may be included in a separate section of the MLS compilation of current listings. *(Adopted 11/92)*

### **Section 1.01 Clear Cooperation Policy**

Within one (1) business day of marketing a property to the public, the listing broker must submit the listing to the MLS for cooperation with other MLS Participants. Public marketing includes, but is not limited to flyers displayed in windows, yard signs, digital marketing on public facing websites, brokerage website displays (including IDX and VOW), digital communications marketing (email blasts), multi-brokerage listing sharing networks and applications available to the general public. *(Adopted 11/19)*

**Note:** Exclusive listing information for required property types must be filed and distributed to other MLS Participants for cooperation under the Clear Cooperation Policy. This applies to listings filed under Section 1 and listings exempt from distribution under Section 1.3 of the MLS Rules if it is being publicly marketed, and any other situation where the listing broker is publicly marketing an exclusive listing that is required to be filed with the service and is not currently available to other MLS Participants.

MLS Participants must distribute exempt listings within (1) business day once the listing is publicly marketed.

The fine schedule for a violation of the Clear Cooperation Policy is as follows:

- 1st offense is \$2500.00
- 2nd offense is \$5000.00
- Any further violations will result in review by the FAOR Board of Directors to impose additional fines and may result in suspension of MLS services.

### **Section 1.1 Types of Properties**

Following are some of the types of properties that may be published through the service, including types described in the preceding paragraph that are required to be filed with the service and other types that may be filed with the service at the participant's option provided, however, that any listing submitted is entered into within the scope of the participant's licensure as a real estate broker: *(Amended 11/91)*

- |                                    |                     |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • residential                      | • motel-hotel       |
| • residential income/ Multi-family | • mobile homes      |
| • subdivided vacant lot            | • mobile home parks |
| • land and ranch                   | • commercial income |
| • business opportunity             | • industrial        |

### **Section 1.1.1 Listings Subject to Rules and Regulations of the Service**

Any listing taken on a contract to be filed with the multiple listing service is subject to the rules and regulations of the service upon signature of the seller(s).

### **Section 1.2 Detail on Listings Filed with the Service**

A listing agreement or property data form, when filed with the multiple listing service by the listing broker, shall be complete in every detail which is ascertainable as specified on the property data form.

1. Signatures of all parties necessary to make the listing an enforceable contract. Both husband and wife shall sign all the listings submitted to Firelands MLS unless the property is separate property, in which case it shall be indicated as "Unmarried or Sole Owner" on the listing.

2. Complete terms and Agreement of sale must be given. It is recommended that the date of possession be defined in either days, months, or negotiable.

### **Section 1.2.0 Accuracy of Listing Data**

Participants and subscribers are required to submit accurate listing data and required to correct any known errors.

### **Section 1.2.1 Limited Service Listings**

Listing agreements under which the listing broker will not provide one, or more, of the following services:

- a. arrange appointments for cooperating brokers to show listed property to potential purchasers but instead gives cooperating brokers authority to make such appointments directly with the seller(s)
- b. accept and present to the seller(s) offers to purchase procured by cooperating brokers but instead gives cooperating brokers authority to present offers to purchase directly to the seller(s)
- c. advise the seller(s) as to the merits of offers to purchase
- d. assist the seller(s) in developing, communicating, or presenting counter-offers
- e. participate on the seller's(s') behalf in negotiations leading to the sale of the listed property will be identified with an appropriate code or symbol (e.g., LR or LS) in MLS compilations so potential cooperating brokers will be aware of the extent of the services the listing broker will provide to the seller(s), and any potential for cooperating brokers being asked to provide some or all of these services to listing brokers' clients, prior to initiating efforts to show or sell the property.

### **Section 1.3 Exempt Listings**

If the seller refuses to permit the listing to be disseminated by the service, the participant may then take the listing (office exclusive) and such listing shall be filed with the service but not disseminated to the participants. Filing of the listing should be accompanied by certification signed by the seller that he does not desire the listing to be disseminated by the service.

### **Section 1.4 Change of Status of Listing**

Any change in listed price or other change in the original listing agreement shall be made only when authorized in writing by the seller and shall be filed with the service within twenty-four (24) hours after the authorized change is received by the listing broker.

### **Section 1.4.1 Held Listings**

Held status is an off-market status and should only be used when a valid listing contract is in effect, because of various reasons such as repairs, illnesses, guests, etc..., the Seller has requested that temporarily there be no showings. A listing may be placed in a Held status for no more than thirty (30) days at which time it will automatically revert back to an Active listing. There can be no For Sale sign displayed. This status is not for short sales or other transactions requiring third party approval, or confirmation, after an offer has been accepted by the property owner. (07/17)

**Section 1.5 Withdrawal of Listing Prior to Expiration**

Listings of property may be withdrawn from the multiple listing service by the listing broker before the expiration date of the listing agreement, provided notice is filed with the service, including a copy of the agreement between the seller and the listing broker which authorizes the withdrawal.

Sellers do not have the unilateral right to require an MLS to withdraw a listing without the listing broker's concurrence. However, when a seller(s) can document that his or her exclusive relationship with the listing broker has been terminated, the multiple listing service may remove the listing at the request of the seller. (Adopted 11/96)

**Section 1.6 Contingencies Applicable to Listings**

Any contingency or conditions of any term in a listing shall be specified and noticed to the participants.

**Section 1.7 Listing Price Specified**

The full gross listing price stated in the listing contract will be included in the information published in the MLS compilation of current listings, unless the property is subject to auction. (Amended 11/92)

**Section 1.8 Listing Multiple Unit Properties**

All properties which are to be sold or which may be sold separately must be indicated individually in the listing and on the property data form. When part of a listed property has been sold, proper notification should be given to the multiple listing service.

**Section 1.9 No Control of Commission Rates or Fees Charged by Participants**

The multiple listing service shall not fix, control, recommend, suggest, or maintain commission rates or fees for services to be rendered by participants. Further, the multiple listing service shall not fix, control, recommend, suggest, or maintain the division of commissions or fees between cooperating participants or between participants and nonparticipants.

**Section 1.10 Expiration of Listings**

Listings filed with the multiple listing service will automatically be removed from the compilation of current listings on the expiration date specified in the agreement, unless prior to that date the MLS receives notice that the listing has been extended or renewed. (Amended 11/01)

If notice of renewal or extension is received after the listing has been removed from the compilation of current listings, the extension or renewal will be published in the same manner as a new listing. Extensions and renewals of listings must be signed by the seller(s) and filed with the service. (Amended 11/01)

**Section 1.11 Termination Date on Listings**

Listings filed with the service shall bear a definite and final termination date, as negotiated between the listing broker and the seller.

**Section 1.12 Service Area**

Only listings of the designated types of property located within the Service Area of the MLS are required to be submitted to the service. Listings of property located outside the MLS's Service Area will (or will not) be accepted if submitted voluntarily by a participant, but cannot be required by the service. The Service areas for Firelands MLS include Erie Co., Huron Co., Sandusky Co., Seneca Co., and Ottawa County. (Amended 09/23)

**Section 1.13 Listings of Suspended Participants**

When a participant of the service is suspended from the MLS for failing to abide by a membership duty (i.e., violation of the Code of Ethics, association bylaws, MLS bylaws, MLS rules and regulations, or other membership obligations except failure to pay appropriate dues, fees, or charges), all listings currently filed with the MLS by the suspended participant shall, at the participant's option, be retained in the service until sold, withdrawn or expired, and shall not be renewed or extended by the MLS beyond the termination date of the listing agreement in effect when the suspension became effective. If a participant has been suspended from the association (except where MLS participation without association membership is permitted by law) or MLS (or both) for failure to pay appropriate dues, fees, or charges, an association MLS is not obligated

to provide MLS services, including continued inclusion of the suspended participant's listings in the MLS compilation of current listing information. Prior to any removal of a suspended participant's listings from the MLS, the suspended participant should be advised, in writing, of the intended removal so that the suspended participant may advise his clients.

#### **Section 1.14 Listings of Expelled Participants**

When a participant of the service is expelled from the MLS for failing to abide by a membership duty (i.e., violation of the Code of Ethics, association bylaws, MLS bylaws, MLS rules and regulations, or other membership obligations except failure to pay appropriate dues, fees, or charges), all listings currently filed with the MLS by the expelled participant shall, at the participant's option, be retained in the service until sold, withdrawn, or expired, and shall not be renewed or extended by the MLS beyond the termination date of the listing agreement in effect when the expulsion became effective. If a participant has been expelled from the association (except where MLS participation without association membership is permitted by law) or MLS (or both) for failure to pay appropriate dues, fees, or charges, an association MLS is not obligated to provide MLS services, including continued inclusion of the expelled participant's listings in the MLS compilation of current listing information. Prior to any removal of an expelled participant's listings from the MLS, the expelled participant should be advised, in writing, of the intended removal so that the expelled participant may advise his clients.

#### **Section 1.15 Listings of Resigned Participants**

When a participant of the service resigns from the MLS, the MLS is not obligated to provide services, including continued inclusion of the resigned participant's listings in the MLS compilation of current listing information. Prior to any removal of a resigned participant's listings from the MLS, the resigned participant should be advised, in writing, of the intended removal so that the resigned participant may advise his clients.

#### **Section 1.16 Property Addresses**

At the time of filing a listing, participants and subscribers must include a property address available to other participants and subscribers, and if an address doesn't exist a parcel identification number can be used. Where an address or parcel identification number are unavailable, the information filed with the MLS must include a legal description of the property sufficient to describe its location. *(Adopted 01/22)*

#### **Section 1.17 Coming Soon Listings & Procedures**

**Definition:** Coming Soon status – indicates that the broker and the seller are preparing the property for sale and for marketing as Active status. This status is not intended to give the listing broker an advantage in finding a buyer for the property to the detriment of cooperating brokers or to circumvent the selling of the property on an open market. The intended use of this status is to provide a vehicle for participants and subscribers to notify other participants and subscribers of properties that will be made fully available for showing and marketing after preparations have been completed. While the property is in Coming Soon status, the seller and the listing broker may not promote or advertise the property in any manner other than as 'coming soon'. Properties in this status may not be shown. This status is for short term use preparatory to Active status, 14 days or less, and must have a listing agreement and seller(s) written authorization form as the listing broker may choose that contains similar disclosures and an explanation

- 1) Mandatory - if you have a valid listing contract, and the listing is not yet available for showing, with the seller(s) written authorization you are required to enter the listing into the MLS in the coming soon status.
- 2) Listings must be entered in the Multiple Listing Service in the Coming Soon status within 72 hours of the listing date. If the Coming Soon listings are not entered in the MLS within the required timeframe, a penalty of \$100.00 will be assessed for non-compliance of the 72-hour rule.
- 3) Property Types allowed in the Coming Soon status;
  - a) Single Family
  - b) Condominium
  - c) Multi-Family
  - d) Commercial
  - e) Rent/Lease
  - f) Land

- 4) Listings can be in the Coming Soon status for a maximum of 14 days.
- 5) Listings must have an On-Market Date (OMD) entered into the system, less than or equal to 14 days.
- 6) While the listing is in the Coming Soon status, it is viewable by the general public via IDX, RETS and API's (Application Programming Interface).
- 7) Listings entered into the MLS with Coming Soon status shall automatically transition to Active status on the On Market Date (OMD). Note: At that time, if the listing is not ready to be shown, the listing will be required to be moved in the HELD status with the available date reflected in the Broker Remarks.
- 8) Listing's Days on Market (DOM) will start when the listing transitions to the Active status.
- 9) Once the listing transitions from the Coming Soon status to the Active status, it cannot revert back to the Coming Soon status.
- 10) Listing may not be transferred from any other status to Coming Soon.
- 11) All MLS Rules and Policies apply where appropriate.
- 12) Listings that are being entered into the system as Coming Soon are required to submit a copy of the Listing Agreement, along with the Coming Soon Authorization Form to the MLS which has been executed by the seller(s), within 72 hours of the listing date. If the Coming Soon listings are not reported to the MLS within the required timeframe, a penalty of \$100.00 will be assessed for non-compliance of the 72-hour rule.
- 13) Listings placed in Coming Soon status cannot be shown by anyone including the listing office during the Coming Soon time period.

***The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the National Association of Realtors, Standard of Practice 3-8 states as follows: Realtors shall not misrepresent the availability of access or show or inspect a listed property. (Amended 11/87)***

Any Participant and/or Subscriber that shows or permits showings of properties that are in the Coming Soon status will be assessed a fine of \$3000.00 and may be in violation of the NAR Standard of Practice stated above. A second offense will result in a \$5000.00 fine and the filing of an Ethics complaint. Repeat offenders of this rule will be reviewed by the MLS leadership and may result in service suspensions or additional fines being assessed.

## **COMING SOON DETAILS**

### **1. DEFINITION....**

- a. In FAOR, Coming Soon is a listed property that is not yet ready to be shown. The owner would like to sign a listing agreement but not yet have it in the Active status.
- b. NOTE – an example of this would be an agent wants to secure the listing but the homeowner needs to make repairs and clean the home. They do not want showings during this time.

### **2. BEFORE YOU ENTER A COMING SOON YOU MUST HAVE...**

- a. Signed listing agreement
- b. Completed Coming Soon Seller Authorization Form signed and dated by seller – including a date when the listing will be active and available to the membership. Authorization Form, along with a copy of Listing Agreement, must be submitted to the MLS within 72 hours of entry.

### **3. AGENTS/BROKERS MAY**

- a. Change the Active Date sooner than 14 days – with a new signed Coming Soon Listing Seller Authorization form from seller.
- b. Have MLS Staff Withdraw the listing if it will not be made active.
- c. Withdraw the listing by submitting a mutual release to the MLS and our staff will then change it to Withdrawn.
- d. Search for listings in the Coming Soon status.
- e. Email the listing to clients
- f. Print the listing
- g. Share on public facing websites identifying the listing as coming soon
- h. Make showing appointments for after the listing enters the Active status
- i. Schedule open houses for after the listing enters the Active status

**4. AGENTS/BROKERS MAY NOT...**

- a. Keep a listing in a Coming Soon status for more than 14 days
- b. Show the property during Coming Soon status
- c. Move a listing from Coming Soon to withdrawn status
- d. Share listing on public facing websites as available while in the Coming Soon status; the listing may only be shared as a Coming Soon listing.

**5. COMING SOON LISTINGS THAT ARE NOT IN THE MLS...**

- a. Coming Soon listings that do not have a valid listing agreement will not appear in the MLS.
- b. You may see properties with Coming Soon signs for an extended period of time. If they do not have a fully executed listing agreement they cannot be entered into the MLS.
- c. Please call the List Office/Agent, on the signage, if you see properties with Coming Soon signage that are not in the MLS.

**6. COMING SOON LISTINGS WILL...**

- a. Automatically move to active status at midnight on the Expected Active Date (This date may not be longer than 14 days from the list date in the contract).
- b. Have a maximum of 14 days that the listing can remain in Coming Soon Status.
- c. Start accumulating market time once it moves to Active Status
- d. NOT have any Days on Market accumulate while in Coming Soon

**Listing input will have a new Status called COMING SOON- When entering a Coming Soon**

**7. YOU MUST HAVE**

- a. Listing agreement with List Date and List Price
- b. Expected Active Date (within 14 days of List Date)
- c. All required fields
- d. Primary Photo for Single family, Condo and Multi-Family, within 72 hours of entry

**8. YOU MAY...**

- a. Change the Active date either earlier or later as long as it falls within the 14 day time frame (seller's signature is required).

**9. YOU MAY NOT...**

- a. Have an Active date later than 14 days
- b. Show this home before the Active Date

**The below fields will show on your listing – they have the following definitions**

- **List Date** – list date on contract
- **Expected Active Date** – Date customer agreed to make active and not more than 14 days after list date
- **List Date Received** – Date listing was entered into the MLS.

## **Selling Procedures**

### **Section 2 Showings and Negotiations**

Appointments for showings and negotiations with the seller for the purchase of listed property filed with the multiple listing service shall be conducted through the listing broker, except under the following circumstances:

- a. the listing broker gives the cooperating broker specific authority to show and/or negotiate directly, or
- b. after reasonable effort, the cooperating broker cannot contact the listing broker or his representative; however, the listing broker, at his option, may preclude such direct negotiations by cooperating brokers. (Amended 4/92)

### **Section 2.1 Presentation of Offers**

The listing broker must make arrangements to present the offer as soon as possible, or give the cooperating broker a satisfactory reason for not doing so. *(Amended 4/92)*

### **Section 2.2 Submission of Written Offers and Counter-Offers**

The listing broker shall submit to the seller all written offers until closing unless precluded by law, government rule, regulation, or agreed otherwise in writing between the seller and the listing broker. Unless the subsequent offer is contingent upon the termination of an existing contract, the listing broker shall recommend that the seller obtain the advice of legal counsel prior to acceptance of the subsequent offer. Participants representing buyers or tenants shall submit to the buyer or tenant all offers and counter-offers until acceptance, and shall recommend that buyers and tenants obtain legal advice where there is a question about whether a pre-existing contract has been terminated. *(Amended 11/05)*

### **Section 2.3 Right of Cooperating Broker in Presentation of Offer**

The cooperating broker (subagent or buyer agent) or his representative has the right to participate in the presentation to the seller or lessor of any offer he secures to purchase or lease. He does not have the right to be present at any discussion or evaluation of that offer by the seller or lessor and the listing broker. However, if the seller or lessor gives written instructions to the listing broker that the cooperating broker not be present when an offer the cooperating broker secured is presented, the cooperating broker has the right to a copy of the seller's or lessor's written instructions. None of the foregoing diminishes the listing broker's right to control the establishment of appointments for such presentations. *(Amended 4/92)*

Where the cooperating broker is not present during the presentation of the offer, the cooperating broker can request in writing, and the listing broker must provide, as soon as practical, written affirmation stating that the offer has been submitted to the seller, or written notification that the seller has waived the obligation to have the offer presented. *(Adopted 11/19)*

### **Section 2.4 Right of Listing Broker in Presentation of Counter-offer**

The listing broker or his representative has the right to participate in the presentation of any counter-offer made by the seller or lessor. He does not have the right to be present at any discussion or evaluation of a counter-offer by the purchaser or lessee (except when the cooperating broker is a subagent). However, if the purchaser or lessee gives written instructions to the cooperating broker that the listing broker not be present when a counter-offer is presented, the listing broker has the right to a copy of the purchaser's or lessee's written instructions. *(Adopted 11/93)*

### **Section 2.5 Reporting Sales to the Service**

Status changes, including final closing of sales and sales prices, shall be reported to the multiple listing service by the listing broker within 72 hours after they have occurred. If negotiations were carried on under Section 2 a. or b. hereof, the cooperating broker shall report accepted offers and prices to the listing broker within 72 hours after occurrence and the listing broker shall report them to the MLS within 24 hours after receiving notice from the cooperating broker. *(Amended 11/11)*

**Note 1:** The listing agreement of a property filed with the MLS by the listing broker should include a provision expressly granting the listing broker authority to advertise; to file the listing with the MLS; to provide timely notice of status changes of the listing to the MLS; and to provide sales information including selling price to the MLS upon sale of the property. If deemed desirable by the MLS to publish sales information prior to final closing (settlement) of a sales transaction, the listing agreement should also include a provision expressly granting the listing broker the right to authorize dissemination of this information by the MLS to its participants. *(Amended 11/01)*

**Note 2:** In disclosure states, if the sale price of a listed property is recorded, the reporting of the sale price may be required by the MLS.

**Note 3:** As established in the Virtual Office Website ("VOW") policy, sale prices can only be categorized as confidential in states where the actual sale prices of completed transactions are not accessible from public records. *(Adopted 11/11)*



### **Section 2.6 Reporting Resolutions of Contingencies**

The listing broker shall report to the multiple listing service within twenty-four (24) hours that a contingency on file with the multiple listing service has been fulfilled or renewed, or the agreement cancelled.

### **Section 2.7 Advertising of Listings Filed with the Service**

A listing shall not be advertised by any participant other than the listing broker without the prior consent of the listing broker.

### **Section 2.8 Reporting Cancellation of Pending Sale**

The listing broker shall report immediately to the multiple listing service the cancellation of any pending sale, and the listing shall be reinstated immediately.

### **Section 2.9 Disclosing the Existence of Offers**

Listing brokers, in response to inquiries from buyers or cooperating brokers shall, with the seller's approval, disclose the existence of offers on the property. Where disclosure is authorized, the listing broker shall also disclose, if asked, whether offers were obtained by the listing licensee, by another licensee in the listing firm, or by a cooperating broker. *(Amended 11/08)*

### **Section 2.10 Availability of Listed Property**

Listing brokers shall not misrepresent the availability of access to show or inspect listed property. *(Adopted 11/05)*

## **Refusal to Sell**

### **Section 3 Refusal to Sell**

If the seller of any listed property filed with the multiple listing service refuses to accept a written offer satisfying the terms and conditions stated in the listing, such fact shall be transmitted immediately to the service and to all participants

## **Prohibitions**

### **Section 4 Information for Participants Only**

Any listing filed with the service shall not be made available to any broker or firm not a member of the MLS without the prior consent of the listing broker.

#### **Section 4.1 For Sale Signs**

Only the for-sale sign of the listing broker may be placed on a property. *(Amended 11/89)*

#### **Section 4.2 Sold Signs**

Prior to closing, only the sold sign of the listing broker may be placed on a property, unless the listing broker authorizes the cooperating (selling) broker to post such a sign. *(Amended 4/96)*

#### **Section 4.3 Solicitation of Listing Filed with the Service**

Participants shall not solicit a listing on property filed with the service unless such solicitation is consistent with Article 16 of the REALTORS®' Code of Ethics, its Standards of Practice, and its Case Interpretations.

**Note:** This section is to be construed in a manner consistent with Article 16 of the Code of Ethics and particularly Standard of Practice 16-4. This section is intended to encourage sellers to permit their properties to be filed with the service by protecting them from being solicited, prior to expiration of the listing, by brokers and salespersons seeking the listing upon its expiration. Without such protection, a seller could receive hundreds of calls, communications, and visits from brokers and salespersons who have been made aware through MLS filing of the date the listing will expire and desire to substitute themselves for the present broker. This section is also intended to encourage brokers to participate in the service by assuring them that other participants will not attempt to persuade the seller to breach the listing agreement or to

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| Amended 08/18/23

interfere with their attempts to market the property. Absent the protection afforded by this section, listing brokers would be most reluctant to generally disclose the identity of the seller or the availability of the property to other brokers. This section does not preclude solicitation of listings under the circumstances otherwise recognized by the Standards of Practice related to Article 16 of the Code of Ethics.

#### **Section 4.4 Use of the Terms MLS and Multiple Listing Service**

No MLS participant, subscriber or licensee affiliated with any participant shall, through the name of their firm, their URLs, their e-mail addresses, their website addresses, or in any other way represent, suggest, or imply that the individual or firm is an MLS, or that they operate an MLS. Participants, subscribers and licensees affiliated with participants shall not represent, suggest, or imply that consumers or others have direct access to MLS databases, or that consumers or others are able to search MLS databases available only to participants and subscribers. This does not prohibit participants and subscribers from representing that any information they are authorized under MLS rules to provide to clients or customers is available on their websites or otherwise. *(Adopted 11/07)*

#### **Section 4.5 Services Advertised as “Free”**

MLS participants and subscribers must not represent that their brokerage services to a client or customer are free or available at no cost to their clients, unless the participant or subscriber will receive no financial compensation from any source for those services. *(Adopted 01/22)*

## **Division of Commissions**

#### **Section 5 Compensation Specified on Each Listing**

The listing broker shall specify, on each listing filed with the multiple listing service, the compensation offered to other multiple listing service participants for their services in the sale of such listing. Such offers are unconditional except that entitlement to compensation is determined by the cooperating broker's performance as the procuring cause of the sale (or lease) or as otherwise provided for in this rule. The listing broker's obligation to compensate any cooperating broker as the procuring cause of the sale (or lease) may be excused if it is determined through arbitration that, through no fault of the listing broker and in the exercise of good faith and reasonable care, it was impossible or financially unfeasible for the listing broker to collect a commission pursuant to the listing agreement. In such instances, entitlement to cooperative compensation offered through MLS would be a question to be determined by an arbitration hearing panel based on all relevant facts and circumstances including, but not limited to, why it was impossible or financially unfeasible for the listing broker to collect some or all of the commission established in the listing agreement; at what point in the transaction did the listing broker know (or should have known) that some or all of the commission established in the listing agreement might not be paid; and how promptly had the listing broker communicated to cooperating brokers that the commission established in the listing agreement might not be paid. *(Amended 11/98)*

In filing a property with the multiple listing service of an association of REALTORS®, the participant of the service is making blanket unilateral offers of compensation to the other MLS participants, and shall therefore specify on each listing filed with the service, the compensation being offered to the other MLS participants. Specifying the compensation on each listing is necessary, because the cooperating broker has the right to know what his compensation shall be prior to his endeavor to sell. \* *(Amended 11/96)*

The listing broker retains the right to determine the amount of compensation offered to other participants (acting as subagents, buyer agents, or in other agency or non-agency capacities defined by law) which may be the same or different. *(Amended 11/96)*

This shall not preclude the listing broker from offering any MLS participant compensation other than the compensation indicated on any listing published by the MLS, provided the listing broker informs the other broker, in writing, in advance of submitting an offer to purchase, and provided that the modification in the specified compensation is not the result of any agreement among all or any other participants in the service. Any superseding offer of compensation must be expressed as either a percentage of the gross sales price or as a flat dollar amount. *(Amended 5/10)*

**Note 1:** The multiple listing service shall not have a rule requiring the listing broker to disclose the amount of total negotiated commission in his listing contract, and the association multiple listing service shall not publish the total negotiated commission on a listing which has been submitted to the MLS by a participant. The association multiple listing service shall not disclose in any way the total commission negotiated between the seller and the listing broker.

**Note 2:** The listing broker may, from time to time, adjust the compensation offered to other multiple listing service participants for their services with respect to any listing by advance published notice to the service so that all participants will be advised. *(Amended 4/92)*

**Note 3:** The multiple listing service shall make no rule on the division of commissions between participants and nonparticipants. This should remain solely the responsibility of the listing broker.

**Note 4:** Multiple listing services, at their discretion, may adopt rules and procedures enabling listing brokers to communicate to potential cooperating brokers that gross commissions established in listing contracts are subject to court approval, and that compensation payable to cooperating brokers may be reduced if the gross commission established in the listing contract is reduced by a court. In such instances, the fact that the gross commission is subject to court approval and either the potential reduction in compensation payable to cooperating brokers or the method by which the potential reduction in compensation will be calculated must be clearly communicated to potential cooperating brokers prior to the time they submit an offer that ultimately results in a successful transaction. *(Amended 5/10)*

\*The compensation specified on listings filed with the multiple listing service shall appear in one of two forms. The essential and appropriate requirement by an association multiple listing service is that the information to be published shall clearly inform the participants as to the compensation they will receive in cooperative transactions, unless advised otherwise by the listing broker, in writing, in advance of submitting an offer to purchase. The compensation specified on listings published by the MLS shall be shown in one of the following forms:

1. by showing a percentage of the gross selling price
2. by showing a definite dollar amount *(Amended 05/10)*

**Note:** MLSs may also, as a matter of local discretion, allow participants to offer cooperative compensation as a percentage of the net sales price, with the net sales price defined as the gross sales price minus buyer upgrades (new construction) and seller concessions (as defined by the MLS unless otherwise defined by state law or regulation). *(Adopted 5/08)*

While MLSs are not required to authorize participants to offer cooperative compensation based on net sale prices, those that do permit such offers must define “seller concessions” for purposes other than new construction, unless that term is defined by applicable state law or regulation. The following definition of “seller concessions” is suggested but not required for adoption: Points paid by seller on behalf of buyer, seller-paid buyer closing costs, cash or cash allowances not escrowed, down payment assistance, additions or alterations not considered deferred maintenance, and personal property not usual and customary to such transactions conveyed from seller to buyer having an agreed upon monetary value. *(Adopted 05/12)*

**Note 5:** Nothing in these MLS rules precludes a listing participant and a cooperating participant, as a matter of mutual agreement, from modifying the cooperative compensation to be paid in the event of a successful transaction. *(Adopted 11/05)*

**Note 6:** Multiple listing services must give participants the ability to disclose to other participants any potential for a short sale. As used in these rules, short sales are defined as a transaction where title transfers, where the sale price is insufficient to pay the total of all liens and costs of sale, and where the seller does not bring sufficient liquid assets to the closing to cure all deficiencies. Multiple listing services may, as a matter of local discretion, require participants to disclose potential short sales when participants know a transaction is a potential short sale. In any instance where a participant discloses a potential short sale, they may, as a matter of local discretion, also be permitted to communicate to other participants how any reduction in the gross commission established in the listing contract required by the lender as a condition of approving the sale will be apportioned between listing and cooperating participants. All confidential disclosures and confidential information related to short sales, if allowed by local rules, must be

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communicated through dedicated fields or confidential “remarks” available only to participants and subscribers. *(Amended 5/09)*

#### **Section 5.0.1 Disclosing Potential Short Sales**

Participants must disclose potential short sales (defined as a transaction where title transfers, where the sale price is insufficient to pay the total of all liens and costs of sale and where the seller does not bring sufficient liquid assets to the closing to cure all deficiencies) when reasonably known to the listing participants. *(Amended 5/09)*

When disclosed, participants may, at their discretion, advise other participants whether and how any reduction in the gross commission established in the listing contract, required by the lender as a condition of approving the sale, will be apportioned between listing and cooperating participants. *(Adopted 5/09)*

Where participants communicate to other participants how any reduction in the gross commission established in the listing contract required by the lender as a condition of approving the sale will be apportioned between the listing and cooperating participants, listing participants shall disclose to cooperating participants in writing the total reduction in the gross commission and the amount by which the compensation payable to the cooperating broker will be reduced within 24 hours of receipt of notification from the lender. *(Adopted 5/10)*

#### **Section 5.1 Participant as Principal**

If a participant or any licensee (or licensed or certified appraiser) affiliated with a participant has any ownership interest in a property, the listing of which is to be disseminated through the multiple listing service, that person shall disclose that interest when the listing is filed with the multiple listing service and such information shall be disseminated to all multiple listing service participants.

#### **Section 5.2 Participant as Purchaser**

If a participant or any licensee (including licensed and certified appraisers) affiliated with a participant wishes to acquire an interest in property listed with another participant, such contemplated interest shall be disclosed, in writing, to the listing broker not later than the time an offer to purchase is submitted to the listing broker. *(Adopted 2/92)*

#### **Section 5.3 Dual or Variable Rate Commission Arrangements**

The existence of a dual or variable rate commission arrangement (i.e., one in which the seller/landlord agrees to pay a specified commission if the property is sold/leased by the listing broker without assistance and a different commission if the sale/lease results through the efforts of a cooperating broker; or one in which the seller/landlord agrees to pay a specified commission if the property is sold/leased by the listing broker either with or without the assistance of a cooperating broker and a different commission if the sale/lease results through the efforts of a seller/landlord) shall be disclosed by the listing broker by a key, code, or symbol as required by the MLS. The listing broker shall, in response to inquiries from potential cooperating brokers, disclose the differential that would result in either a cooperative transaction or, alternatively, in a sale/lease that results through the efforts of the seller/landlord. If the cooperating broker is a buyer/tenant representative, the buyer/tenant representative must disclose such information to their client before the client makes an offer to purchase or lease. *(Amended 5/01)*

#### **Section 5.4 Display of Listing Broker’s Offer of Compensation**

Participants and subscribers who share the listing broker’s offer of compensation for an active listing must display the following disclaimer or something similar.

*The listing broker’s offer of compensation is made only to participants of the MLS where the listing is filed. (Adopted 01/22)*

## **Service Charges**

#### **Section 6 Service Fees and Charges**

The following service charges for operation of the multiple listing services are in effect to defray the costs of the service and are subject to change from time to time in the manner prescribed:

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**Initial Participation Fee:** An applicant for participation in the service shall pay an application fee of \$600.00 per office\* with such fee to accompany the application, \$ 200.00 Initiation Fee, a software license fee of \$ 140.00 plus sales tax, and a prorated MLS fee of \$470.00 per year per licensee to begin service.

\* Fee applies for each office that is registered with the Ohio Department of Real Estate (ODRE) as a Main office (REC) or Branch office (BBB) that participants of the MLS work from or advertise as an office.

**Recurring MLS Fee:** The annual MLS fee of each participant shall be an amount equal to \$470.00 times each salesperson and licensed or certified appraiser who has access to and use of the service, whether licensed as a broker, sales licensee, or licensed or certified appraiser who is employed by or affiliated as an independent contractor with such participant. Payment of such fees shall be made bi-annually on or before the 20th day of March and September of the year of the multiple listing service. Fees shall be prorated for new membership.

However, MLSs must provide participants the option of a no-cost waiver of MLS fees, dues, and charges for any licensee or licensed or certified appraiser who can demonstrate subscription to a different MLS or CIE where the principal broker participates. MLSs may, at their discretion, require that broker participants sign a certification for nonuse of its MLS services by their licensees, which can include penalties and termination of the waiver if violated. *(Amended 5/18 and 8/18)*

**Agent Transfers:** Agents who transfer to a different Brokerage must inform the departing Brokerage within 1 calendar day of leaving. The Participant office must inform MLS within 1 calendar day of Agent joining or leaving the Brokerage. Any listings that are to transfer with the Agent must be reported to the MLS within 1 calendar day. All listings will be transferred to the Broker of the departing Brokerage unless otherwise stated. There is a \$50 Agent Transfer fee assessed to the Agent.

**Listing Fee:** No monthly per listing fee is required.

**MLS Entered Listings:** MLS Entered Listings: Listings that are added or listing restored by the MLS staff, will carry a fee of \$10.00 for services rendered by staff. Broker Load listings will have no fee. (8/97)

**Photos:** The Multiple Listing Service may, as a matter of local discretion, require submission of a reasonable number of photographs or other graphic representations that accurately depict listed property except where sellers expressly direct that photographs of their property not appear in MLS compilations. Ninety-nine (99) photos per listing can be entered into the MLS. MLS Staff can upload photos to a listing for \$5.00 each.

**Primary Photo:** In order to maintain consistency in the Service, primary photo as established is the front view of the property. Any photo set as the primary photo for the property that is not the front view of the property will be removed. In the event of a home having two front views (i.e. water front home) the listing agent may choose which of the two views to use as primary. If the alternate view is used as the primary, the photo of the front view of the property must be set in the second position. Lot/Land listings **do not** require a photo. (2/18)

**Multiple Areas:** Listings that are requested to be placed in more than one area of the MLS will bring a \$25.00 Fee for each additional insertion. Listings entered more than once: when sold, additional entries must be withdrawn, if not will be subject to a \$25.00 Fine.

**Proper Type Listing:** Listings must be submitted in the proper property type, if blatantly wrong (i.e. 2 Bedroom House as a Condo) a \$25.00 fine will be assessed and 24 hours to correct the error. Only 1 name in listor section and one name in co-listor section.

**Missing Photos:** If a listing is without a photo for 3 calendar days after being entered into the MLS, there will be a \$25.00 fine and if absent after 6 calendar days a \$50.00 fine. (Jan. 2007) If another Participants photo is used without permission \$50.00 Fine and 3 days to enter a new photo. (7/08)

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**Reciprocity/MLS Only Members:** Members of any other Board, who are principals, in good standing, may apply for an additional membership in the Firelands MLS. Each office location (branch) must join individually as well as their designated Realtor/Broker, if membership is desired by any of their office members. Proof of membership in another board of Realtors and MLS must be shown to qualify for MLS only membership in Firelands MLS. MLS only members may enter all of their listings or only those physically located within the Firelands Territory at their own discretion. All fees are the same for all members.

**False Listings:** Any Realtor/participant entering a listing under their name, into Firelands MLS for any non-member, will be charged a fine of \$1000.00 Firelands MLS reserves the right to request a copy of the listing agreement if a complaint is received about a particular listing. Once a fine has been assessed the Realtor has 3 days to correct the error or the listing will be deleted. Effective 9/0/01. (Co-Listors are allowed only if both are Firelands MLS Members) Only 1 name can be entered at Listor and 1 name as co-listor. (7/08)

**Marketing, Remarks and Photographs:** The MLS does not permit the placement of the listing agent name, brokerage, phone number, email address, web address, Yard signs and other information of this nature that is not descriptive in nature and relevant to an accurate portrayal of the property being listed – as opposed to information about the firm listing the property – to be placed in the MLS, remarks, directions or photo sections of a listing. Any violation of this policy shall be considered a violation of the MLS Rules and Regulations and Participants will be charged a \$25.00 fee per incident. Once a warning has been issued and a \$25.00 fine assessed, the infraction must be corrected within 5 calendar days or MLS staff will remove the violation and assess another \$25.00 fine. (11/03)

#### **Section 6.1 Charges**

A. All accounts are Due and Payable by the 20th day of each month.

A-1 A \$25 or 10% of balance owed (whichever is greater) FINE will be imposed on the next calendar day.

A-2 If an account becomes thirty (30) days PAST DUE, a certified letter will be sent notifying you that if the amount owed, plus FINE, is not PAID within ten (10) days, the following will happen. 1. Participant will not have access to MLS Computer System. Participants are in danger of being removed from MLS with all rights and privileges revoked and having all current listings withdrawn from MLS. Furthermore, the Initial Subscriber fees will have to be repaid.

A. \$25.00 charge will be levied on all withdrawn listings, when they are put back into the MLS. When a Certified letter is sent for a 30 day past due account, an automatic \$25.00 delinquency charge will be added to the balance due.

B. For failure of the listing office to file information taken on MLS forms within 72 hours after all required signatures have been received, a charge not to exceed \$25 for each calendar day until information is filed the total not to exceed \$100. (3/16)

C. The failure of a listing office to enter/file a completed MLS form shall be subject to a \$25.00 charge. To be a complete listing it must contain room sizes for the number of rooms noted. Form/listing information may be noticed to the listing office and must be returned/entered into the MLS, completely filled out within 24 hours. For each day over the 24 hours which the listing is not completed, there will be a \$25.00 charge.

D. For failure of the listing office to report within 24 hours to the MLS, the status change of any property, a charge of \$25.00 will be assessed.

E. For failure of the listing office to report within 3 days to the MLS office, the final closing of any sale, the charge of \$25.00 a day not to exceed \$100.00.

F. For failure of the listing office to report within 24 hours to the MLS, the fact that a pending sale has been canceled for any reason, a charge of \$25.00.

G. For failure of the listing office to report within 24 hours to the MLS, a cancellation or withdrawal of a listing a charge of \$25.00.

H. Properties entered into the MLS that cannot be shown immediately, must have a HELD status until showings are allowed. Sign is not permitted.

I. Any subscriber guilty of repeated violations may forfeit his rights and assessed as deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors of the Firelands Association of Realtors.

J. Comparable sales of homes not listed in MLS but sold by Participant, may be entered into the MLS at no charge. However, properties entered for Comp Purposes must have a photo, sq. ft., lot size and # of bedrooms.

K. Participant office will notify the MLS in writing within 1 calendar day of an agent leaving and/or joining that office. Penalty will be a \$50.00 fine. (01/20)

L. Agents who transfer their licenses without notifying the departing Brokerage and MLS in writing within 1 calendar day of departure will be fined \$50.00. (08/23)

M. With permission from the parties involved, entering any seller concessions into the agent only remarks after the sale is complete; helps give a true value of the property.

N. No enhancements are to be made to the Rapattoni system, such as changing fonts, size, color, etc. Only Rapattoni standard print can be used when entering a listing.

O. Virtual Tours cannot contain any “branding” in the MLS. No yard signs, agents, photos, logo, etc. (01/07)

Broker Load Offices – Broker load offices are not required to submit paperwork to MLS, unless requested by MLS Director. The MLS Director may request paperwork periodically for a listing audit.

Compliance with Rules – Authority to Impose Discipline – By becoming and remaining a participant or subscriber in this MLS, each participant and subscriber agrees to be subject to the rules and regulation and any other MLS governance provision. The MLS may, through the administrative and hearing procedures established in these rules, impose discipline for violations of the rules and other MLS governance provisions. Discipline that may be imposed may only consist of one or more of the following:

- a. Letter of Warning
- b. Letter of reprimand
- c. Attendance at MLS orientation or other appropriate courses or seminars which the participant or subscriber can reasonably attend taking into consideration cost, location, duration
- d. Appropriate, reasonable fine not to exceed \$15,000.
- e. Probation for a stated period of time not less than thirty days nor more than one year
- f. Suspension of MLS rights, privileges, and services for not less than thirty days nor more than one year.
- g. Termination of MLS rights, privileges, and services with no right to reapply for a specified period not to exceed three years. (11/07)

## **Section 6: Jurisdiction of Association Multiple Listing Services (Policy Statement 7.42)**

The service area of multiple listing services owned and operated by associations of REALTORS is not limited to the jurisdiction of the parent association(s) of REALTORS®. Rather, associations are encouraged to establish multiple listing services that encompass natural market areas and to periodically

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reexamine such boundaries to ensure that they encompass the relevant market area. While associations are encouraged to work cooperatively to establish market area multiple listing services, the absence of such an agreement shall not preclude any association from establishing and maintaining a multiple listing service whose service area exceeds that of the parent association(s) jurisdiction. MLSs may not require that other offices of a firm to participate in the MLS if any office of that firm participates in that MLS. (Revised 5/02)

## Compliance with Rules

### Section 7 Compliance with Rules—Authority to Impose Discipline

By becoming and remaining a participant or subscriber in this MLS, each participant and subscriber agrees to be subject to the rules and regulations and any other MLS governance provision. The MLS may, through the administrative and hearing procedures established in these rules, impose discipline for violations of the rules and other MLS governance provisions. Discipline that may be imposed may only consist of one or more of the following:

- a. letter of warning
- b. letter of reprimand
- c. attendance at MLS orientation or other appropriate courses which the participant or subscriber can reasonably attend taking into consideration cost, location and duration
- d. appropriate, reasonable fine not to exceed \$15,000
- e. suspension of MLS rights, privileges, and services for not less than thirty (30) days nor more than one (1) year
- f. termination of MLS rights, privileges, and services with no right to reapply for a specified period not to exceed three (3) years. (*Revised 11/14*)

**Note 1:** A participant (or user/subscriber, where appropriate) can be placed on probation. Probation is not a form of discipline. When a participant (or user/subscriber, where appropriate) is placed on probation the discipline is held in abeyance for a stipulated period of time not longer than one (1) year. Any subsequent finding of a violation of the MLS rules during the probationary period may, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, result in the imposition of the suspended discipline. Absent any subsequent findings of a violation during the probationary period, both the probationary status and the suspended discipline are considered fulfilled, and the individual's record will reflect the fulfillment. The fact that one or more forms of discipline are held in abeyance during the probationary period does not bar imposition of other forms of discipline which will not be held in abeyance. (*Revised 05/14*)

**Note 2:** MLS Participants and subscribers can receive no more than three (3) administrative sanctions in a calendar year before they are required to attend a hearing for their actions and potential violations of MLS rules, except that the MLS may allow more administrative sanctions for violations of listing information provided by participants and subscribers before requiring a hearing. The MLS must send a copy of all administrative sanctions against a subscriber to the subscriber's participant and the participant is required to attend the hearing of the subscriber who has received more than three (3) administrative sanctions within a calendar year (*Adopted 11/20*)

### Section 7.1 Compliance with Rules

The following action may be taken for noncompliance with the rules:

- a. for failure to pay any service charge or fee within one (1) month of the date due, and provided that at least ten (10) days' notice has been given, the service shall be suspended until service charges or fees are paid in full



b. for failure to comply with any other rule, the provisions of Sections 9 and 9.1 shall apply

**Note:** Generally, warning, censure, and the imposition of a moderate fine are sufficient to constitute a deterrent to violation of the rules and regulations of the multiple listing service. Suspension or termination is an extreme sanction to be used in cases of extreme or repeated violation of the rules and regulations of the service. If the MLS desires to establish a series of moderate fines, they should be clearly specified in the rules and regulations. (11/88)

#### **Section 7.2 Applicability of Rules to Users and/or Subscribers**

Non-principal brokers, sales licensees, appraisers, and others authorized to have access to information published by the MLS are subject to these rules and regulations and may be disciplined for violations thereof provided that the user or subscriber has signed an agreement acknowledging that access to and use of MLS information is contingent on compliance with the rules and regulations. Further, failure of any user or subscriber to abide by the rules and/or any sanction imposed for violations thereof can subject the participant to the same or other discipline. This provision does not eliminate the participant's ultimate responsibility and accountability for all users or subscribers affiliated with the participant. (4/92)

## **Meetings**

### **Section 8 Meetings of MLS Committee**

The multiple listing service committee shall meet for the transaction of its business at a time and place to be determined by the committee or at the call of the chairperson.

#### **Section 8.1 Meetings of MLS Participants**

The committee may call meetings of the participants in the service to be known as meetings of the multiple listing service.

#### **Section 8.2 Conduct of the Meetings**

The chairperson or vice chairperson shall preside at all meetings or, in their absence, a temporary chairperson from the membership of the committee shall be named by the chairperson or, upon his failure to do so, by the committee

## **Enforcement of Rules or Disputes**

### **Section 9 Consideration of Alleged Violations**

The committee shall give consideration to all written complaints having to do with violations of the rules and regulations. By becoming and remaining a participant, each participant agrees to be subject to these rules and regulations, the enforcement of which are at the sole discretion of the Committee (Board of Directors).

When requested by a complainant, the MLS will process a complaint without revealing the complainant's identity. If a complaint is subsequently forwarded to a hearing, and the original complainant does not consent to participate in the process, the MLS will appoint a representative to serve as the complainant. (Amended 11/20)

#### **Section 9.1 Violations of Rules and Regulations**

If the alleged offense is a violation of the rules and regulations of the service and does not involve a charge of alleged unethical conduct or request for arbitration, it may be administratively considered and determined by the multiple listing service committee, and if a violation is determined, the committee may direct the imposition of sanction, provided the recipient of such sanction may request a hearing before the professional standards committee of the association in accordance with the bylaws and rules and regulations of the association of REALTORS® within twenty (20) days following receipt of the committee's decision. (Amended 11/96)

If, rather than conducting an administrative review, the multiple listing committee has a procedure established to conduct hearings, the decision of the multiple listing committee may be appealed to the board of directors of the association of REALTORS® within twenty (20) days of the tribunal's decision being rendered. Alleged violations involving unethical conduct shall be referred to the association's grievance committee for processing in accordance with the professional standards procedures of the association. If the charge alleges a refusal to arbitrate, such charge shall be referred directly to the board of directors of the association of REALTORS®. *(Amended 2/98)*

If, rather than conducting an administrative review, the MLS committee has a procedure established to conduct hearings, the decision of the hearing tribunal may be appealed to the board of directors of the association of REALTORS®. Alleged violations of Section 16 of the rules and regulations shall be referred to the association's grievance committee for processing in accordance with the professional standards procedures of the association, except that if the charge alleges a refusal to arbitrate, such charge shall be referred directly to the board of directors of the association. *(Amended 2/98)*

### **Section 9.2 Complaints of Unethical Conduct**

All other complaints of unethical conduct shall be referred by the committee to the secretary of the association of REALTORS® for appropriate action in accordance with the professional standards procedures established in the association's bylaws. *(Amended 11/88)*

## **Confidentiality of MLS Information**

### **Section 10 Confidentiality of MLS Information**

Any information provided by the multiple listing service to the participants shall be considered official information of the service. Such information shall be considered confidential and exclusively for the use of participants and real estate licensees affiliated with such participants and those participants who are licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property and licensed or certified appraisers affiliated with such participants. *(Amended 4/92)*

#### **Section 10.1 MLS Not Responsible for Accuracy of Information**

The information published and disseminated by the service is communicated verbatim, without change by the service, as filed with the service by the participant. The service does not verify such information provided and disclaims any responsibility for its accuracy. Each participant agrees to hold the service harmless against any liability arising from any inaccuracy or inadequacy of the information such participant provides.

## **Ownership of MLS Compilation\* and Copyright**

### **Section 11**

By the act of submitting any property listing content to the MLS, the participant represents and warrants that he or she is fully authorized to license the property listing content as contemplated by and in compliance with this section and these rules and regulations, and also thereby does grant to the MLS license to include the property listing content in its copyrighted MLS compilation and also in any statistical report on comparables. Listing content includes, but is not limited to, photographs, images, graphics, audio and video recordings, virtual tours, drawings, descriptions, remarks, narratives, pricing information, and other details or information related to listed property. *(Amended 5/18)*

Each participant who submits listing content to the MLS agrees to defend and hold the MLS and every other participant harmless from and against any liability or claim arising from any inaccuracy of the submitted listing content or any inadequacy of ownership, license, or title to the submitted listing content. *(Adopted 5/18)*

**Note:** The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) is a federal copyright law that enhances the penalties for copyright infringement occurring on the Internet. The law provides exemptions or “safe harbors” from copyright infringement liability for online service providers (OSP) that satisfy certain criteria. Courts construe the definition of “online service provider” broadly, which would likely include MLSs as well as participants and subscribers hosting an IDX display.

One safe harbor limits the liability of an OSP that hosts a system, network or website on which Internet users may post user-generated content. If an OSP complies with the provisions of this DMCA safe harbor, it cannot be liable for copyright infringement if a user posts infringing material on its website. This protects an OSP from incurring significant sums in copyright infringement damages, as statutory damages are as high as \$150,000 per work. For this reason, it is highly recommended that MLSs, participants and subscribers comply with the DMCA safe harbor provisions discussed herein.

To qualify for this safe harbor, the OSP must:

- (1) Designate on its website and register with the Copyright Office an agent to receive takedown requests. The agent could be the MLS, participant, subscriber, or other individual or entity.
- (2) Develop and post a DMCA-compliant website policy that addresses repeat offenders.
- (3) Comply with the DMCA takedown procedure. If a copyright owner submits a takedown notice to the OSP, which alleges infringement of its copyright at a certain location, then the OSP must promptly remove allegedly infringing material. The alleged infringer may submit a counter-notice that the OSP must share with the copyright owner. If the copyright owner fails to initiate a copyright lawsuit within ten (10) days, then the OSP may restore the removed material.
- (4) Have no actual knowledge of any complained-of infringing activity.
- (5) Not be aware of facts or circumstances from which complained-of infringing activity is apparent.
- (6) Not receive a financial benefit attributable to complained-of infringing activity when the OSP is capable of controlling such activity.

Full compliance with these DMCA safe harbor criteria will mitigate an OSP’s copyright infringement liability. For more information see 17 U.S.C. §512.

\* The term MLS compilation, as used in Sections 11 and 12 herein, shall be construed to include any format in which property listing data is collected and disseminated to the participants, including but not limited to bound book, loose-leaf binder, computer database, card file, or any other format whatsoever.

### **Section 11.2 Display**

Each participant shall be entitled to lease from the Firelands Association of REALTORS® a number of copies of each MLS compilation sufficient to provide the participant and each person affiliated as a licensee (including licensed or certified appraisers) with such participant with one copy of such compilation. The participant shall pay for each such copy the rental fee set by the association. \*

Participants shall acquire by such lease only the right to use the MLS compilation in accordance with these rules.

## **Use of Copyrighted MLS Compilation**

### **Section 12 Distribution**

Participants shall, at all times, maintain control over and responsibility for each copy of any MLS compilation leased to them by the association of REALTORS®, and shall not distribute any such copies to persons other than subscribers who are affiliated with such participant as licensees, those individuals who are licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property, and any other subscribers as authorized pursuant to the governing documents of the MLS. Use of

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information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service is strictly limited to the activities authorized under a participant's licensure(s) or certification, and unauthorized uses are prohibited. Further, none of the foregoing is intended to convey participation or membership or any right of access to information developed or published by an association multiple listing service where access to such information is prohibited by law. *(Amended 4/92)*

### **Section 12.1 Display**

Participants and those persons affiliated as licensees with such participants shall be permitted to display the MLS compilation to prospective purchasers only in conjunction with their ordinary business activities of attempting to locate ready, willing, and able buyers for the properties described in said MLS compilation.

### **Section 12.2 Reproduction**

Participants or their affiliated licensees shall not reproduce any MLS compilation or any portion thereof, except in the following limited circumstances:

Participants or their affiliated licensees may reproduce from the MLS compilation and distribute to prospective purchasers a reasonable number of single copies of property listing data contained in the MLS compilation which relate to any properties in which the prospective purchasers are or may, in the judgment of the participant or their affiliated licensees, be interested.

Reproductions made in accordance with this rule shall be prepared in such a fashion that the property listing data of properties other than that in which the prospective purchaser has expressed interest, or in which the participant or the affiliated licensees are seeking to promote interest, does not appear on such reproduction.

Nothing contained herein shall be construed to preclude any participant from utilizing, displaying, distributing, or reproducing property listing sheets or other compilations of data pertaining exclusively to properties currently listed for sale with the participant.

Any MLS information, whether provided in written or printed form, provided electronically, or provided in any other form or format, is provided for the exclusive use of the participant and those licensees affiliated with the participant who are authorized to have access to such information. Such information may not be transmitted, retransmitted, or provided in any manner to any unauthorized individual, office, or firm.

None of the foregoing shall be construed to prevent any individual legitimately in possession of current listing information, sold information, comparables, or statistical information from utilizing such information to support valuations on particular properties for clients and customers. Any MLS content in data feeds available to participants for real estate brokerage purposes must also be available to participants for valuation purposes, including automated valuations. MLSs must either permit use of existing data feeds, or create a separate data feed, to satisfy this requirement. MLSs may require execution of a third-party license agreement where deemed appropriate by the MLS. MLSs may require participants who will use such data feeds to pay the reasonably estimated costs incurred by the MLS in adding or enhancing its downloading capacity for this purpose. Information deemed confidential may not be used as supporting documentation. Any other use of such information is unauthorized and prohibited by these rules and regulations. *(Amended 05/14)*

## **Use of MLS Information**

### **Section 13 Limitations on Use of MLS Information**

Use of information from MLS compilation of current listing information, from the association's statistical report, or from any sold or comparable report of the association or MLS for public mass-media advertising by an MLS participant or in other public representations, may not be prohibited. However, any print or non-print forms of advertising or other forms of public representations based in whole or in part on information supplied by the association or its MLS must clearly demonstrate the period of time over which

such claims are based and must include the following, or substantially similar, notice: Based on information from the association of REALTORS® (alternatively, from the Firelands MLS) for the period *(date)* through *(date)*. *(Amended 11/93)*

## Changes in Rules and Regulations

### Section 14 Changes in Rules and Regulations

Amendments to the rules and regulations of the service shall be by a Majority vote of the members of the multiple listing service committee, subject to approval by the board of directors of the association of REALTORS®.

## Orientation

### Section 17 Orientation

Any applicant for MLS participation and any licensee (including licensed or certified appraisers) affiliated with an MLS participant who has access to and use of MLS-generated information shall complete an orientation program of no more than eight (8) classroom hours devoted to the MLS rules and regulations and computer training related to MLS information entry and retrieval and the operation of the MLS within ninety (90) days after access has been provided. *(Amended 11/04)*

Participants and subscribers may be required, at the discretion of the MLS, to complete additional training of not more than four (4) classroom hours in any twelve (12) month period when deemed necessary by the MLS to familiarize participants and subscribers with system changes or enhancements and/or changes to MLS rules or policies. Participants and subscribers must be given the opportunity to complete any mandated additional training remotely. *(Amended 11/17)*

## Internet Data Exchange (IDX)/Broker Reciprocity

### Section 18 IDX Defined

IDX affords MLS participants the ability to authorize limited electronic display and delivery of their listings by other participants via the following authorized mediums under the participant's control: websites, mobile apps, and audio devices. As used throughout these rules, "display" includes "delivery" of such listing. *(Amended 5/17)*

### Section 18.1 Authorization

Participants' consent for display of their listings by other participants pursuant to these rules and regulations must be established in writing. If a participant withholds consent on a blanket basis to permit the display of that participant's listings, that participant may not download, frame or display the aggregated MLS data of other participants. Even where participants have given blanket authority for other participants to display their listings through Broker Reciprocity/IDX, such consent may be withdrawn on a listing-by-listing basis where the seller has prohibited all Internet display or other electronic display or distribution. *(Amended 05/17)*

### Section 18.2 Participation

Participation in Broker Reciprocity is available to all MLS Participants who are REALTORS® who are engaged in real estate brokerage and who consent to display their listings by other Participants. This requirement can be met by maintaining an office or Internet presence from which Participants are available to represent real estate sellers or buyers (or both).

### Section 18.2.1

Participants must notify the MLS of their intention to display Broker Reciprocity/IDX information and must give the MLS direct access for purposes of monitoring/ensuring compliance with applicable rules and policies. *(Amended 05/12)*

### **Section 18.2.2**

MLS participants may not use Broker Reciprocity/IDX-provided listings for any purpose other than display as provided for in these rules. This does not require participants to prevent indexing of Broker Reciprocity/IDX listings by recognized search engines. *(Amended 05/12)*

### **Section 18.2.3**

Listings, including property addresses, can be included in Broker Reciprocity/IDX displays except where a seller has directed their listing broker to withhold their listing or the listing's property address from all display on the Internet (including, but not limited to, publicly-accessible websites or VOWs) **or other electronic forms of display or distribution.** *(Amended 05/17)*

### **Section 18.2.4**

Participants may select the listings they choose to display through Broker Reciprocity/IDX based only on objective criteria including, but not limited to, factors such as geography or location ("uptown," "downtown," etc.), list price, type of property (e.g., condominiums, cooperatives, single-family detached, multi-family), or type of listing (e.g., exclusive right-to-sell or exclusive agency). Selection of listings displayed **on any through** Broker Reciprocity/IDX **site** must be independently made by each participant. *(Amended 01/22)*

### **Section 18.2.5**

Participants must refresh all MLS downloads and displays automatically fed by those downloads not less frequently than every 12 hours. *(Amended 11/14)*

### **Section 18.2.6**

Except as provided in the Broker Reciprocity/IDX policy and these rules, a Broker Reciprocity/IDX site or a participant or user operating a Broker Reciprocity/IDX site or displaying IDX information as otherwise permitted may not distribute, provide, or make any portion of the MLS database available to any person or entity. *(Amended 05/12)*

### **Section 18.2.7**

Any Broker Reciprocity/IDX display controlled by a participant must clearly identify the name of the brokerage firm under which they operate in a readily visible color and typeface. For purposes of the Broker Reciprocity/IDX policy and these rules, "control" means the ability to add, delete, modify and update information as required by the Broker Reciprocity/IDX policy and MLS rules. *(Amended 05/12)*

### **Section 18.2.8**

Any Broker Reciprocity/IDX display controlled by a participant or subscriber that

- a. allows third-parties to write comments or reviews about particular listings or displays a hyperlink to such comments or reviews in immediate conjunction with particular listings, or
- b. displays an automated estimate of the market value of the listing (or hyperlink to such estimate) in immediate conjunction with the listing,

either or both of those features shall be disabled or discontinued for the seller's listings at the request of the seller. The listing broker or agent shall communicate to the MLS that the seller has elected to have one or both of these features disabled or discontinued on all displays controlled by participants. Except for the foregoing and subject to Section 18.2.9, a participant's Broker Reciprocity/IDX display may communicate the participant's professional judgment concerning any listing. Nothing shall prevent a Broker Reciprocity/IDX display from notifying its customers that a particular feature has been disabled at the request of the seller. *(Adopted 05/12)*

### **Section 18.2.9**

Participants shall maintain a means (e.g., e-mail address, telephone number) to receive comments about the accuracy of any data or information that is added by or on behalf of the participant beyond that supplied by the MLS and that relates to a specific property. Participants shall correct or remove any false data or information relating to a specific property upon receipt of a communication from the listing broker or listing agent for the property explaining why the data or information is false. However, participants shall

not be obligated to remove or correct any data or information that simply reflects good faith opinion, advice, or professional judgment. *(Amended 05/12)*

#### **Section 18.2.10**

An MLS Participant (or where permitted locally, an MLS Subscriber) may co-mingle the listings of other brokers received in an IDX feed with listings available from other MLS IDX feeds, provided all such displays are consistent with the IDX rules, and the MLS Participant (or MLS Subscriber) holds participatory rights in those MLSs. As used in this policy, “co-mingling” means that consumers are able to execute a single property search of multiple IDX data feeds resulting in the display of IDX information from each of the MLSs on a single search results page; and that Participants may display listings from each IDX feed on a single webpage or display. *(Adopted 11/14)*

#### **Section 18.2.11**

Participants shall not modify or manipulate information relating to other participants listings. MLS Participants may augment their IDX display of MLS data with applicable property information from other sources to appear on the same webpage or display, clearly separated by the data supplied by the MLS. The source(s) of the information must be clearly identified in the immediate proximity to such data. This requirement does not restrict the format of MLS data display or display of fewer than all of the available listings or fewer authorized fields. *(Adopted 05/15)*

#### **Section 18.2.12**

All listings displayed pursuant to IDX shall identify the listing firm, and the email or phone number provided by the listing participant in a reasonably prominent location and in a readily visible color and typeface not smaller than the medium used in the display of listing data. *(Amended 01/22)*

### **Section 18.3 Display**

Display of listing information pursuant to Broker Reciprocity/IDX is subject to the following rules:

#### **Section 18.3.1**

Listings displayed pursuant to Broker Reciprocity/IDX shall contain only those fields of data designated by the MLS. Display of all other fields (as determined by the MLS) is prohibited. Confidential fields intended only for other MLS participants and users (e.g., showing instructions, and property security information) may not be displayed. *(Amended 05/12)*

##### **Section 18.3.1.1**

The type of listing agreement (e.g., exclusive right to sell, exclusive agency, etc.) may not be displayed. *(Amended 05/12)*

#### **Section 18.3.4**

All listings displayed pursuant to Broker Reciprocity shall identify the listing agent.

#### **Section 18.3.5**

Non-principal brokers and sales licensees affiliated with Broker Reciprocity/IDX participants may display information available through Broker Reciprocity/IDX on their own websites subject to their participant’s consent and control and the requirements of state law and/or regulation.

#### **Section 18.3.6**

Deleted November 2006.

#### **Section 18.3.7**

All listings displayed pursuant to Broker Reciprocity/IDX shall show the MLS as the source of the information. Displays of minimal information (e.g., “thumbnails”, text messages, “tweets”, etc., of two hundred [200] characters or less) are exempt from this requirement but only when linked directly to a display that includes all required disclosures. *(Amended 05/12)*

**Section 18.3.8**

Participants (and their affiliated licensees, if applicable) shall indicate on their websites that Broker Reciprocity/IDX information is provided exclusively for consumers' personal, non-commercial use, that it may not be used for any purpose other than to identify prospective properties consumers may be interested in purchasing, and that the data is deemed reliable but is not guaranteed accurate by the MLS. The MLS may, at its discretion, require use of other disclaimers as necessary to protect participants and/or the MLS from liability. Displays of minimal information (e.g., "thumbnails", text messages, "tweets", etc., of two hundred [200] characters or less) are exempt from this requirement but only when linked directly to a display that includes all required disclosures. *(Amended 05/12)*

**Section 18.3.9**

The data consumers can retrieve or download in response to an inquiry shall be determined by the MLS but in no instance shall be limited to fewer than one hundred (100) listings or five percent (5%) of the listings available for Broker Reciprocity/IDX display, whichever is fewer. *(Amended 11/09)*

**Section 18.3.10**

The right to display other participants' listings pursuant to Broker Reciprocity/IDX shall be limited to a participant's office(s) holding participatory rights in this MLS.

**Section 18.3.11**

Listings obtained through IDX feeds from REALTOR® Association MLSs where the MLS Participant holds participatory rights must be displayed separately from listings obtained from other sources. Listings obtained from other sources (e.g., from other MLSs, from non-participating brokers, etc.) must display the source from which each such listing was obtained. Displays of minimal information (e.g., "thumbnails", text messages, "tweets", etc., of two hundred [200] characters or less) are exempt from this requirement but only when linked directly to a display that includes all required disclosures. *(Amended 11/14)*

Note: An MLS Participant (or where permitted locally, an MLS Subscriber) may co-mingle the listings of other brokers received in an IDX feed with listings available from other MLS IDX feeds, provided all such displays are consistent with the IDX rules, and the MLS Participant (or MLS Subscriber) holds participatory rights in those MLSs. As used in this policy, "co-mingling" means that consumers are able to execute a single property search of multiple IDX data feeds resulting in the display of IDX information from each of the MLSs on a single search results page; and that Participants may display listings from each IDX feed on a single webpage or display.

**Section 18.3.12**

Display of expired, and withdrawn listings is prohibited. *(Amended 11/09)*

**Section 18.3.13**

Display of seller's(s') and/or occupant's(s') name(s), phone number(s), and e-mail address(es) is prohibited.

**Section 18.3.14**

Participants are required to employ appropriate security protection such as firewalls on their websites and displays, provided that any security measures required may not be greater than those employed by the MLS. *(Amended 05/12)*

**Section 18.3.15**

Participants must maintain an audit trail of consumer activity on their website and make that information available to the MLS if the MLS believes the Broker Reciprocity/IDX site has caused or permitted a breach in the security of the data or a violation of MLS rules related to use by consumers. *(Amended 05/12)*

**Section 18.3.16**

Deceptive or misleading advertising (including co-branding) on pages displaying Broker Reciprocity/IDX-provided listings is prohibited. For purposes of these rules, co-branding will be presumed not to be deceptive or misleading if the participant's logo and contact information is larger than that of any third party. *(Adopted 11/09)*



#### **Section 18.4 Service Fees and Charges**

Service fees and charges for participation in Broker Reciprocity/IDX shall be as established annually by the Board of Directors. *(Adopted 11/01, Amended 5/05)*

### **Section 19**

## **Virtual Office Websites (VOWs)**

**Note:** Adoption of Sections 19.1 through 19.14 is mandatory.

#### **Section 19.1 VOW Defined**

a. A “Virtual Office Website” (VOW) is a participant’s Internet website, or a feature of a participant’s website, through which the participant is capable of providing real estate brokerage services to consumers with whom the participant has first established a broker-consumer relationship (as defined by state law) where the consumer has the opportunity to search MLS listing information, subject to the participant’s oversight, supervision, and accountability. A non-principal broker or sales licensee affiliated with a participant may, with his or her participant’s consent, operate a VOW. Any VOW of a non-principal broker or sales licensee is subject to the participant’s oversight, supervision, and accountability.

b. As used in Section 19 of these rules, the term “participant” includes a participant’s affiliated non-principal brokers and sales licensees—except when the term is used in the phrases “participant’s consent” and “participant’s oversight, supervision, and accountability”. References to “VOW” and “VOWs” include all Virtual Office Websites, whether operated by a participant, by a non-principal broker or sales licensee, or by an “Affiliated VOW Partner” (AVP) on behalf of a participant.

c. “Affiliated VOW Partner” (AVP) refers to an entity or person designated by a participant to operate a VOW on behalf of the participant, subject to the participant’s supervision, accountability, and compliance with the VOW policy. No AVP has independent participation rights in the MLS by virtue of its right to receive information on behalf of a participant. No AVP has the right to use MLS listing information, except in connection with operation of a VOW on behalf of one or more participants. Access by an AVP to MLS listing information is derivative of the rights of the participant on whose behalf the AVP operates a VOW.

d. As used in Section 19 of these rules, the term “MLS listing information” refers to active listing information and sold data provided by participants to the MLS and aggregated and distributed by the MLS to participants.

#### **Section 19.2**

a. The right of a participant’s VOW to display MLS listing information is limited to that supplied by the MLS(s) in which the participant has participatory rights. However, a participant with offices participating in different MLSs may operate a master website with links to the VOWs of the other offices.

b. Subject to the provisions of the VOW policy and these rules, a participant’s VOW, including any VOW operated on behalf of a participant by an AVP, may provide other features, information, or functions, e.g., “Internet Data Exchange” (IDX).

c. Except as otherwise provided in the VOW policy or in these rules, a participant need not obtain separate permission from other MLS participants whose listings will be displayed on the participant’s VOW.

#### **Section 19.3**

a. Before permitting any consumer to search for or retrieve any MLS listing information on his or her VOW, the participant must take each of the following steps.

i. The participant must first establish with that consumer a lawful broker-consumer relationship (as defined by state law), including completion of all actions required by state law in connection with providing real estate brokerage services to clients and customers (hereinafter, “Registrants”). Such actions shall include, but are not limited to, satisfying all applicable agency, non-agency, and other disclosure obligations, and execution of any required agreements.

ii. The participant must obtain the name of and a valid e-mail address for each Registrant. The participant must send an e-mail to the address provided by the Registrant confirming that the Registrant has agreed to the terms of use (described in Subsection d., below). The participant must verify that the e-mail address provided by the Registrant is valid and that the Registrant has agreed to the terms of use.

iii. The participant must require each Registrant to have a user name and a password, the combination of which is different from those of all other Registrants on the VOW. The participant may, at his or her option, supply the user name and password or may allow the Registrant to establish its user name and password. The participant must also assure that any e-mail address is associated with only one user name and password.

b. The participant must assure that each Registrant's password expires on a date certain, but may provide for renewal of the password. The participant must at all times maintain a record of the name, e-mail address, user name, and current password of each Registrant. The participant must keep such records for not less than one hundred eighty (180) days after the expiration of the validity of the Registrant's password.

c. If the MLS has reason to believe that a participant's VOW has caused or permitted a breach in the security of MLS listing information or a violation of MLS rules, the participant shall, upon request of the MLS, provide the name, e-mail address, username, and current password, of any Registrant suspected of involvement in the breach or violation. The participant shall also, if requested by the MLS, provide an audit trail of activity by any such Registrant.

d. The participant shall require each Registrant to review and affirmatively to express agreement (by mouse click or otherwise) to a terms of use provision that provides at least the following:

i. that the Registrant acknowledges entering into a lawful consumer-broker relationship with the participant

ii. that all information obtained by the Registrant from the VOW is intended only for the Registrant's personal, non-commercial use

iii. that the Registrant has a bona fide interest in the purchase, sale, or lease of real estate of the type being offered through the VOW

iv. that the Registrant will not copy, redistribute, or retransmit any of the information provided, except in connection with the Registrant's consideration of the purchase or sale of an individual property

v. that the Registrant acknowledges the MLS' ownership of and the validity of the MLS' copyright in the MLS database

e. The terms of use agreement may not impose a financial obligation on the Registrant or create any representation agreement between the Registrant and the participant. Any agreement entered into at any time between the participant and Registrant imposing a financial obligation on the Registrant or creating representation of the Registrant by the participant must be established separately from the terms of use, must be prominently labeled as such, and may not be accepted solely by mouse click.

f. The terms of use agreement shall also expressly authorize the MLS and other MLS participants or their duly authorized representatives to access the VOW for the purposes of verifying compliance with MLS rules and monitoring display of participants' listings by the VOW. The agreement may also include such other provisions as may be agreed to between the participant and the Registrant.

#### **Section 19.4**

A participant's VOW must prominently display an e-mail address, telephone number, or specific identification of another mode of communication (e.g., live chat) by which a consumer can contact the participant to ask questions or get more information about any property displayed on the VOW. The participant or a non-principal broker or sales licensee licensed with the participant must be willing and able to respond knowledgeably to inquiries from Registrants about properties within the market area served by that participant and displayed on the VOW.

### Section 19.5

A participant's VOW must employ reasonable efforts to monitor for and prevent misappropriation, scraping, and other unauthorized uses of MLS listing information. A participant's VOW shall utilize appropriate security protection such as firewalls as long as this requirement does not impose security obligations greater than those employed concurrently by the MLS.

**Note:** MLSs may adopt rules requiring Participants to employ specific security measures, provided that any security measure required does not impose obligations greater than those employed by the MLS.

### Section 19.6

a. A participant's VOW shall not display the listings or property addresses of any seller who has affirmatively directed the listing broker to withhold the seller's listing or property address from display on the Internet. The listing broker shall communicate to the MLS that the seller has elected not to permit display of the listing or property address on the Internet. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a participant who operates a VOW may provide to consumers via other delivery mechanisms, such as e-mail, fax, or otherwise, the listings of sellers who have determined not to have the listing for their property displayed on the Internet.

b. A participant who lists a property for a seller who has elected not to have the property listing or the property address displayed on the Internet shall cause the seller to execute a document that includes the following (or a substantially similar) provision.

### Seller Opt-out Form

1. Check one.

a. ☐ I have advised my broker or sales agent that I do not want the listed property to be displayed on the Internet.

b. ☐ I have advised my broker or sales agent that I do not want the address of the listed property to be displayed on the Internet.

2. I understand and acknowledge that if I have selected Option a., consumers who conduct searches for listings on the Internet will not see information about the listed property in response to their searches.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials of Seller

c. The participant shall retain such forms for at least one (1) year from the date they are signed or one (1) year from the date the listing goes off the market, whichever is greater.

### Section 19.7

a. Subject to Subsection b., below, a participant's VOW may allow third-parties:

i. to write comments or reviews about particular listings or display a hyperlink to such comments or reviews in immediate conjunction with particular listings, or

ii. to display an automated estimate of the market value of the listing (or hyperlink to such estimate) in immediate conjunction with the listing.

b. Notwithstanding the foregoing, at the request of a seller, the participant shall disable or discontinue either or both of those features described in Subsection a. as to any listing of the seller. The listing broker or agent shall communicate to the MLS that the seller has elected to have one or both of these features disabled or discontinued on all participants' websites. Subject to the foregoing and to Section 19.8, a participant's VOW may communicate the participant's professional judgment concerning any listing. A participant's VOW may notify its customers that a particular feature has been disabled at the request of the seller.

**Section 19.8**

A participant's VOW shall maintain a means (e.g., e-mail address, telephone number) to receive comments from the listing broker about the accuracy of any information that is added by or on behalf of the participant beyond that supplied by the MLS and that relates to a specific property displayed on the VOW. The participant shall correct or remove any false information relating to a specific property within forty-eight (48) hours following receipt of a communication from the listing broker explaining why the data or information is false. The participant shall not, however, be obligated to correct or remove any data or information that simply reflects good faith opinion, advice, or professional judgment.

**Section 19.9**

A participant shall cause the MLS listing information available on its VOW to be refreshed at least once every three (3) days.

**Section 19.10**

Except as provided in these rules, in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®' VOW policy, or in any other applicable MLS rules or policies, no participant shall distribute, provide, or make accessible any portion of the MLS listing information to any person or entity.

**Section 19.11**

A participant's VOW must display the participant's privacy policy informing Registrants of all of the ways in which information that they provide may be used.

**Section 19.12**

A participant's VOW may exclude listings from display based only on objective criteria, including, but not limited to, factors such as geography, list price. (*Amended 01/22*)

**Section 19.13**

A participant who intends to operate a VOW to display MLS listing information must notify the MLS of its intention to establish a VOW and must make the VOW readily accessible to the MLS and to all MLS participants for purposes of verifying compliance with these rules, the VOW policy, and any other applicable MLS rules or policies.

**Section 19.14**

A participant may operate more than one VOW himself or herself or through an AVP. A participant who operates his or her own VOW may contract with an AVP to have the AVP operate other VOWs on his or her behalf. However, any VOW operated on behalf of a participant by an AVP is subject to the supervision and accountability of the participant.

**Section 19.15**

A participant's VOW may not make available for search by or display to Registrants any of the following information:

- a. expired and withdrawn listings

**Note:** Due to the 2015 changes in IDX policy and the requirement that participants are allowed to use MLS listing information through all delivery mechanisms when providing brokerage services, MLSs can no longer prohibit the display of pending ("under contract") listings to the Registrants of a participant's VOW

- b. the compensation offered to other MLS participants
- c. the type of listing agreement, i.e., exclusive right-to-sell or exclusive agency
- d. the seller's and occupant's name(s), phone number(s), or e-mail address(es)
- e. instructions or remarks intended for cooperating brokers only, such as those regarding showings or security of listed property

f. sold information

**Note:** If sold information is publicly accessible in the jurisdiction of the MLS, Subsection 19.15f. must be omitted.

#### **Section 19.16**

A participant shall not change the content of any MLS listing information that is displayed on a VOW from the content as it is provided in the MLS. The participant may, however, augment MLS listing information with additional information not otherwise prohibited by these rules or by other applicable MLS rules or policies, as long as the source of such other information is clearly identified. This rule does not restrict the format of display of MLS listing information on VOWs or the display on VOWs of fewer than all of the listings or fewer than all of the authorized information fields.

#### **Section 19.17**

A participant shall cause to be placed on his or her VOW a notice indicating that the MLS listing information displayed on the VOW is deemed reliable, but is not guaranteed accurate by the MLS. A participant's VOW may include other appropriate disclaimers necessary to protect the participant and/or the MLS from liability.

#### **Section 19.18**

A participant shall cause any listing that is displayed on his or her VOW to identify the name of the listing firm, the listing broker or agent, and the email or phone number provided by the listing participant in a readily visible color, in a reasonably prominent location, and in typeface not smaller than the median typeface used in the display of listing data. *(Amended 01/22)*

#### **Section 19.19**

A participant shall limit the number of listings that a Registrant may view, retrieve, or download to not more than 100 current listings in response to any inquiry.

#### **Section 19.20**

A participant shall require that Registrants' passwords be reconfirmed or changed every 180 days.

#### **Section 19.21**

A participant may display advertising and the identification of other entities ("co-branding") on any VOW the participant operates or that is operated on his or her behalf. However, a participant may not display on any such VOW deceptive or misleading advertising or co-branding. For purposes of this section, cobranding will be presumed not to be deceptive or misleading if the participant's logo and contact information (or that of at least one participant, in the case of a VOW established and operated on behalf of more than one participant) is displayed in immediate conjunction with that of every other party, and the logo and contact information of all participants displayed on the VOW is as large as the logo of the AVP and larger than that of any third party.

#### **Section 19.22**

A participant shall cause any listing displayed on his or her VOW obtained from other sources, including from another MLS or from a broker not participating in the MLS, to identify the source of the listing.

#### **Section 19.23**

A participant shall cause any listing displayed on his or her VOW obtained from other sources, including from another MLS or from a broker not participating in the MLS, to be searched separately from listings in the MLS.

#### **Section 19.24**

Participants and the AVPs operating VOWs on their behalf must execute the license agreement required by the MLS.

#### **Section 19.25**

Where a seller affirmatively directs his or her listing broker to withhold either the seller's listing or the address of the seller's listing from display on the Internet, a copy of the seller's affirmative direction shall be provided to the MLS within forty-eight (48) hours.

## **Section 20 Passwords**

Each Participant and Subscriber needs a password to access the MLS. The passwords will be issued by the MLS to Participants and Licensed Subscribers upon completion of the training. Unlicensed Subscribers shall be given passwords without the requirement of training. If special circumstances require that a Participant or Licensed Subscriber be granted access prior to training, the MLS may issue a password for temporary access to the MLS. If the training is not completed within 30 days as required in Section 17 above, the temporary access will be terminated until the training has been completed.

### **Section 20.1 Confidentiality of Passwords**

To maintain the integrity of the Multiple Listing Service and to ensure compliance with Sections 10 and 12 of these Rules and Regulations, no Participant or Subscriber shall disclose his or her MLS password to any person. Any Participant or Subscriber who violates this section shall be subject to a fine of \$1,000 for the first offense, \$2,000 for the second offense, \$2,500 for the third offense, and termination of MLS services for four or more offenses.