



Get permission first
Just because a listing is in the MLS doesn't mean you can post it online

Agents are using tools like Craigslist, blogs, agent websites, Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites to post listings online to attract buyers, highlight good deals and demonstrate market expertise. However, posting another broker's listing online without permission violates the "Carolina Multiple Listing Services, Inc. (CMLS) Rules and Regulations," the Realtor® Code of Ethics, and the North Carolina Real Estate Commission rules. Just because a listing is in the MLS doesn't mean you can post it online.

Permission to display listings belonging to other brokerages is granted through CMLS' Internet Data Exchange ("IDX") and Virtual Office Website (VOW) programs. The IDX rules require certain items to be displayed on every listing that belongs to another brokerage, and the VOW program requires consumers to register and consent to a "terms of use" prior to viewing listing data. These programs also require that the listing data is refreshed at least every 72 hours.

It is not possible to post other brokers' listings on Craigslist, Facebook, Twitter or other social media sites in a way that that complies with IDX or VOW rules. Here are a few things to consider before you post another broker's listing anywhere online:

- Obtain permission from the broker-in-charge (BIC), (not just the listing agent).
- Ask (or specify) whether to display the listing agent and/or listing brokerage name.
- Give notice that the listing is someone else's. Otherwise, it is possible that it could be construed as a violation of the Code of Ethics Article 12.
- Specify whether there is important information that must be displayed (bank-owned listings).

Additionally, agents who post their own listings on the Internet as "featured listings" or on Craigslist should remove old listing data from view. Update or remove "featured listings" from agent websites and Craigslist posts when the listing status changes (sold, expired or withdrawn). Failure to do so could be construed as a violation of Article 12 of the Code of Ethics.

The rules apply to all listings, including bank-owned listings. A few agents have incorrectly assumed that it is OK to post a foreclosure (i.e., bank-owned listing) online without following the CDS/IDX rules or obtaining written permission from the listing brokerage.

The Charlotte Regional Realtor® Association/CMLS staff cannot proactively monitor social media websites and Craigslist for violations, but does address complaints alleging that a listing is advertised on the Internet without the listing brokerage's permission. The complainant must specifically identify the post on Internet that is the subject of the complaint, and also identify the MLS number of the listing (if applicable).



Display of CMLS Statistics/Sold Listings

CMLS prefers to be the source of statistical information to the media. However, CMLS Member Participants and Subscribers may make public representations or advertise statistical information and sold listings for a particular neighborhood. Any public representation/advertisement of CMLS statistical information or sold listings must conform to the following requirements:

- CMLS must be cited as the source of the statistical information by including the disclaimer from Section 13 of the “CMLS Rules and Regulations.” This disclaimer indicates that data is based on information from CMLS, and specifies the date range and the area covered.
- To prevent a violation of Article 12 of the Realtor® Code of Ethics, any public representation/advertisement of MLS statistical information or sold listings for a particular neighborhood must indicate that "Properties may be listed or sold by various participants of the MLS."
- Member Participants and Subscribers must ensure that any retransmission of the statistical information includes the required disclaimers.
- Statistics on active listings must be based on more than one active listing; otherwise, it could be construed that the brokerage publishing the report is advertising another brokerage's listing without permission.
- Permission to display other brokerages' active listings is granted through CMLS' Internet Data Exchange (“IDX”) and Virtual Office Website (VOW) programs. The IDX/VOW programs do not apply to print advertising or other advertising media (including non-IDX/VOW websites). The IDX rules require certain items to be displayed on every listing that belongs to another brokerage, and the VOW program requires consumers to register and consent to a “terms of use” prior to viewing listing data. These programs also require that the listing data is refreshed at least every 72 hours. For non-IDX/VOW websites or other public representations/advertisements, you must obtain written permission from the listing brokerage to display another broker's active listing.
- CMLS provides two methods IDX recipients can use to display sold content on their websites:

Sold content provided with FTP data feed: CMLS provides sold content (i.e., those listings that have closed and have been reported as “Sold” in CMLS' online database, reflected as “Sold” status) with a FTP data feed. The [“CMLS Rules and Regulations”](#) Sections 16 and 18 provide the rules for Internet display of sold data using this method.

Sales History Data Tool: This tool offers consumers the ability to search for limited information on sales in any neighborhood in our 10-county CMLS service area. The Sales History Data Tool is on CarolinaHome.com, and CMLS has created a frameable version of the tool available for any Subscriber with an IDX website.