

MLS Insight: Ensuring Data Accuracy on RMLSweb



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MLS Insight is a series about how things work at RMLS™.

The accuracy of data in listings posted by RMLS™ is something we take very seriously. Data accuracy makes the MLS real estate marketplace hum with the least possible friction. Because we understand that the reason we have rules and regulations is to facilitate a fair and efficient platform for our REALTOR® subscribers, RMLS™ has always focused on education and data correction instead of punishment and income for the MLS.

In fact, we renamed our Rules and Regulations Department to the Data Accuracy Department to reflect this mission!

Of course we still have a process for taking formal complaints—the standing Rules and Regulations Committee to review complaints and impose sanctions (fines in most cases), and the Hearings Committee, whose job it is to conduct hearings if sanctions are appealed. (Hearings are conducted in substantial accordance with the procedures applicable to Professional Standards.) This year, the Rules and Regulations Committee is chaired by RMLS™ Director Rick Jenkins and the Hearings Committee is chaired by RMLS™ Director Mark Meek.

However, the great majority of the work of the data accuracy process is proactive at RMLS™. We respond to all inquiries, questions, and complaints from our subscribers and also conduct regular audits and data checks. To give you some idea

of the scope of this effort, here are some numbers from 2014 to ponder:

- Our Data Accuracy staff, Vallerie Bush and Wanda Kennedy, responded to more than 8,000 issues—an average about 670 per month.
- Of these, about 5,300 came from the REPORT ISSUE button that appears on the lower right corner of all Agent Full reports in RMLSweb.
- The department took over 3,100 phone calls.
- In proactive audits, 399,541 listings were reviewed and 6,400+ violations identified. (For frame of reference, 81,594 listings were added to RMLSweb in 2014.)

We also try to analyze Listing Load to prevent inaccuracies at the data collection source if we can. For example, we have blocked the ability to mark both Short Sale and Bank Owned/REO with a YES at the same time. Entry of a sold price with a +10% difference from the listing price will produce a warning message. If the property type INPARK is selected, then the style options become limited to the manufactured home types.

The system also runs auto-checks for certain potential issues upon the publishing/saving of a listing, automatically sending an email to the listing agent to alert them of a possible problem. Emails are automatically sent when there is a missing school, missing tax ID, or when the status has been pending (PEN) for over 3 months.

News Flash! One of the reasons for an extended pending is a lease option. The Board of Directors approved a new status for pending listings with lease option terms. The "POP" status will be available later in 2015.

One of the responsibilities of the Data Accuracy Department is to comb for possible fair housing violations. Some history is relevant here. In 1995, RMLS™ entered into a conciliation agreement after a fair housing complaint. The particular

complaint was due to a listing that advertised “available for adults over 40.” As a result, RMLS™ promised to conduct fair housing/HUD checks on all listings in the future and to promote fair housing on RMLSweb. RMLS™ also paid \$30,000 in the settlement, which was a lot of money for a company only three years old. Today, there is a list of words that are flagged in Listing Load upon the publishing/editing of listing remarks. Staff members review a system-generated fair housing/HUD file daily with a more extensive list of possible word violations, and all remarks (public, private, supplemental remarks) are reviewed.

Data accuracy makes RMLS™ better. I encourage you to click the REPORT ISSUE button if you think you see a possible problem on a listing. If it isn't really an issue we'll let you know, and if it is we will contact the listing agent to get that data corrected! You will remain anonymous, unless you are submitting a formal violation report that you intend to have reviewed by the Rules and Regulations Committee.



The next post will focus on RMLSweb development projects that were approved by the Board of Directors for 2015. If you have any questions you would like to have answered, I encourage you to post a comment.