

# RMLS™ Rules Roundup for January-February 2019



*The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations Committee has requested that periodic reports are given to subscribers about the number and types of formal rules violations, along with information about informal violations and courtesy notifications by type. Read “If a RMLS™ Rule is Broken, What Happens?” for a deeper explanation.*

Have you ever spotted something wrong in a property listing on RMLSweb? The Data Accuracy team is responsible for sorting things out whenever a RMLS™ subscriber contacts us—whether that is via the “Report Issue” button on a listing, by email, or contacting us directly by phone. In January and February 2019 our team handled 529 phone calls.

We track 30 specific issues in Listing Data Checker (LDC), the software that helps us spot and correct issues proactively. Six of these are courtesy notifications, but the other 24 are informal violations of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations. In addition to our focus on education we also process formal violations throughout the year.

## **HOT TOPICS**

In January we saw quite a few instances of personal promotion in video/virtual tours that were branded, along with other forms of personal promotion in the public remarks field. As a reminder, personal promotion is not permitted in public remarks, photographs, video, or virtual tours. Personal promotion includes and is not limited to phone numbers, agent name, firm name, email address, and websites. Remember, when submitting data to a listing that the information should describe the property only.

In February we sent out a number of courtesy notices on listings that included more than one owner name in the first owner name field. This courtesy notice was created in 2018 to remind subscribers that there are two owner name fields in RMLSweb. Both owner name fields are provided to ZipLogix and when a subscriber uses MLS Connect or MLS Push to autofill information into ZipLogix, the information is auto filled as appropriate. This is not a rules violation but simply a way that RMLS™ is working to help educate our subscribers where we can.

## **FORMAL VIOLATIONS**

The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations Committee reviews all formal complaints which allege a violation of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations. The committee has the power to impose sanctions. In January and February 2019, no formal rules violations were filed by RMLS™ subscribers.

## **INFORMAL VIOLATIONS**

In January and February 2019, RMLS™ Data Accuracy staff reviewed 34,656 listings and found the following informal violations:

<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Category</b>
686	723	Listing Missing Tax ID
151	90	Incorrect/Missing Information
113	73	Personal Promotion
53	64	Year Built Description
135	83	Owner Name
70	60	Missing School
0	0	Incorrect Address
0	65	Duplicate Listing
24	45	No Showing
26	23	Incorrect 1st Photo
21	31	Concessions
15	21	Missing Condo Unit
8	4	Partial Bathroom 5+
11	9	Listing Input in Incorrect MLS Area
3	3	City Unknown
4	22	HUD

34	21	Is Property a Condo
9	6	Duplicate Sold in Different Category
0	0	Photograph Omit Form
0	1	Short Sale Not Indicated
0	0	Fannie Mae
0	0	Duplicate Listing Different Agent
0	1	Inaccurate Lot Size
0	0	Missing SqFt by Level

Following are the courtesy notifications sent to RMLS™ subscribers in January and February 2019:

Jan	Feb	Category
934	764	Multiple Owners in 1st Owner Name Field
199	139	Listing is Still Pending
0	29	New Listing Input Over 24 Hours
1	2	Listing Status Change Over 72 Hours
0	0	Listing is Still Pending w/ Lease

When we notice an uptick in a specific type of violation (perhaps a rule recently changed or market conditions lead to an increase in a certain type of issue) we may also put a notification up on RMLSweb, educating subscribers before one of their listings gets flagged and we need to contact them.

RMLS™ Data Accuracy can be reached via email or by phone at (503) 236-7657 if you ever have questions about the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations, if you wonder whether a specific

listing has inaccurate data, or if you want to chat with us more about the above information.

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## RMLS™ Rules Roundup for 2018



*The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations Committee has requested that periodic reports are given to subscribers about the number and types of formal rules violations, along with information about informal violations and courtesy notifications by type. Read “If a RMLS™ Rule is Broken, What Happens?” for a deeper explanation.*

Have you ever spotted something wrong in a property listing on RMLSweb? The Data Accuracy team is responsible for sorting

things out whenever a RMLS™ subscriber contacts us—whether that is via the “Report Issue” button on a listing, by email, or contacting us directly by phone. We hear from many of you: in 2018 our team handled 3,737 phone calls!

You can probably imagine how busy that keeps our small staff, and in 2018 we started using new software, called Listing Data Checker (LDC), to help us spot and correct issues more proactively. LDC helps automate simple tasks that used to take staff time every single work day.

We track 30 specific issues in LDC. Six of these are courtesy notifications, but the other 24 are informal violations of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations. In addition to our focus on education in 2018 there were eight formal violations that resulted in \$1,400 in fines being collected.

## **FORMAL VIOLATIONS**

The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations Committee reviews all formal complaints which allege a violation of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations. The committee has the power to impose sanctions.

In 2018, eight formal rules violations were filed, with a grand total of \$1,400 in fines levied. Following is a list of the specific violations:

- *5.1L Unauthorized Use of a Lockbox:* Buyer’s agent let buyers into a listing, then left them there to go to another listing. Seller’s agent came to the listing to discover the buyers inside the listing without their

agent present.

- *5.1S Marketing of Listing Prior to Publication:* Buyers contacted their agent to inquire about a property with a sign that they wanted to see. The listing was not in RMLSweb as either an excluded listing or in CSN status. The listing was put in as an active listing one week after the buyer's agent contacted the seller's agent.
- *5.1S Marketing of Listing Prior to Publication:* Subscriber noticed a yard sign on a property on a Thursday. By the following Monday the listing had not been entered into RMLSweb. Property was made active six calendar days after sign was put on property.
- *5.1S Marketing of Listing Prior to Publication:* Subscriber found a "Coming Soon" listing on a public Facebook page.
- *5.1S Marketing of Listing Prior to Publication:* Subscriber saw a sign on a property saying that it was "Coming Soon." When they checked RMLSweb, they found the property was not yet listed. When they made inquiries with the seller's firm they were told that it would be live in five calendar days.
- *5.1L Unauthorized Use of a Lockbox:* Seller's listing was in pending status and had been for four days. Another agent entered property without contacting seller's agent or making an appointment.
- *5.1L Unauthorized Use of a Lockbox:* Seller's listing was in pending status for 18 days when another agent entered property without permission.
- *5.1G Sold or Leased Input Over 144 Hours from Effective Date:* A property sold on Monday and the status was not updated from pending to sold for four weeks.

## **INFORMAL VIOLATIONS**

In 2018, the Data Accuracy staff reviewed 438,452 listings and

found the following informal violations.

2,888	Listing Missing Tax ID
1,816	Incorrect /Missing Information
1,547	Personal Promotion
1,172	Year Built Description
833	Owner Name
789	Missing School
623	Incorrect Address
483	Duplicate Listing
388	No Showing
371	Incorrect 1st Photo
244	Concessions
163	Missing Condo Unit
85	Partial Bathrooms 5+
80	Listing Input in Incorrect MLS Area
56	City Unknown
51	HUD
44	Is Property a Condo
6	Duplicate Sold in Different Category
6	Photograph Omit Form
4	Short Sale Not Indicated
1	Fannie Mae
1	Duplicate Listing Different Agent
0	Inaccurate Lot Size
0	Missing SqFt by Level

Following are the courtesy notifications sent to RMLS™ subscribers in 2018, largely through the work of LDC.



3,369	Multiple Owners in 1st Owner Name field
1,907	Listing is Still Pending
407	New Listing Input Over 72/24 Hours
177	Listing is Set to Expire
68	Listing Status Change Over 72/24 Hours
1	Listing is Still Pending w/Lease

You can see we have our work cut out for us in Data Accuracy! When we notice an uptick in a specific type of violation (perhaps a rule has recently changed or market conditions lead to an increase in a certain type of issue) we may also put a notification up on RMLSweb, educating subscribers before one of their listings gets flagged and we need to contact them.

RMLS™ Data Accuracy can be reached via email or by phone at (503) 236-7657 if you ever have questions about the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations, if you wonder whether a specific listing has inaccurate data, or if you want to chat with us more about the above information.

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## **RMLS™ Rules Roundup for May-September 2018**



*The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations Committee has requested that reports about the number of formal violations, the type of violations, and the results get shared periodically with subscribers. Read “If a RMLS™ Rule is Broken, What Happens?” for a deeper explanation.*

The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations Committee reviews all formal complaints which allege a violation of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations. The committee has the power to impose sanctions.

### **Violations in May through September 2018**

During the period from May through September of 2018 there was one new violation submitted which resulted in a fine of \$250. There was also one violation submitted that resulted in no fine being levied. The cited violations were as follows:

### Section 5.1.S. Marketing of Listing Prior to RMLS™ Publication

- Marketing a listing prior to publication in RMLSweb

### Section 5.1.G. Sold or Leased

- Sold status change input over 144 hours.

Over the same period staff also responded to 2,217 phone calls and reviewed 202,255 listings for inaccurate data. Combined with the Report Issue button and email sent directly to rules@rmls.com the Data Accuracy Department was able to help subscribers make 7,380 corrections to listings in order to ensure that RMLS™ subscribers have the most accurate data. The top corrections that our team made were for personal promotion, missing owner name, and incorrect first photo.

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## **RMLS™ Rules Roundup for 2017, January-April 2018**



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The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations Committee reviews all formal complaints which allege a violation of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations. The committee has the power to impose sanctions.

### **Violations in 2017**

Six formal violations were submitted in 2017, resulting in a total of \$2,350.00 in fines being sanctioned. One RMLS™ subscriber had lockbox privileges suspended. The cited violations were as follows:

#### Section 5.1.L. Unauthorized Use of RMLS™ Lockbox Access Device or Method

- Not following showing instructions (3)
- Entering a property while in pending status (PEN) without

prior approval (2)

- Using the lockbox system for purposes other than real estate business (1)

### **Violations in January through April 2018**

During January through April of 2018, four formal violations were submitted resulting in a total of \$800 in fines being sanctioned. The cited violations were as follows:

#### Section 5.1.L. Unauthorized Use of RMLS™ Lockbox Access Device or Method

- Entering a property while it was in pending status (PEN) without prior approval (2)

#### Section 5.1.S. Marketing of Listing Prior to RMLS™ Publication

- Marketing a listing prior to publication in RMLSweb (2)

The committee also discusses potential changes to the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations and makes recommendations to the RMLS™ Board of Directors. Subscribers are welcome to submit suggestions to the committee—contact Data Accuracy staff for more information via email or by calling (503) 236-7657.

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## **If a RMLS™ Rule is Broken, What Happens?**



Not all REALTORS® who subscribe to RMLS™ have an intimate familiarity of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations. This is why the Data Accuracy staff work hard each day to reach out to subscribers and correct issues that have been spotted in listings or address other concerns called in by fellow REALTORS®.

As Data Compliance Manager I'm relatively new to RMLS™ but one of my roles is to educate subscribers about the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations in our ongoing effort to ensure data accuracy on RMLSweb.

One of the most basic questions our subscribers may ask themselves is this: *what happens when a RMLS™ subscriber breaks one of the RMLS™ Rules?*

The answer depends on the rule, and whether a formal complaint was received. There are two types of issues that get sent to us. The most common of these is done using the report issue button that is found on the listing in RMLSweb, calling the RMLS™ Help Desk, or sending an email to [rules@rmls.com](mailto:rules@rmls.com). This is an anonymous process and is helpful to us in identifying errors on listings as well as rules violations.

The second type is the formal violation. A formal violation is not an anonymous process and involves accusations of rule breaking that could carry a sanction. These are far less common but we take them very seriously when they happen. Between January and July 2017 RMLS™ had received six formal violations. All of them were regarding various misuses of a lockbox (Section 5.1.l. Lockbox Access). Of those, three were for not following showing instructions, two were for entering a property while it was in pending (PEN) status and the last was for using it, the lockbox, for something other than real estate business. The six violations were reviewed by the Rules Committee and a total of \$1,350.00 in fines were sanctioned. In one case, lockbox privileges were suspended.

The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations Committee has requested that reports about the number of formal violations, the type of violation, and the result get shared periodically with subscribers. RMLS™ will be reporting updates throughout the year, so keep watching for these reports throughout the year!

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## **Top 10 RMLSweb Listing Inaccuracies in 2016**

It's not that important to be absolutely certain about listing details before publishing a listing on RMLSweb, is it?

As a matter of fact it's *very* important, both to RMLS™ and your fellow REALTORS®.

Accurate listing information is vital to the smooth operation of the real estate market. Correct listing data also facilitates cooperation between REALTORS® engaged in a transaction. This is why RMLS™ puts staff time and resources

into reviewing listings. Our staff also relies upon help from subscribers—REALTORS® like you—to help us quickly identify inaccuracies and get them cleaned up for the benefit of all.

In 2016 the RMLS™ Data Accuracy team addressed 6,355 listing inaccuracies that were reported to RMLS™ on RMLSweb. That's nearly 25 issues addressed each business day! Our Data Accuracy also conducts daily audits which identify additional inaccuracies that get corrected (but that's another blog post for another time).

What are the top 10 most common listing inaccuracies on RMLSweb? We compiled a list to help RMLS™ subscribers focus their efforts as they're entering listings using Listing Load. We encourage REALTORS® to get familiar with the details of each of these issues in order to help RMLSweb the most accurate it can be.



## **1. Year Built and Year Built Description**

Resolved: **1,296** (20.4%)

These can include the Year Built Description not being changed from Under Construction or Proposed to the correct state of construction on the property. If the property is completed at time of closing the Year Built Description value should be changed to New before being marked as Sold. Another common error can occur by accidentally setting the Year Built Description to New when it should have been Resale, because the property was previously occupied.

## **2. Incorrect/Missing Information**

Resolved: **1,153** (18.1%)

This can include many different issues within a variety of fields. Examples are listing the incorrect number of bedrooms, incorrect number of bathrooms, or having the incorrect number of levels listed. This also includes listings with inaccurate square footage and/or not dividing the square footage between



levels.

### **3. Personal Promotion**

Resolved: **1,094** (17.2%) [*See RMLS™ Rules, Section 3.24*]

The rules don't permit information in the public fields of a listing that identifies the listing agent or their brokerage. This includes names or contact information (or links to such) in the public remarks, photos, or virtual/video tours containing yard signs or other types of branding. Promotion is only allowed in Private Remarks.

### **4. Address**

Resolved: **847** (13.3%)

Adding extra words to a street name, not using the selection boxes for street direction/street suffix, or failing to submit the unit number can cause problems with mapping and/or searching for a property. When these items are found the Data Accuracy team will work to correct the address fields as appropriate. If you know of an issue with the published address, let Data Accuracy know.

### **5. Owner Name**

Resolved: **589** (9.3%)

There are reasons why a seller may wish to have their name withheld from a listing. If this is the case, use Document 1261 (Owner Name Omission Form) and submit the form to RMLS™. After this form has been submitted, enter "Form 1261 on file" into the Owner Name field on the listing.

### **6. No Showings**

Resolved: **380** (6.0%) [*See RMLS™ Rules, Section 3.26*]

Any active status listing that is published on RMLSweb must be made available to be shown to prospective clients.

### **7. Residential Property Type**

Resolved: **310** (4.9%)

Is the property attached? Detached? A condo? In a park? Proper property type is essential to ensure that the listing shows up

in the right search results and gets seen by the people who would be the most interested in your listing. Document 1270 (Residential Property Types), found on RMLSweb, can be helpful in determining what property type should be noted.

## **8. Photo(s)**

Resolved: **293** (4.6%) [See *RMLS™ Rules, Section 3.7*]

Common issues found with photos include:

- First listing photo is not of the exterior of building
- Text or graphics appear in photos
- Missing watermarks for “Sample Image” or “Virtual Staging”
- Photo contains children or other inappropriate content.

If the seller wishes to omit listing photos, please submit Document 1263 (Photograph Omission Form).

## **9. MLS Area**

Resolved: **172** (2.7%)

A listing is sometimes entered with the wrong MLS area or has been listed in two different MLS areas. This can have an impact on details like making the proper school choices available or allowing the correct county to be selected.

## **10. Duplicate Listings**

Resolved: **131** (2.1%)

Sometimes properties are listed more than once by mistake. This typically happens if two different people in an office input the same listing. It could also happen if a property is being relisted and the old listing does not get canceled prior to the new listing being published.

Have you noticed any of the above issues as you've perused listings on RMLSweb? Data accuracy on RMLSweb starts with you, the subscriber. Be sure information in your own listings is correct, and contact RMLS™ Data Accuracy staff if you see issues in other listings—just click the Report Issue button at the bottom of the listing. We appreciate your hard work and

enjoy working with you to ensure that RMLS*web* listing data is as accurate as possible.