South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
South Carolina Real Estate Commission
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SOUTH CAROLINA DISCLOSURE OF REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE RELATIONSHIP

Pursuant to South Carolina Real Estate License Law in S.C. Code of Laws Section 40-57-370, a real estate licensee is required to provide you a meaningful explanation of agency relationships offered by the licensee's brokerage firm. This must be done at the first practical opportunity when you and the licensee have substantive contact.

Before you begin to work with a real estate licensee, including being shown a home (or any property), it is important for you to know the difference between a broker-in-charge and associated licensees. The broker-in- charge is the person in charge of a real estate brokerage firm. Associated licensees may work only through a broker-in-charge. **In other words, when you choose to work with any real estate licensee, your business relationship is legally with the brokerage firm and not with the associated licensee.**

A real estate brokerage firm and its associated licensees can provide buyers and sellers valuable real estate services, whether in the form of basic **customer** services, or through **client**-level agency representation. The services you can expect will depend upon the legal relationship you establish with the brokerage firm. It is important for you to discuss the following information with the real estate licensee and agree on whether in your business relationship you will be a **customer** or a **client**.

You Are a Customer of the Brokerage Firm

South Carolina license law defines customers as buyers or sellers who choose NOT to establish an agency relationship. The law requires real estate licensees to perform the following **basic duties** when dealing with any real estate buyer or seller as customers: ***present all offers in a timely manner, account for money or other property received on your behalf, provide an explanation of the scope of services to be provided, be fair and honest and provide accurate information, provide limited confidentiality, and disclose "material adverse facts" about the property or the transaction which are within the licensee's knowledge.***

Unless or until you enter into a written agreement with the brokerage firm for agency representation, you are considered a "customer" of the brokerage firm, and the brokerage firm will not act as your agent. As a customer, you should not expect the brokerage firm or its licensees to promote your best interest.

Customer service does not require a written agreement; therefore, you are not committed to the brokerage firm in any way unless a transaction broker agreement or compensation agreement obligates you otherwise.

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Transaction Brokerage

A real estate brokerage firm may offer transaction brokerage in accordance with S.C. Code of Laws Section 40- 57-350. Transaction broker means a real estate brokerage firm that provides customer service to a buyer, a seller, or both in a real estate transaction. A transaction broker may be a single agent of a party in a transaction giving the other party customer service. A transaction broker also may facilitate a transaction without representing either party. The duties of a brokerage firm offering transaction brokerage relationship to a customer can be found in S.C. Code of Laws Section 40-57-350(L)(2).

You Can Become a Client of the Brokerage Firm

Clients receive more services than customers. If client status is offered by the real estate brokerage firm, you can become a client by entering into a written agency agreement requiring the brokerage firm and its associated licensees to act as an agent on your behalf and promote your best interests. If you choose to become a client, you will be asked to confirm in your written representation agreement that you received this agency relationships disclosure document in a timely manner.

A ***seller becomes a client*** of a real estate brokerage firm by signing a formal listing agreement with the brokerage firm. For a seller to become a client, this agreement must be in writing and must clearly establish the terms of the agreement and the obligations of both the seller and the brokerage firm which becomes the agent for the seller.

A ***buyer becomes a client*** of a real estate brokerage firm by signing a formal buyer agency agreement with the brokerage firm. For a buyer to become a client, this agreement must be in writing and must clearly establish the terms of the agreement and the obligations of both the buyer and the brokerage firm which becomes the agent for the buyer.

If you enter into a written agency agreement, as a client, the real estate brokerage has the following ***client-level duties: obedience, loyalty, disclosure, confidentiality, accounting, and reasonable skill and care.*** Client-level services also include advice, counsel and assistance in negotiations.

Single Agency

When the brokerage firm represents only one client in the same transaction (the seller or the buyer), it is called single agency.

Dual Agency

Dual agency exists when the real estate brokerage firm has two clients in one transaction – a seller client and a buyer client. At the time you sign an agency agreement, you may be asked to acknowledge whether you would consider giving written consent allowing the brokerage firm to represent both you and the other client in a disclosed dual agency relationship.

Disclosed Dual Agency

In a disclosed dual agency, the brokerage firm's representation duties are limited because the buyer and seller have recognized conflicts of interest. Both clients' interests are represented by the brokerage firm. As a disclosed dual agent, the brokerage firm and its associated licensees cannot advocate on behalf of one client over the other, and cannot disclose confidential client information concerning the price negotiations, terms, or factors motivating the buyer/client to buy or the seller/client to sell. Each Dual Agency Agreement contains the names of both the seller client(s) and the buyer client(s) and identifies the property.

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Designated Agency

In designated agency, a broker-in-charge may designate individual associated licensees to act solely on behalf of each client. Designated agents are not limited by the brokerage firm's agency relationship with the other client, but instead have a duty to promote the best interest of their clients, including negotiating a price. The broker-in- charge remains a disclosed dual agent for both clients, and ensures the assigned agents fulfill their duties to their respective clients. At the time you sign an agency agreement, you may be asked to acknowledge whether you would consider giving written consent allowing the brokerage firm to designate a representative for you and one for the other client in a designated agency. Each Designated Agency Agreement contains the names of both the seller client(s) and the buyer client(s) and identifies the property.

It's Your Choice

As a real estate consumer in South Carolina, it is your choice as to the type and nature of services you receive.

- You can choose to remain a customer and represent yourself, with or without a transaction broker agreement.
- You can choose to hire the brokerage firm for representation through a written agency agreement.
- If represented by the brokerage firm, you can decide whether to go forward under the shared services of dual agency or designated agency or to remain in single agency.

If you plan to become a client of a brokerage firm, the licensee will explain the agreement to you fully and answer questions you may have about the agreement. Until you enter into a representation agreement with the brokerage firm, you are considered a customer and the brokerage firm cannot be your advocate, cannot advise you on price or terms, and only provides limited confidentiality unless a transaction broker agreement obligates the brokerage firm otherwise.

By signing this disclosure, you do not agree to pay a commission or any other compensation to a brokerage firm. The brokerage firm will not receive compensation from any source for showing homes or property to you as a customer without a separate written agreement. The amount, rate, and source of any compensation paid to a brokerage firm will be contained in a separate written agreement. The brokerage firm may not receive compensation from any source that exceeds the amount or rate agreed to in their agreement with a buyer or seller, except with full knowledge and written consent to all parties. Commissions are fully negotiable and not set by law.

The choice of service belongs to you -- the South Carolina Consumer.

Acknowledgement of Receipt:

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Brokerage Firm Name:

_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

This form has been approved by the South Carolina Real Estate Commission for use in explaining representation and compensation in real estate transactions and consumer rights as a buyer or seller. Reprinting without permission is permitted provided no changes or modifications are made.

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