

SECTION 13. INTERNET DATA EXCHANGE (IDX)

Section 13 – IDX Defined: IDX affords MLS participants the ability to authorize limited electronic display of their listings by other participants.

Section 13.1 Authorization: Participants' consent for display of their listings by other participants pursuant to these rules and regulations is presumed unless a participant affirmatively notifies the MLS that the participant refuses to permit display (either on a blanket or on a listing-by-listing basis). If a participant refuses 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have given blanket authority for other participants to display their listings on IDX sites, such consent may be withdrawn on a listing-by-listing basis where the seller has prohibited all Internet display.

Section 13.2 Participation: Participation in IDX is available to all MLS participants who consent to display of their listings by other participants. A non-principal broker or sales licensee (Subscriber) affiliated with a Participant may, with his or her Participant's consent, operate an IDX website. Any IDX website of a non-principal broker or sales licensee is subject to the Participant's oversight, supervision, and accountability. Unless expressly contravened by the provisions of this section, all other Rules and Regulations remain in full force and effort.

Section 13.2.1 Participants and subscribers must notify the MLS of their intention to display IDX information and must give the MLS direct access for purposes of monitoring/ensuring compliance with applicable rules and policies.

Section 13.2.2 MLS participants or subscribers may not use IDX-provided listings for any purpose other than display as provided for in these rules. This does not require participants to prevent indexing of IDX listings by recognized search engines.

Section 13.2.3 Listings, including property addresses, can be included in 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).

Section 13.2.4 Participants may select the listings they choose to display on their IDX sites 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), cooperative compensation offered by listing brokers, type of listing (e.g., exclusive right-to-sell or exclusive right of brokerage), or the level of service being provided by the listing firm. Selection of listings displayed on any IDX site must be independently made by each participant.

Section 13.2.5 Participants must refresh all MLS downloads and displays automatically fed by those downloads not less frequently than every 12 hours.

Section 13.2.6 Except as provided in the IDX policy and these rules, an IDX site or a participant or user operating an 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.

Section 13.2.7 Any 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 IDX policy and these rules, “control” means the ability to add, delete, modify and update information as required by the IDX policy and MLS rules.

Section 13.2.8 Any 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 13.2.9, a participant’s IDX display may communicate the participant’s professional judgment concerning any listing. Nothing shall prevent an IDX display from notifying its customers that a particular feature has been disabled at the request of the seller.

Section 13.2.9 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.

Section 13.2.10 An MLS Participant or 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 13.3 Display: Display of listing information pursuant to IDX is subject to the following rules:

Section 13.3.1 Listings displayed pursuant to 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., cooperative compensation offers, showing instructions, property security information, etc.) may not be displayed.

Section 13.3.1.1 The type of listing agreement (e.g., exclusive right to sell, exclusive right of brokerage, etc.) may not be displayed.

Section 13.3.2 Participants shall not modify or manipulate information relating to other participants' listings. (This is not a limitation on site design but refers to changes to actual listing data.) MLS data may be augmented with additional data not otherwise prohibited from display so long as the source of the additional data is clearly identified. This requirement does not restrict the format of MLS data display or display of fewer than all of the available listings or fewer authorized data fields.

Section 13.3.3 All listings displayed pursuant to IDX shall identify the listing firm in a reasonably prominent location and in a readily visible color and typeface not smaller than the median used in the display of listing data. 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.

Section 13.3.4 Non-principal brokers and sales licensees affiliated with IDX participants may display information available through IDX on their own websites subject to their participant's consent and control and the requirements of state law and/or regulation.

Section 13.3.5 All listings displayed pursuant to 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.

Section 13.3.6 Participants (and their affiliated licensees, if applicable) shall indicate on their websites that 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.

Section 13.3.7 The right to display other participants' listings pursuant to IDX shall be limited to a participant's office(s) holding participatory rights in this MLS.

Section 13.3.8 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.

Section 13.3.9 Display of expired, withdrawn, and pending listings is prohibited.

Section 13.3.10 Display of seller’s(s’) and/or occupant’s(s’) name(s), phone number(s), and e-mail address(es) is prohibited.

Section 13.3.11 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.

Section 13.4 3rd Party Advertising - Deceptive or misleading advertising (including co-branding) on pages displaying 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.

Section 13.5 Service Fees and Charges - Service fees and charges for participation in IDX shall be as established annually by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 14 – VIRTUAL OFFICE WEBSITES (VOWs)

Section 14.1 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 14 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 14.2

- 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 14.3

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, user name, 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 14.4

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 14.5

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.

Section 14.6

- 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 14.7

- 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 14.8

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 14.9

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

Section 14.10

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 14.11

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 14.12

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, type of property, cooperative compensation offered by listing broker, and whether the listing broker is a REALTOR[®].

Section 14.13

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 14.14

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 14.15

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

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

Section 14.16

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 14.17

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 14.18

A participant shall cause any listing that is displayed on his or her VOW to identify the name of the listing firm and the listing broker or agent 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.

Section 14.19

A participant shall limit the number of listings that a Registrant may view, retrieve, or download to not more than 1000 current listings and not more than 1000 sold listings in response to any inquiry.

Note: The number of listings that may be viewed, retrieved, or downloaded should be specified by the MLS in the context of this rule, but may not be fewer than one hundred (100) listings or five percent (5%) of the listings in the MLS, whichever is less.

Section 14.20

A participant shall require that Registrants' passwords be reconfirmed or changed every 90 days.

Note: The number of days passwords remain valid before being changed or reconfirmed must be specified by the MLS in the context of this rule and cannot be shorter than ninety (90)

days. Participants may, at their option, require Registrants to reconfirm or change passwords more frequently.

Section 14.21

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, co-branding 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 14.22

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 14.23

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 14.24

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

Section 14.25

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.