

Case Notes

Fraud and failure to comply with record-keeping requirements warranted license revocation and imposition of fines. *New Jersey Real Estate Commission v. Tumolo and Rossell*, 97 N.J.A.R.2d (REC) 1.

Revocation of real estate broker's license was justified. *New Jersey Real Estate Commission v. Roth*, 94 N.J.A.R.2d (REC) 17.

Commingling of funds, accounting failures, as well as other violations, warranted permanent revocation of broker/salesperson license and imposition of fine. *New Jersey Real Estate Commission v. Duffy*, 93 N.J.A.R.2d (REC) 13.

Commingling of funds, making misrepresentations to investigator, as well as other violations, warranted revocation of broker's license and imposition of fine. *New Jersey Real Estate Commission v. Eberhardt*, 92 N.J.A.R.2d (REC) 53.

Commingling trust monies and failing to maintain separate account for escrow funds, as well as other violations, warranted revocation of broker's license, suspension of salesperson's license, and assessment of fine. *New Jersey Real Estate Commission v. Woods*, 92 N.J.A.R.2d (REC) 25.

Failing to maintain as separate funds monies held as escrow agent, and other violations, warranted revocation of broker's license and assessment of fine. *New Jersey Real Estate Commission v. Brown*, 92 N.J.A.R.2d (REC) 21.

11:5-5.5 Inspection of records

(a) Every licensee shall make available for inspection by the Commission or its designated representatives all records of transactions, books of account, instruments, documents and forms utilized or maintained by such licensee in the conduct of the licensed business, which may be pertinent to the conduct of the investigation of any specific complaint.

(b) To accomplish the objectives and carry out the duties prescribed by this Act, especially the provisions of N.J.S.A. 45:15-17, the Commission may issue subpoenas to any person, administer an oath or affirmation to any person, and conduct hearings in aid of any investigation or inquiry.

(c) All files on pending and closed sale, exchange or lease transactions, all files on listings for sales or rentals, and all property management files shall be maintained or stored at the offices of brokers licensed as employing brokers or corporate or partnership brokers. Upon terminating their employment with such a broker, and/or transferring to the employ of another such broker, no salesperson or broker-salesperson shall remove or cause to be removed any of the contents of such files from the offices of the broker. The term "files" as used herein shall be construed to mean all transaction records required to be kept by brokers pursuant to N.J.A.C. 11:5-5.4.

As amended, R.1983 d.471, effective November 7, 1983.

See: 15 N.J.R. 1343(a), 15 N.J.R. 1865(c).

Language citing statute deleted in subsection (a).

Amended by R.1988 d.410, effective September 6, 1988.

See: 20 N.J.R. 883(a), 20 N.J.R. 2295(a).

Added (c).

Petition for Rulemaking: Upon termination from employment with a broker, no salesperson or broker salesperson may remove files from the office pertaining to sale or rental listings.

See: 23 N.J.R. 1968(e).

Public Notice: Petition to amend subsection (c).

See: 23 N.J.R. 2191(b).

Amended by R.1992 d.107, effective March 2, 1992.

See: 23 N.J.R. 3428(a), 23 N.J.R. 3739(a), 24 N.J.R. 852(b).

Meaning of "files" specified at (c).

Amended by R.1998 d.497, effective October 5, 1998.

See: 30 N.J.R. 2333(a), 30 N.J.R. 3646(a).

In (b), deleted ", in addition to other powers conferred upon it by the Act" following "Commission"; and in (c), changed N.J.A.C. reference.

Case Notes

Real estate licensing law exemption for attorneys held only to authorize attorneys to sell or rent real estate incidental to their normal practice of law; denial of broker's license to attorney who did not meet statutory apprenticeship and testing requirements upheld. *Spirito v. State, New Jersey Real Estate Commission*, 180 N.J.Super. 180, 434 A.2d 623 (App.Div.1981).

SUBCHAPTER 6. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**11:5-6.1 Advertising rules**

(a) Unless otherwise set forth herein, subsections (b) through (n) below shall apply to all categories of advertising including all publications, radio or television broadcasts, all electronic media including E-mail and the Internet, business stationery, business cards, business and legal forms and documents, and signs and billboards.

1. Individuals operating as sole proprietors and licensed as employing brokers shall conspicuously display on the exterior of their maintained place of business their name and the words "Licensed Real Estate Broker".

2. Firms licensed as corporate or partnership brokers shall conspicuously display on the exterior of their maintained place of business their regular business name and the name of the individual licensed as their broker of record and the words "Licensed Real Estate Broker".

(b) All advertising of any licensed individual, partnership, firm, or corporate broker shall include their regular business name which for the purposes of these rules, shall mean the name in which that individual, partnership, firm or corporation is on record with the Commission as doing business as a real estate broker. All advertising by a salesperson or broker-salesperson shall include the name in which they are licensed and the regular business name of the individual, partnership, firm or corporate broker through whom they are licensed. If such advertisements contain a reference to the licensed status of the person placing the ad, their status as a salesperson or broker-salesperson must be indicated through inclusion of a descriptive term as provided in (e) below. A salesperson may not indicate in any advertisement or otherwise that he or she is licensed as a broker-salesperson.

1. With the exception of business cards, in all advertisements which contain the name of a salesperson or broker-salesperson the regular business name of the individual, partnership, firm or corporate broker through whom that

person is licensed shall appear in larger print or be displayed in a more prominent manner than the name of the salesperson or broker-salesperson.

2. Where a webpage on the worldwide web established by a salesperson, a broker-salesperson, or a team of such licensees is not linked electronically to the webpage of the broker through whom the person or team is licensed, the webpage shall display the telephone number and may display the street address of the licensed brokerage office from which the individual or team operates as real estate licensees. That information shall appear in wording as large as the predominant size wording on the webpage.

3. Where a webpage of an individual or team is linked electronically to the webpage of the broker through whom such person or persons are licensed, the webpage of the nonbroker licensee(s) shall display information which clearly indicates how to link to the broker. That information shall appear in wording as large as the predominant size wording on the webpage.

(c) All advertising, with the exception of lawn signs placed on residential properties containing four or fewer units, shall clearly indicate after the licensee's regular business name that the advertising licensee is engaged in the real estate brokerage business. Except as prescribed by N.J.S.A. 45:15-17(j), examples of permissible language shall include, but are not limited to, "Realtor," "Realtist," "real estate broker," "broker," or "real estate agency". Examples of prohibited language when used alone shall include, but are not limited to, "realty," "real estate," "land sales," and "land investments." This provision shall not apply when the word "agency" appears in the advertisement as part of the licensee's regular business name or when the licensee has legal or equitable ownership of the property.

(d) With the exception of business cards, any advertising which contains a home telephone number, cell-phone number, beeper or pager number, home fax number, or E-mail address of an individual salesperson or broker-salesperson, or a team of such licensees, shall also include the telephone number and may include the street address of the licensed brokerage office from which the advertising licensee(s) operate. All such advertising shall also contain language identifying each number included in the advertising. For example, a home telephone number may be followed or preceded by the word "home" or the abbreviation "res."

1. No advertising shall represent that a location is a place at which the business of a real estate licensee is conducted unless that location is the licensed main office or a licensed branch office of the broker through whom the advertising licensee is licensed. Salespersons and broker-salespersons shall not include in their advertisements any reference to a "home office."

(e) The business card of any licensed salesperson shall indicate that this licensee is a salesperson by the use of the words salesperson or sales representative, or sales associate, or where permitted by law, realtor-associate or realtist associate. The business card of any licensed broker-salesperson shall indicate that this licensee is a broker-salesperson by the use of any of the aforementioned words or by the use of the words broker-salesperson. The business card of any licensed broker shall indicate that this licensee is a broker by use of the word broker or, where permitted by law, Realtor or Realtist.

(f) Any advertising which refers to amounts of down payment, monthly payment, or carrying charges, or which indicates that a mortgage is obtainable (where the mortgage referred to is not already a lien against the premises advertised), shall contain the words "to a qualified buyer".

(g) Any advertisement which sets forth amounts of down payment, monthly payment, carrying charges, taxes or mortgage money obtainable shall contain appropriate qualifying words such as "approximate" or "estimated," which qualifying words shall be clearly associated with the amounts set forth. If such amounts are mentioned the broker shall maintain written proof of the validity of these statements in the broker's files. Such written proof shall be maintained for a period of 12 months from the date upon which an advertisement containing such unqualified references shall have last appeared in any publication.

(h) With the exception of magazine or newspaper advertisements published under municipality headings, any advertisement for the sale, exchange or rental of real property, or any interest therein, shall designate the geographical area containing that property by specifying the municipality within which that property is located.

(i) No licensed individual, limited or general partnership, firm or corporation shall advertise or use any form of application or make any inquiry which expresses directly or indirectly any limitation, specification or discrimination as to race, religion, creed, color, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry or as to whether a person is handicapped as that term is defined in N.J.A.C. 11:5-6.4(h).

(j) Any use of an insignia, emblem, logo, trade name or other form of identification in any advertising or other public utterance, either by a single licensee or any group of licensees, which suggests or otherwise implies common ownership or common management among such licensees, shall be prohibited except in the case of branch offices controlled by a single broker or licensee and duly licensed as branch offices pursuant to the provision of N.J.S.A. 45:1-1 et seq. Nothing herein provided is intended to preclude or inhibit the use, advertising or display of any insignia, emblem, logo or trade name of any bona fide trade association by any licensee provided that such licensee is a member of such trade association.

1. Any franchised licensee using in any advertising the trade name of a franchisor shall include in such advertising in a manner reasonably calculated to attract the attention of the public the franchised licensee's regular business name.

2. Any licensee including the franchisor using the trade name of franchisor in any advertising shall also include in a manner reasonably calculated to attract the attention of the public the following legend or a substantially similar legend: "each office is independently owned and operated", except in the following categories of advertising:

i. "For sale" signs located on the premises of specific properties for sale;

ii. Small "spot" classified advertising by a licensee in newspapers, magazines or other publications advertising properties. A small spot classified advertisement is defined as an advertisement which is no more than one column wide and 20 lines long and which describes no more than two properties; a line is defined as a standard newspaper classified advertising line of the newspaper, magazine or other publication in which the advertisement is published;

iii. Business cards; and

iv. Advertising placed or distributed by offices which are wholly owned by the franchisor, which contains the office address and contains language which identifies the office as being wholly owned or the franchisor.

3. The intent of this subsection is to further promote the general purpose of the Real Estate License Act of ensuring that all individuals, firms or corporations are clearly identifiable to the public as the licensed brokers who are financially and otherwise responsible to the consuming public for their real estate brokerage activities. It is not the intent of this subsection to limit or otherwise inhibit the operation of branch offices as set forth in N.J.S.A. 45:15-12 and sections 18 and 19 of this subchapter, nor is it the intent of this subsection to prevent the franchising of any group of licensees provided such franchising or other association is not inconsistent with the purpose of the Real Estate License Act as expressed herein.

(k) Any advertising by any licensed individual, partnership, firm or corporation referring generally to membership in any real estate multiple listing service operation shall specify the complete name of the listing service in which membership is held, except in the following categories of advertising:

1. "For sale" signs and small "spot" classified advertising of any licensee as described in (j) above;

2. Business cards;

3. All business signs.

(l) Any home warranty offer contained in any advertisement shall comply with all Federal and State warranty legislation, including the New Home Warranty and Builder's Registration Act, c.467, L.1977, N.J.S.A. 46:3B-1, et seq., and the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act, P.L. 93-637, 15 U.S.C. 2301 et seq. Such advertising shall specify clearly whether the warranty is by inspection or non-inspection of the premises, whether the warranty is mandatory, and whether the purchaser or the seller is responsible for payment for the warranty. No advertisement shall contain an offer for a warranty unless a warranty may be secured for the property being advertised.

(m) Except as herein provided, no free offering, including the offering of a free appraisal, shall be made in any advertisement or promotional material. "Appraisal" as used herein is given its technical meaning as a complete study and analysis by a certified or licensed appraiser to ascertain fair market value by using a process in which all factors that would fix price in the market place must be considered.

1. Nothing herein shall be construed as prohibiting the use of such words as "included" or "included in the purchase price" in reference to items included by the owner in the sale of any real property or interest therein.

2. Free offerings ancillary to the real estate transaction process and that are informational or educational in nature, including, but not limited to, offerings of market studies or seminars, and offerings in the nature of promotional items of token value, such as calendars or pens, are not prohibited. A market study is not an appraisal as herein defined.

i. The prohibition upon licensees from making free offerings of items of more than token value applies to all offerings which confer upon consumers a monetary benefit of a value of more than \$5.00 retail. Examples of prohibited free offerings include free or subsidized homeowners warranties, property, radon and pest inspections, surveys, mortgage fees, offers to pay other costs typically incurred by parties to real estate transactions, and coupons offering discounts on commissions charged by brokerage firms.

ii. Any written comparative market study or analysis (CMA) provided by a licensee to a consumer shall include a statement indicating that the CMA is not an appraisal and should not be considered the equivalent of an appraisal. The said statement shall appear in print as large as the predominant size print in any writing reporting the results of the CMA.

(n) No licensee shall publish or cause to be published any advertisement or place any sign which makes reference to the availability of a specific property which is exclusively listed for sale by another broker unless the licensee obtains the prior written consent of the broker with whom the property is exclusively listed. Such consent shall not be given

or withheld by the listing broker without the knowledge of the owner.

1. With regard to information on listings disseminated through the Internet by licensees other than the listing broker, listing brokers shall be deemed to have given the consent referred to in (n) above with the knowledge of the owner where:

i. A written listing agreement contains the seller's authorization for information on the listing to be posted on the website of the broker, or of a multiple listing service to which the broker belongs, or of another party to which the broker or such an MLS submits information on listings; and

ii. The website on which the listing information shall initially appear has instituted no measures to prevent other parties with websites from utilizing an electronic link to enable consumers to view that information while remaining in the website of the other party.

As amended, R.1976 d.276, effective August 31, 1976.

See: 8 N.J.R. 387(a), 8 N.J.R. 482(a).

As amended, R.1977 d.84, effective March 10, 1977.

See: 9 N.J.R. 91(d), 9 N.J.R. 178(a).

As amended, R.1978 d.42, effective January 31, 1978.

See: 9 N.J.R. 534(c), 10 N.J.R. 116(c).

As amended, R.1979 d.461, effective November 26, 1979.

See: 10 N.J.R. 499(a), 12 N.J.R. 44(b).

As amended, R.1980 d.52, effective January 31, 1980.

See: 12 N.J.R. 44(a), 12 N.J.R. 128(a).

As amended, R.1980 d.213, effective May 14, 1980.

See: 12 N.J.R. 44(a), 12 N.J.R. 343(a).

As amended, R.1980 d.279, effective June 26, 1980.

See: 12 N.J.R. 340(b), 12 N.J.R. 484(d).

As amended, R.1983 d.471, effective November 7, 1983.

See: 15 N.J.R. 1343(a), 15 N.J.R. 1865(c).

Time limits on compliance deleted.

As amended, R.1986 d.91, effective April 7, 1986.

See: 17 N.J.R. 666(a), 18 N.J.R. 699(a).

(m)3-5. deleted.

Amended by R.1987 d.69, effective January 20, 1987.

See: 18 N.J.R. 1679(a), 19 N.J.R. 232(b).

Amended (d) and (e).

Petition: Notice of Action upon petition for Declaratory Ruling and/or

Rulemaking limiting the scope of Advertising Rules.

See: 19 N.J.R. 570(d), 19 N.J.R. 664(a).

Amended by R.1988 d.237, effective June 6, 1988.

See: 20 N.J.R. 497(a), 20 N.J.R. 1205(a).

Substantially amended subsection (j).

Amended by R.1989 d.447, effective August 21, 1989.

See: 21 N.J.R. 1312(a), 21 N.J.R. 2552(b).

Exempted residential lawn sign advertisement for properties of four or fewer units, corrected spelling of realtor and added new (n) regarding consent of exclusive listing broker.

Amended by R.1993 d.9, effective January 4, 1993 (operative May 4, 1993).

See: 24 N.J.R. 3484(a), 25 N.J.R. 178(b).

Requirements for signs, cards, etc. amended to show name of broker, identified as such.

Amended by R.1994 d.266, effective June 20, 1994 (operative July 1, 1994).

See: 26 N.J.R. 729(a), 26 N.J.R. 1194(a), 26 N.J.R. 1222(a), 26 N.J.R. 2581(b).

Amended by R.1997 d.26, effective January 21, 1997.

See: 28 N.J.R. 3064(a), 29 N.J.R. 365(a).

In (l), inserted reference to the seller regarding warranty payment; in (m)2, inserted reference to informational or educational; and added (m)2i.

Amended by R.1998 d.246, effective May 18, 1998.

See: 30 N.J.R. 278(a), 30 N.J.R. 1827(a).

In (a), inserted "all electronic media including E-mail and the Internet," in the introductory paragraph; in (b), added new 1 through 3; rewrote (d); and in (m), substituted "certified or licensed appraiser" for "specialist or expert" in the introductory paragraph, added ", and coupons offering discounts on commissions charged by brokerage firms" at the end of li, and inserted a new lii.

Amended by R.1998 d.497, effective October 5, 1998.

See: 30 N.J.R. 2333(a), 30 N.J.R. 3646(a).

In (g), deleted "without qualification," following "mentioned" in the second sentence; and in (i), changed N.J.A.C. reference.

Amended by R.2000 d.223, effective June 19, 2000 (operative September 17, 2000).

See: 31 N.J.R. 2678(a), 32 N.J.R. 2242(b).

In (n), added 1.

Case Notes

New Jersey Land Sales Full Disclosure Act discriminated in its plain effect against interstate commerce and violated dormant commerce clause. *Old Coach Development Corp., Inc. v. Tanzman, C.A.3 (N.J.)1989, 881 F.2d 1227.*

Barring real estate broker's merchandise coupon program pursuant to statute was not improper regulation of competition. *Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate Services, Inc. v. New Jersey Real Estate Com'n, 242 N.J.Super. 354, 576 A.2d 938 (A.D.1990).*

Statute prohibiting real estate brokers from using promotions involving "prizes" did not deprive broker that wished to use merchandise coupon program of property without due process. *Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate Services, Inc. v. New Jersey Real Estate Com'n, 242 N.J.Super. 354, 576 A.2d 938 (A.D.1990).*

Commingling trust monies and failing to maintain separate account for escrow funds, as well as other violations, warranted revocation of broker's license, suspension of salesperson's license, and assessment of fine. *New Jersey Real Estate Commission v. Woods. 92 N.J.A.R.2d (REC) 25.*

11:5-6.2 Contracts of sale, leases and listing agreements

(a) The following paragraphs specify licensees' obligations to obtain written confirmation of the intentions of, and to deliver copies of documents to, parties to a real estate transaction.

1. Where a licensee memorializes the terms of an offer or counter-offer on a writing which will itself become an "instrument" as defined in (a)3 below, the licensee shall deliver to the maker of such an offer or counter-offer a clear copy of the executed offer or counter-offer immediately upon its being signed, and initialed if necessary as provided in this section, by the maker of the offer or counter-offer. Any addition, deletion, or other change in any such offer or counter-offer shall be initialed by the party proposing such a revision and, if accepted, by the other party to the transaction.

2. Where a licensee records the terms of an offer or counter-offer on a writing which is not intended to be binding upon either party, and which so states on its face, in the event that the licensee secures the signature and/or initials of any party on such a writing, the licensee shall provide to the signing and/or initialing party a clear copy of the writing as signed and/or initialed by them.