

MEMBERSHIP MARKS MANUAL

For Associations



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS®

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The REALTOR® Marks	4
What is a Trademark?	4
The Definition of REALTOR®	5
The License Granted by NAR to Associations	6
NAR's Three Main Trademark Rules	7
<i>The REALTOR® Marks Must Be Properly Formatted</i>	7
<i>Descriptive Wording May Not Be Used with the REALTOR® Marks</i>	8
<i>All Contextual Uses of the REALTOR® Marks Must Tie Back to Membership</i>	9
Email Addresses, Domain Names and Usernames	11
Proper Use of the REALTOR® Logo	13
<i>The REALTOR® Identifier Must Be Included</i>	13
<i>Proper Coloring of the REALTOR® Logo</i>	14
<i>REALTOR® Logo Backgrounds</i>	15
<i>Area of Isolation</i>	15
<i>Sizing and Spacing Requirements</i>	16
<i>Do Not Alter the REALTOR® Logo</i>	17

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Special Uses of the REALTOR® Marks	18
<i>MLS REALTOR® Logo</i>	18
<i>Charity, Foundation, Program, Publication, Activity, Political Initiative and Chapter Names</i>	18
<i>License Plates</i>	19
<i>Merchandise</i>	20
<i>Use of the Marks in the Media</i>	20
<i>Use of the REALTOR® Logo in Architecture</i>	20
<i>Use of the REALTOR® Marks by Association Staff</i>	21
<i>Use of the REALTOR® Marks with Association Services Generally</i>	21
Associations' Role in NAR's Trademark Protection and Enforcement Program	22
<i>Educating Members</i>	22
<i>Addressing Misuses of the REALTOR® Marks by Individuals</i>	22
<i>Addressing Members' Misuse of the REALTOR® Marks in Business Names, Domain Names, and Email Addresses</i>	23
<i>Misuse of the REALTOR® Marks by Companies</i>	24
<i>Non-Compliance with Enforcement Letters</i>	24
NAR Trademark Contact Information	25
Frequently Asked Questions	26

THE REALTOR® MARKS

For over 100 years, the REALTOR®, REALTORS®, REALTOR ASSOCIATE®, and REALTOR® Logo trademarks (the “REALTOR® Marks”) have differentiated members of the National Association of REALTORS® (“NAR”) from non-member real estate professionals. **REALTOR® has one meaning**, a member of NAR, and indicates a real estate professional’s pledge to adhere to NAR’s strict Code of Ethics. The REALTOR® Marks also signify NAR members’ commitment to protecting clients, the public, and other real estate professionals, as well as to conducting business with integrity, and providing high standards of real estate services.

The REALTOR® Marks are protected by federal law, and NAR’s Trademark Rules are designed to protect and promote the special meaning of the REALTOR® Marks, ensuring that the REALTOR® brand remains a valuable membership benefit. This manual sets forth NAR’s Trademark Rules in detail to help Associations understand how to properly use the Marks while promoting and offering their various services and products. We hope this manual becomes a valuable tool!

Check out NAR’s *Membership Marks Manual for Members* for more information on the application of NAR’s Trademark Rules to members’ use of the REALTOR® Marks.

WHAT IS A TRADEMARK?

A trademark is a term or design that communicates the source of the products or services bearing the trademark. Over time, trademarks become associated with standards of quality or care relied on by the public.

The REALTOR® Marks are collective membership marks, which is a type of trademark that is used to indicate membership in that group. In this case, the use of REALTOR® by a real estate professional indicates that they are a member of NAR. Thus, non-members are not permitted to use the REALTOR® Marks.

A trademark owner is legally obligated to ensure its trademarks are used properly and only by authorized third parties. If a trademark owner fails to police use of its trademarks, the protection afforded to it by federal law may be lost forever. The words “escalator” and “aspirin” were once valuable brands, but due to a lack of care, vigilance, and public promotion, these terms lost their distinctive protectable qualities and are now words of ordinary use. This is why it is vital that NAR ensure members’ use of the REALTOR® Marks is proper and enforce against unauthorized uses by third parties.

THE DEFINITION OF REALTOR®

REALTOR® has one meaning only: REALTOR® is a federally registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

In other words, REALTOR® means member of the National Association of REALTORS®. The REALTOR® Marks may not be used to connote a profession or title.

It’s important to ensure that your Association’s contextual use of the REALTOR® Marks conveys this special meaning. Use the “Member Test” to determine if a contextual use is proper. Simply substitute the word “member” for “REALTOR®” and objectively determine if the sentence conveys your original meaning. Check out [pages 9-10](#) for more information on the Member Test and contextual uses of the REALTOR® Marks, including examples of proper and improper uses.

Tip: REALTOR® is pronounced as REAL-tore (re'al-tôr'). Consistent pronunciation contributes to preserving the special meaning of the Marks, so make sure you are pronouncing REALTOR® correctly.

THE LICENSE GRANTED BY NAR TO ASSOCIATIONS

NAR grants to state and local associations in good standing a limited license to use the REALTOR® Marks to indicate their affiliation with NAR, subject to NAR's Trademark Rules. Keep the following in mind when using the REALTOR® Marks.

- Associations may use “REALTORS®” in their name only with NAR's prior written authorization, which is routinely granted. If an association wishes to change its name or to adopt a DBA, the association must seek prior written approval from NAR. More information about obtaining NAR's authorization is available at <https://www.nar.realtor/about-nar/policies/procedure-for-approving-names-of-associations>.
- NAR's Trademark Rules prohibit the use of descriptive wording with the REALTOR® Marks, including geographic locations; however, Associations may use descriptive wording with the REALTOR® Marks in DBAs, subject to NAR's prior written approval as noted above.
- Associations' use of the REALTOR® Logo must be in connection with its services, products and activities, and the Logo must appear in close connection with the Association's name.
- An Association's license to use the REALTOR® Marks automatically terminates when that entity ceases to be an active association of NAR in good standing.



NAR'S THREE MAIN TRADEMARK RULES

The meaning of REALTOR® is supported by **three main rules**:

1. The REALTOR® Marks must be formatted properly.
2. Descriptive wording may not be used with the REALTOR® Marks.
3. All contextual uses of the REALTOR® Marks must tie back to membership in NAR.

1. THE REALTOR® MARKS MUST BE PROPERLY FORMATTED.

Proper formatting of the REALTOR® Marks conveys to others that REALTOR® is a trademark and therefore has a special meaning. Keep in mind the following formatting when using the REALTOR® Marks:

Whenever possible, always display the REALTOR® word marks in all uppercase lettering with the trademark registration symbol:

REALTOR® **REALTORS®**

If this formatting is not possible, then the REALTOR® Marks may be formatted one of the following ways:

- With a capitalized letter R and the trademark registration symbol ®:

Realtor® **Realtors®**

- In all uppercase letters without the trademark registration symbol ®:

REALTOR **REALTORS**

The font Futura Black may not be used to display the REALTOR® word marks or wording adjacent to the REALTOR® Logo. The “R” in the Block portion of the REALTOR® Logo is Futura Black, and other uses of this font with the REALTOR® Marks detract from and compete with the REALTOR® Logo.

REALTOR®



The REALTOR® Marks may never appear in all lowercase letters. The only exception to this is in domain names, email addresses, and usernames, such as social media usernames, because capitalization is not typically recognized. See [pages 11-12](#) for more information on use in domain names, email addresses, and usernames.



Associations may not misspell, reconstruct, expand, abbreviate or divide the REALTOR® Marks. The following are examples of prohibited uses of the REALTOR® Marks:

REAL-I-TOR

REALTORiffic

RLTR.

R-E-A-L-T-O-R-S

REALTOR® - Assistant

REALTER

REALTOR-rent of Homes

The formatting rules for the REALTOR® Logo are explained on [pages 13-17](#).

2. DESCRIPTIVE WORDING MAY NOT BE USED WITH THE REALTOR® MARKS.

Apart from approved association names and DBAs, NAR's Bylaws prohibit the use of descriptive wording with the REALTOR® Marks. The REALTOR® Marks are intended to distinguish *members* from *non-members*. Using descriptive wording with the REALTOR® Marks has the improper effect of distinguishing between members. Prohibited descriptive wording includes geographic descriptors, adjectives, and words such as "my," "your", and "the".

Professional REALTORS®

Jane the REALTOR®

Top Chicago REALTOR®

www.bestrealtor.com

Hometown REALTOR®

steve@number1realtor.com

3. ALL CONTEXTUAL USES OF THE REALTOR® MARKS MUST TIE BACK TO MEMBERSHIP.

Contextual uses of the REALTOR® Marks must always clearly convey that REALTOR® means member of NAR by directly referring back to membership in NAR or a state or local association. The REALTOR® Marks may never be used to denote a vocation or business.

Tip: If you are using the REALTOR® Marks contextually in any public-facing written material, the meaning of REALTOR® must appear at the bottom of the page on which the term REALTOR® is first used. For example, you may use one of the following options:

REALTOR® is a federally registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is member of the National Association of REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

REALTOR® means member of the National Association of REALTORS®

Use **NAR's Member Test** to determine whether a contextual use is proper. Simply replace the term "REALTOR®" with "member" and objectively determine if the sentence conveys the correct meaning. Keep in mind that it doesn't matter if you intend to refer to NAR members. The sentence on its own must clearly convey the correct meaning of REALTOR®.

Tip: If you determine that the sentence does not pass the Member Test, but you are truly referring to members of NAR, then simply replace the REALTOR® Marks with "members of NAR" or "NAR members."

Proper Contextual Use:



How many REALTORS® will be at the state association meeting today?

This sentence passes the Member Test because REALTORS® is used in a context that directly relates to association activities. Thus, the use of REALTORS® in this sentence is proper.

Incorrect Contextual Uses:



John Doe is a lawyer and licensed REALTOR®.

Substituting “member” shows that this use of REALTOR® does not pass the Member Test. Listing REALTOR® along with a separate vocation implies that being a REALTOR® is a vocation, which is not the case. Also, licensure is unrelated to membership in NAR, further emphasizing that this sentence is likely referring to the vocation of real estate professional. The sentence should instead read:



John Doe is a lawyer and licensed real estate professional.



Sunshine Realty: Builders – REALTORS® – Insurers

Use of the term "REALTOR®" here does not pass the Member Test because REALTOR® is being improperly used to refer to an occupation. The REALTOR® Marks may not be used in conjunction with other occupations because consumers would likely read this as three job titles. The following should be used instead:



Sunshine Realty: Builders – Real Estate Agents – Insurers

EMAIL ADDRESSES, DOMAIN NAMES AND USERNAMES

Email addresses, domain names and usernames, including social media usernames, that incorporate the REALTOR® Marks must comply with NAR's Trademark Rules, with **two notable exceptions:**

1. the REALTOR® Marks may appear in lowercase lettering because email addresses, domain names and usernames are not typically capitalized; and
2. separating punctuation and the registration symbol ® may be omitted because such formatting is typically not available in email addresses, domain names and usernames.

Keep in mind that all other trademark rules still apply, including those listed in the Manual for members. The REALTOR® Marks must be used in connection with the Association's name or, in the case of members, the member's personal name or brokerage name. Also, descriptive language may not be used with the REALTOR® Marks.

This means that when an Association uses the REALTOR® Marks in email addresses, domain names and usernames, the Marks may only appear:

1. within the Association's name; and
2. within a program title that complies with NAR's Trademark Rules ([see pages 18-19](#));

The REALTOR® Marks may not appear next to other wording.

Proper Email Addresses, Domain Names and Usernames:

pleasantvalleyassociationofrealtors.com

lakesiderealtors.com when the association's name is Lakeside REALTORS®

ae@riversiderealtors.com when the association's name is Riverside REALTORS®



The above are proper because REALTORS® only appears within the Association's name. The REALTOR® Marks do not appear adjacent to descriptive wording.

Improper Email Addresses, Domain Names and Usernames for Association Staff:



sarahrealtor@lakesiderealtors.com

This email address is improper for staff member Sarah because the REALTOR® Marks may not be used in connection with a staff member's personal name. While staff are an integral part of the REALTOR® family, use of the REALTOR® membership marks by an individual is reserved only for members.



sarah@lakesiderealtors.com would be an appropriate email address for a staff member of an Association with the name Lakeside REALTORS®.



PROPER USE OF THE REALTOR® LOGO



NAR established special formatting rules for the REALTOR® Logo to ensure it is always used in a consistent and uniform manner, which preserves the special meaning associated with the Logo.

Tip: Only use the downloadable files of the REALTOR® Logo available on nar.realtor/trademark. Associations may not attempt to reconstruct or create the REALTOR® Logo on their own.

THE REALTOR® IDENTIFIER MUST BE INCLUDED

The REALTOR® Logo must always include the REALTOR® identifier underneath the Block "R", as shown above. An Association may use the Block "R" alone without the identifier only with the advanced written permission of the NAR Legal Affairs Team. An Association may send such request to trademark@nar.realtor. Each request is considered on its own merit. Typically, however, permission is granted when the requested use is: (1) limited in scope and duration, or (2) not prominent, for example, a book shelf shaped like the Block "R" in the Association's office.

PRIOR WRITTEN PERMISSION REQUIRED



Associations may not replace the REALTOR® designation with other wording.



PROPER COLORING OF THE REALTOR® LOGO

The block and the REALTOR® identifier must always be the same color. The “R” in the box portion of the REALTOR® Logo (the “stylized ‘R’”) must always be the same color as the background on which the Logo is placed. The Logo may be placed on any solid-color background as long as the color contrasts sharply with the color of the rectangular block and REALTOR® identifier.

Tip: The official colors of the REALTOR® Logo are REALTOR® Blue (Pantone Matching System number 293) for the block and REALTOR® identifier and REALTOR® Gold (Pantone Matching System number 873) for the stylized “R”. If these colors are used for the REALTOR® Logo, then the Logo may be displayed on any background color. Keep in mind that if REALTOR® Gold is used for the stylized “R,” then REALTOR® Blue must be used for the block and REALTOR® identifier.



REALTOR® LOGO BACKGROUNDS

The REALTOR® Logo may only be displayed over a solid-colored background.



The REALTOR® Logo may not be superimposed over an image or patterned background.



AREA OF ISOLATION

The REALTOR® Logo must always be surrounded by an “area of isolation” that is equal to half the width of the block. No other wording or design elements may appear within the area of isolation in order to enhance the distinctiveness and recognizability of the REALTOR® Logo.



The REALTOR® Logo may not be framed or surrounded with a border that violates the area of isolation.



Tip: The area of isolation applies to borders, such as the edge of a piece of paper on which the Logo appears or the border of an online banner advertisement including the Logo. The REALTOR® Logo must be separated from these edges or borders by an appropriately sized area of isolation.

SIZING AND SPACING REQUIREMENTS

All elements of the REALTOR® Logo must remain clearly readable. Associations must also maintain the same relative proportions and spacing of the REALTOR® Logo, with one exception: associations may increase the size of the trademark registration symbol ® as necessary to ensure its readability.



For example, the REALTOR® designation in the following Logo is not readable, so this is an **improper use** of the REALTOR® Logo:



Here, the trademark registration symbol ® in this display of the REALTOR® Logo is unreadable. Therefore, this is an **improper use** of the REALTOR® Logo.



Here, the trademark registration symbol ® is properly increased in size to ensure it is readable:



Tip: The width of the REALTOR® Logo should never be smaller than **0.375 inches** or **20 pixels**. If the REALTOR® Logo is enlarged to more than three feet in width, then the registration symbol must be readable at a distance of 20 feet.

DO NOT ALTER THE REALTOR® LOGO

Members may not alter or modify the REALTOR® Logo, including removing elements of the Logo, using the Logo to create new designs, distorting the Logo, or tilting the Logo.



The REALTOR® Logo also may not be used as the letter “R” in a word or a phrase.

**RON'S
REALTY**

**R ED
IVER
EALTY**

SPECIAL USES OF THE REALTOR® MARKS

MLS REALTOR® LOGO:



An MLS operated by an Association may use the MLS Service Mark shown here. More information on the MLS Service Mark may be found in Part Two Section C of the [NAR's Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy](#) under "Registered Multiple Listing Service Mark of the National Association of REALTORS®".

Charity, Foundation, Program, Publication, Activity, Political Initiative and Chapter Names:

Associations may include the REALTOR® Marks in the names for charities, foundations, programs, publications, activities, chapters, political initiatives and the like ("Program Names"), provided that the Association directly owns or operates the underlying initiative, and that the Association's name immediately precedes, follows or is otherwise included in the Program Name. This applies to each time the Program Name is used, including within domain names. Associations may comply with this rule by incorporating their name into the Program Name or by including the following or similar language after the Program Name: "a service of the (association name)."

A third party may not use the REALTOR® Marks in a Program Name even if they have partnered with an association.

Proper Program Names:

Riverside REALTORS® Care

This Program Name is proper because the Association's name, Riverside REALTORS®, is included directly in the Program Name.

REALTORS® Care, a charity of the Lakeside Association of REALTORS®.

This Program Name is proper because the Association's name immediately follows the Program Name via the language "a charity of the Lakeside Association of REALTORS®." This language must be used every time the Program Name is used.

Incorrect Program Names:

REALTORS® Care

This name is incorrect because the Association's name is omitted. The Association's name must immediately precede, follow or otherwise be included in a Program Name that includes the REALTOR® Marks.

Cloud County REALTORS® Foundation

This name is incorrect because the sponsoring association's name is "Cloud County Association of REALTORS®." The name actually used by the Association must immediately precede, follow or otherwise be included in the Program Name.

License Plates:

Occasionally, Associations may wish to offer REALTOR®-branded license plates to members. Such license plates featuring the REALTOR® Marks must be pre-approved in writing by NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor. While each license plate design will be considered on a case-by-case basis, license plates featuring the REALTOR® Marks may be approved if:

1. The name of the Association and the REALTOR® Logo are featured on the license plate. In this scenario, use of the REALTOR® Marks is connected to the Association's name instead of the owner of the car. Therefore, it is not necessary for the Association to restrict use of the license plates to active members only.
2. The REALTOR® Mark or Logo is featured alone and use of the license plate is restricted to active members of the Association only. In this scenario, the Association must ensure only active members are using the license plates featuring the REALTOR® Marks because non-members are not authorized to use the REALTOR® Marks.

Keep in mind that the other Trademark Rules still apply to use of the REALTOR® Marks on license plates with one exception: an area of isolation is not required for the REALTOR® Logo because the space limitations on a license plate often do not permit for one.

Merchandise:

Associations must restrict the sale or distribution of merchandise bearing the REALTOR® Marks to members only. If the merchandise is available to non-members, then any REALTOR®-branded merchandise must also include the Association's name.

Use of the Marks in the Media:

Most newspapers and publications follow either the Associated Press (AP) Style Book or the United Press International (UPI) Style Book. These style books treat trademarks as proper nouns and do not require use of the trademark registration symbol ®. Associations may therefore format the Marks in accordance with the AP or UPI style guidelines in press releases as follows: Realtor. Keep in mind that the REALTOR® Marks may only be used to refer to members of NAR. Make sure any press release that uses the REALTOR® Marks passes NAR's Member Test, explained on [pages 9-10](#).

Any press release that includes the REALTOR® Marks must include the meaning of the term REALTOR® at the bottom of the first page of the press release. Please see [page 9](#) for examples.

Use of the REALTOR® Logo in Architecture:

Associations may wish to use the REALTOR® Logo in architectural elements, such as embossing the Logo on the outside of a building wall, displaying a large version of the Logo on the floor of a lobby, or otherwise incorporating the Logo into building elements. Associations must obtain prior written authorization from NAR's Legal Affairs Team before proceeding with such designs. Requests may be directed to NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor.

Use of the REALTOR® Marks by Association Staff:

Association staff are an integral part of the REALTOR® family, and certain uses of the REALTOR® Marks by staff are acceptable, such as wearing or using REALTOR®-branded merchandise and wearing REALTOR® pins, while providing Association services.

Use of the REALTOR® Marks with Association Services generally:

Associations may only use the REALTOR® Marks in connection with authorized Association services and activities. Associations may not use the REALTOR® Marks in connection with services and activities for which the Association lacks authority under the Association's Bylaws or NAR's Constitution and Bylaws or which are otherwise illegal under federal, state or local laws or regulations.

ASSOCIATIONS' ROLE IN NAR'S TRADEMARK PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

NAR relies on Associations to support its Trademark Protection and Enforcement Program by educating members on proper use of the REALTOR® Marks and pursuing misuses of the Marks by individuals. In fact, NAR's Bylaws require Associations to cooperate and coordinate with NAR in protecting the REALTOR® Marks. To support these efforts, it's critical for Association staff to be familiar with NAR's Trademark Rules for Associations and members.

Educating Members

Associations are responsible for educating their members on proper use of the REALTOR® Marks in compliance with NAR's Trademark Rules, for example, by including trademark training during new member orientation. Checkout the following trademark education resources available to Associations at nar.realtor/mmm.

Addressing Misuses of the REALTOR® Marks by Individuals

When an Association learns of a misuse of the REALTOR® Marks by a member or non-member, the Association has a duty to address the misuse. The first step is to investigate the misuse and collect as much of the following information as possible:

- A copy, photo or screenshot of the alleged misuse.
- A description of when and where the misuse appeared.
- The person or business responsible for the misuse and corresponding contact information.

If you are uncertain whether a use is improper, please share the above details with NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor, and we will assist you in confirming next steps.

NAR has created template enforcement letters for Associations to use in addressing misuses. Downloadable Word document versions of the letters are available at <https://www.nar.realtor/membership-marks-manual/sample-letters>.

A copy of all correspondence sent or received by an Association relating to a misuse of the REALTOR® Marks should also be sent to NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor.

Misusers will often agree to correct misuses of the REALTOR® Marks. In that case, the Association should attempt to obtain the misuser's agreement to cease the misuse in writing. If a misuser agrees to comply orally, the Association should make a detailed record describing the situation, including the misuser's name, contact information, summary of the discussion, and date of conversation.

While NAR hopes Associations will address local misuses of the REALTOR® Marks, please always feel free to contact NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor for additional assistance.

Addressing Members' Misuse of the REALTOR® Marks in Business Names, Domain Names, and Email Addresses

The earlier a misuse is detected, the easier it is for a member to correct the misuse. That's why we strongly encourage Associations to review members' business names, email addresses, and domain names for misuses of the REALTOR® Marks when entering new member information into the REALTORS® M1 membership database, and contact them immediately if any misuses are discovered.

- **Business Names:** One of the most common misuses of the REALTOR® Marks by members is improperly including the Marks in their legal business name as filed with the Secretary of State, which is specifically prohibited by NAR's Bylaws. That said, members may use the REALTOR® Marks in connection with their personal name (Sarah Rodriguez, REALTOR®) and in connection with their brokerage name or DBA (Sunshine Realty, REALTORS®).

For example, if a member brokerage's legal name is "Sunshine Realty, Inc.," the REALTOR® Marks may be used in connection with the brokerage name: Sunshine Realty, REALTORS®. If the member brokerage adopts a DBA of "Sunshine", the REALTOR® Marks may be used with the DBA: Sunshine, REALTORS®. The business name "Sunshine REALTORS®, Inc." and DBA "Sunshine, REALTORS®" are both improper because they include the REALTOR® Marks.

This type of misuse is usually one of the easiest to correct. Members typically must file the appropriate paperwork with the relevant Secretary of State to remove the REALTOR® Marks from their registered business name or DBA. Check out page 5 in NAR's [Membership Marks Manual for Members](#) for more information about members' use of the REALTOR® Marks in connection with a business name.

- **Email addresses and Domain Names:** When using the REALTOR® Marks in an email address or domain names, the Marks may only appear adjacent to: (1) the member's personal name or brokerage name, and (2) the @ symbol or the .com or other extension. The REALTOR® Marks may not appear next to other wording. Check out pages 10 - 11 in NAR's [Member Membership Marks Manual](#) for a detailed explanation of this rule, including examples of proper and improper use.

Misuse of the REALTOR® Marks by Companies

If an Association discovers a misuse of the REALTOR® Marks by a company, such as a franchisor, a conglomerate organization, or a vendor of products or services, the Association should notify NAR so NAR may address the unauthorized use. All relevant documentation or other materials explaining and evidencing such use should be forwarded to NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor.

Non-Compliance with Enforcement Letters

If the Association does not receive a written confirmation of compliance from a misuser within one month of the date of the Association's first letter, the Association should request assistance from NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor.

A member's failure or refusal to comply with NAR's Trademark Rules constitutes a violation of that member's duties of Association membership. The Association's Grievance Committee or NAR may then file a complaint against the member for violation of their membership duty. If the Association's Professional Standards Committee finds a violation, then the member may be disciplined consistent with Section 14 of the [Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual](#), including but not limited to possible suspension or termination of membership or MLS privileges.

NAR may also initiate legal action against misusers that refuse to cease their misuse, including a federal lawsuit or a Uniform Domain-Name Dispute-Resolution Policy (UDRP) procedure. NAR has been successful in obtaining court orders against infringers ordering that they cease and desist misuse of the Marks and, in many cases, are ordered to pay NAR damages relating to the infringement and costs associated with the lawsuit, including attorneys' fees.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions or encounter any misuse of the REALTOR® Marks, please contact NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor or **312-329-8270**.

The Trademark Rules set forth in this Membership Marks Manual are official policy interpretations of NAR's Constitutions and Bylaws regarding use of the REALTOR® Marks. These Trademark Rules, and the guidelines and policies under them, are essential to the orderly, uniform use of the REALTOR® Marks, and to their preservation and promotion.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does REALTOR® mean?

REALTOR® has one meaning only: member of the National Association of REALTORS®. See [page 5](#) for additional information on the special meaning of the REALTOR® Marks.

Can I call a non-member a non-REALTOR®?

No. The REALTOR® Marks should only be used to identify members of NAR. Use “non-member” when referring to someone who is not a member of NAR.

Can a state or local association state that REALTOR® means member of that local or state association?

No. This is not the correct definition of REALTOR®. REALTOR® means member of the National Association of REALTORS®, and associations may not refer to REALTORS® as a member of a specific local or state association because members of other local or state associations are also REALTORS®.

May an Association change its name or adopt a DBA?

Should an Association wish to change its name or adopt a DBA, the association must seek prior written approval from NAR. More information on NAR’s name change procedure is available at <https://www.nar.realtor/about-nar/policies/procedure-for-approving-names-of-associations>.

Who may use the term “REALTOR ASSOCIATE®?”

Members that hold “REALTOR ASSOCIATE®” membership in their local association must use “REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®”, and not “REALTOR®”, to indicate membership in NAR. NAR’s Trademark Rules apply to use of “REALTOR ASSOCIATE®”, although please note that the trademark registration symbol ® appears after “ASSOCIATE”. Not all state and local associations offer REALTOR ASSOCIATE® membership.

How should I format the REALTOR® Marks if the surrounding text is in all uppercase lettering?

The REALTOR® Marks must be highlighted as special terms through additional formatting, such as boldface or italics. The following examples show proper formatting in this type of scenario:

IT WILL BE OF INTEREST TO YOUR CLIENTS THAT AS A **REALTOR®**,
YOU ARE BOUND BY NAR'S STRICT CODE OF ETHICS.

IT WILL BE OF INTEREST TO YOUR CLIENTS THAT AS A *REALTOR®*,
YOU ARE BOUND BY NAR'S STRICT CODE OF ETHICS.

See [pages 7-8](#) for additional information on formatting the REALTOR® word Marks and [pages 13-17](#) for additional information on formatting the REALTOR® Logo.

Why aren't the REALTOR® Marks formatted properly in news articles or press releases?

News publications often display trademarks as proper nouns, with an initial capitalized letter and without the trademark registration symbol: Realtor. Associations may use this formatting in their own press releases. Remember that contextual uses of the REALTOR® Marks in press releases must convey that REALTOR® means member of NAR. Check out [pages 9-10](#) for more information on NAR's Member Test, which will help you determine if your contextual use is proper. Please also keep in mind that press releases using the REALTOR® Marks must include the definition of the term REALTOR®. Please see [pages 7-8](#) for additional information on proper formatting of the REALTOR® Marks.

If you believe a news publication is misusing the REALTOR® Marks contextually, please notify NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor.

Do NAR's Trademark Rules apply to social media, including hashtags?

Yes. NAR's Trademark Rules apply to all uses of the REALTOR® Marks, including on social media and within hashtags. For example, the hashtags #localrealtor is improper because descriptive wording, "local", is not permitted to be used with the REALTOR® Marks. The hashtag #usearealtor is also improper because it lacks a contextual tieback to membership in NAR, and readers may assume that REALTOR® means real estate agent, real estate broker, or real estate professional, which is incorrect. A hashtag consisting of an Association's name is proper.

May an Association use the REALTOR® Logo as a social media profile photo or app icon?

Yes. An Association may use the REALTOR® Logo as a social media profile photo and as an icon for an app provided that: (1) the app or profile is offered in connection with the Association's services; and (2) the Association's full name always appears adjacent to such app icon or profile photo. Acronyms and abbreviations are insufficient. Use of the Logo must still comply with NAR's Trademark Rules, including the area of isolation and readability requirements. See [pages 13-17](#) for additional information on formatting the REALTOR® Logo.

How may the REALTOR® Marks be used contextually within sentences or when speaking?

The REALTOR® Marks may be used contextually provided such use clearly conveys that REALTOR® means member of NAR. Additionally, the definition of REALTOR® must be included in public-facing materials that use the REALTOR® Marks. See [pages 9-10](#) about proper contextual use of the REALTOR® Marks, including using the Member Test to determine if your use is proper.

May Associations use the REALTOR® Marks in the titles of programs, activities, charities, and the like (“Program Names”) that are offered by the Association, such as a charity event?

Associations may use the REALTOR® Marks in Program Names provided that: (1) the Association's name immediately precedes, follows, or is otherwise included in the Program Name; and (2) the Association has direct control over the underlying program, activity, charity, etc. Please see [pages 18-19](#) for a more detailed explanation of how Associations may use the REALTOR® Marks in Program Names.

May members use the REALTOR® Marks in connection with programs, activities, charities, and the like that they offer or otherwise participate in, such as a sports team name?

No. Members may not use the REALTOR® Marks in this manner. Members are licensed to use the REALTOR® Marks in connection with their name and their real estate business name and only within the context of their real estate business. Only Associations may use the REALTOR® Marks in the names of programs, activities or charities, provided such use complies with NAR's Trademark Rules.

May an Association offer or sell merchandise, such as clothing or pens, that include the REALTOR® Marks?

If merchandise only features the REALTOR® Marks, then the Association may only sell that merchandise to active members. If merchandise features the REALTOR® Marks and the Association's name, then the Association may sell such merchandise to the general public. Please see [page 20](#) for additional information on use of the REALTOR® Marks with merchandise.

May an Association distribute awards bearing the REALTOR® Marks without other identification, like the Association's name?

Yes. An Association may distribute awards bearing the REALTOR® Marks without other identification, like the Association's name, provided the recipient is an active member.

What steps should an Association take if a member is using the REALTOR® Marks within a firm name?

Members are licensed to use the REALTOR® Marks in connection with their personal name and business name or DBA. Members are prohibited from using the REALTOR® Marks in business names or DBAs. Please use the sample letters available at <https://www.nar.realtor/membership-marks-manual/sample-letters> to contact the member about changing their business name. Please see [pages 22-24](#) for more information about enforcement of the REALTOR® Marks. Please see pages 4-5 of the [Member Marks Manual](#) for more information about how members are licensed to use the REALTOR® Marks.

What steps should an Association take when it identifies a misuse of the REALTOR® Marks by an individual, including members?

NAR relies on state and local associations to support NAR's trademark protection and enforcement program. Associations should investigate and address the misuse of the REALTOR(R) marks. NAR makes template enforcement letters available to associations at <https://www.nar.realtor/membership-marks-manual/sample-letters>. For more information about how associations should address trademark misuse, see [pages 22-24](#), and associations may always contact NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor for assistance.

What steps should an Association take when it identifies a misuse of the REALTOR® Marks by a company?

Associations should notify NAR of misuses of the REALTOR® Marks by a company, such as a franchisor or vendor, and NAR will address the misuse. Please send all relevant documentation evidencing the misuse to NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor. Please see [pages 22-24](#) for additional information on Associations' role in NAR's Trademark Protection Program.

Who should an Association contact with questions about whether a specific use is a misuse of the REALTOR® Marks?

Please contact NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor with any questions relating to protection and enforcement of the REALTOR® Marks.

What should an Association do if an individual does not respond to its enforcement letter?

Associations should notify NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor of any misusers that do not cease their misuse within one month of the Association's enforcement letter. The Association should share copies of all communications and evidence of the misuse. Please see [pages 22-24](#) for additional information on Associations' role in NAR's Trademark and Protection Program.

Does NAR have any additional resources on proper use of the REALTOR® Marks?

Yes. Please check out nar.realtor/mmm for additional trademark resources. Please contact NAR's Legal Affairs Team at trademark@nar.realtor with any questions.