

WIRE FRAUD ADVISORY

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1 Buyer(s) and Seller(s) must exercise extreme caution when wiring money in real estate transactions.
2 Criminals/hackers target email accounts of Broker(s) and Agent(s) as well as other parties involved in real
3 estate transactions, including banks, mortgage brokers, attorneys, title companies, and others. In many cases,
4 the criminals/hackers have been able to intercept emailed wire transfer instructions, obtain account
5 information, and, by altering some of the data, use emails to convince Buyer(s) and Seller(s) to redirect the
6 money to a fraudulent account. These emails are convincing and sophisticated and may look like legitimate
7 emails from parties in the transaction. Once the money is redirected, it may be impossible to recover the money
8 from the criminals/hackers.

9 **In every real estate transaction, Buyer(s) and Seller(s) must:**

- 10 • **Never wire money without personally speaking with the intended recipient of the wire**
11 **transfer, so that you can confirm the routing number and account number.**
- 12 • **Verify that the contact information for the wire transfer recipient is legitimate. You**
13 **should only call the intended recipient using a phone number that you have obtained from**
14 **an independent source (phone book, official website, etc.); do not use the phone number**
15 **contained in the email containing the wiring instructions.**
- 16 • **Never use an email to send personal information such as social security numbers, bank**
17 **accounts, and credit card numbers, unless your email is secured/encrypted.**
- 18 • **Take steps to secure the system you are using with your email account. Protective actions**
19 **could include strong passwords and secure Wi-Fi.**
- 20 • **Never wire money out of state, unless you have confirmation from your bank or mortgage**
21 **broker, the title company, and your Broker(s) or Agent(s). A local title company will not**
22 **ask you to wire money out of state.**
- 23 • **If you believe you have received questionable or suspicious wire transfer instructions,**
24 **immediately notify your bank or mortgage broker, the title company, and your Broker(s)**
25 **or Agent(s).**
- 26 • **If you suspect that you have been victimized by wire fraud, immediately contact the Fargo**
27 **FBI office at (701) 232-7241, the Bismarck FBI Office at (701) 223-4875, or file a complaint**
28 **with the FBI online at www.ic3.gov.**

29 THIS NOTICE IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE LEGAL ADVICE. YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR
30 ATTORNEY IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

31 By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read, understand and received a copy of this Wire Fraud
32 Advisory.

33 _____
34 Signature Date Signature Date