

## Texas Murder Raises Concerns for Real Estate Agent Safety

The brutal murder of Sarah Ann Walker in McKinney, Texas early this month has again spotlighted a perennial topic - violence against real estate agents and **real estate safety tips**. Ms. Walker was presiding over an open house at a new housing development when she was stabbed 27 times. A house hunting couple found her body on the kitchen floor.

Conducting a real estate practice almost by definition puts agents in potentially hazardous situations. An agent conducting an open house is often alone and knows nothing about the person walking in the door. Agents often meet customers for the first time in front of a vacant house, or drive or ride with them to an appointment. It is not uncommon for an agent to be alone in the office late at night, finalizing an offer or catching up on paperwork, and some agents still go door to door looking for listings.

There don't appear to be any real solid **statistics** on the number of agents who fall victim to murder, rape, assault, or robbery. One source states that 206 agents were murdered on the job between 1982 and 2000. This does not even touch on the number of agents who were the victims of sexual assault, non-fatal shootings, beatings, and stabbings; robbery, and car jacking. Misiu Systems, Ltd which provides security products to the industry lists news articles about 74 incidents including murders, police alerts to agents, sexual assaults, and robberies since February, 1997, including ten since the first of this year. Many of the accounts concerned multiple victims.