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Recent Developments in Fair-Housing:

As you know, pursuant to the Fair Housing Act and several other federal, state and local laws, real estate agents are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

What you may not know is how strictly these laws are interpreted and the extent to which these laws limit what you may say to potential purchasers.

To help educate realtors about fair housing, last month the State legislature passed a law that requires brokers seeking to renew their licenses to undergo at least three (3) hours of fair-housing and anti-discrimination training as part of their 22 ½ hours of continuing education.

The Westchester County Board of Realtors stated in support of the measure that, “New York State’s Realtors consider housing discrimination to be abhorrent and completely curable. One way to prevent illegal discrimination in housing is to better educate real estate licensees about what constitutes illegal discrimination and how to avoid it.”

For more information, we recommend a recent *New York Times* article by Vivian S. Toy entitled “Questions Your Broker Can’t Answer” (June 24, 2007) which can be found on the web. The article, amongst other things, suggests that brokers advise their clients at the first meeting that they must adhere to all fair-housing laws. Then when questions are later posed by potential purchasers that may not be appropriate under the law, the broker can simply remind them that he or she may not discuss that topic under the law.

Disclaimer: The information provided is not intended to be legal advice, but merely conveys general information related to legal issues commonly encountered.

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