Understanding Whom Real Estate Agents Represent

Before you decide to sell or buy or rent a home you need to consider the following information:

Agents Who Represent the Seller

Seller’s Agent: A seller's agent works for the real estate company that lists and markets the property for the sellers or landlords, and exclusively represents the sellers or landlords. That means that he or she may assist the buyer or tenant in purchasing or renting the property, but his or her duty of loyalty is only to the sellers or landlords. The seller pays the seller's agent's fees as specified in a written listing agreement.

Cooperating Agent: A cooperating agent works for a real estate company different from the company for which the seller's agent works. The cooperating agent can assist a buyer or tenant in purchasing or renting a property, but his or her duty of loyalty is only to the sellers or landlords. The cooperating agent's fee is paid by the sellers or landlords through the seller's agent's company.

Agents Who Represent the Buyer

Presumed Buyer's Agent (no written agreement): When a person goes to a real estate agent for assistance in finding a home to buy or rent, the agent is presumed to be representing the buyer and can show the buyer properties that are not listed by the agent's real estate company. A presumed buyer’s agent may not make or prepare an offer or negotiate a sale for the buyer. The buyer does not have an obligation to pay anything to the presumed agent.

If for any reason the buyer does not want the agent to represent him or her as a presumed agent, either initially or at any time, the buyer can decline or terminate a presumed agency relationship simply by saying so.

Buyer’s Agent (by written agreement): A buyer or tenant may enter into a written contract with a real estate agent which provides that the agent will represent the buyer or tenant in locating a property to buy or rent. The agent is then known as the buyer's agent. That agent assists the buyer in evaluating properties and preparing offers, and negotiates in the best interests of the buyer or tenant. The agent's fee is paid according to the written agreement between the agent and the buyer or tenant. If you as a buyer or tenant wish to have an agent represent you exclusively, you must enter into a written buyer agency agreement.

Dual Agents

The possibility of dual agency arises when the buyer's agent and the seller's agent both work for the same real estate company, and the buyer is interested in property listed by that company. The real estate company, or broker, is called the "dual agent". Dual agents do not act exclusively in the interests of either the seller or buyer, or landlord or tenant, and therefore cannot give undivided loyalty to either party. There may be a conflict of interest because the interests of the seller and buyer may be different or adverse.

If both seller and buyer, or landlord and tenant, agree to dual agency by signing a Consent For Dual Agency form, then the real estate company (the "dual agent") will assign one agent to represent the seller or landlord (the seller's "intra-company agent") and another agent to represent the buyer or tenant (the buyer's "intra-company agent"). Intra-company agents may provide the same services to their clients as exclusive seller's or buyer's agents, including advising their clients as to price and negotiation strategy, provided the clients have both consented to be represented by dual agency.
If either party does not agree to dual agency, the real estate company may withdraw the agency agreement for that particular property with either the buyer or seller, or both. If the seller's agreement is terminated, the seller must then either represent him or herself or arrange to be represented by an agent from another real estate company. If the buyer's agreement is terminated, the buyer or tenant may choose to enter into a written buyer agency agreement with an agent from a different company. Alternatively, the buyer or tenant may choose not to be represented by an agent of his or her own but simply to receive assistance from the seller's agent, from another agent in that company, or from a cooperating agent from another company.

No matter what type of agent you choose to work with, you have the following rights and responsibilities in selling or buying or renting property:

- Real estate agents are obligated by law to treat all parties to a real estate transaction honestly and fairly. They must exercise reasonable care and diligence and maintain the confidentiality of clients. They must not discriminate in the offering of properties; they must promptly present each written offer or counteroffer to the other party; and they must answer questions truthfully.

- Real estate agents must disclose all material facts that they know or should know relating to a property. An agent’s duty to maintain confidentiality does not apply to the disclosure of material facts about a property.

- All agreements with real estate agents should be in writing and should explain the duties and obligations of the agent. The agreement should explain how the agent will be paid and any fee-sharing agreements with other agents.

- You have the responsibility to protect your own interests. You should carefully read all agreements to make sure they accurately reflect your understanding. A real estate agent is qualified to advise you on real estate matters only. If you need legal or tax advice, it is your responsibility to consult a licensed attorney or accountant.

Any complaints about a real estate agent may be filed with the Real Estate Commission at 500 North Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD 21202. (410) 230-6200.
Consent for Dual Agency

(In this form, the word "seller" includes "landlord", "buyer" includes "tenant", and "purchase" or "sale" includes "lease.")

When Dual Agency May Occur

The possibility of dual agency arises when:

> The buyer is interested in a property listed by a real estate company; and
> The seller's agent and the buyer's agent work for that same real estate company.

Before the buyer and seller can proceed to be represented by a dual agent, they must both sign a Consent for Dual Agency. If they have previously signed a Consent for Dual Agency, they must affirm their consent for the sale of a particular property to a particular buyer.

Your Choices Concerning Dual Agency

When a dual agency situation in fact arises, the buyer and seller have the following options:

1. **Consent in writing to dual agency.** If all parties consent in writing, the real estate company (the "dual agent") will assign one real estate agent from the company to represent the seller or landlord (the seller's "intra-company agent") and another agent from the company to represent the buyer or tenant (the buyer's "intra-company agent"). Intra-company agents may provide the same services to their clients as an exclusive seller's or buyer's agent, including advising their clients as to price and negotiation strategy.

2. **Do not consent to Dual Agency.** If either the buyer or the seller, or landlord or tenant, refuses to consent in writing to dual agency, the real estate company must terminate the agency agreement for that particular property with either the buyer or the seller, or both. If the seller's agreement is terminated, the seller must then either represent him or herself or arrange to be represented by an agent from another real estate company. If the buyer's agreement is terminated, the buyer or tenant may choose to enter into a written buyer agency agreement with an agent from a different company. Alternatively, the buyer or tenant may choose not to be represented by an agent of his or her own but simply to receive assistance from the seller's agent, from another agent in that company, or from a cooperating agent from another company.

Important Considerations Before Making a Decision About Dual Agency

- A dual agent does not exclusively represent either the seller or buyer and there may be a conflict of interest because the interests of the seller and buyer may be different or adverse.
- As a dual agent, the real estate company does not owe undivided loyalty to either the seller or buyer.
Duties of a Dual Agent and Intra-Company Agent

Like other agents, dual agents and intra-company agents must keep confidential information about a client's bargaining position or motivations unless the client gives consent to disclose the information. For example, a dual agent or intra-company agent may not tell the other party, or the other party's agent, without consent of the client:

- anything the client asks to be kept confidential*,
- that the seller would accept a lower price or other terms,
- that the buyer would accept a higher price or other terms,
- the reasons why a party wants to sell or buy, or
- that a party needs to sell or buy quickly.

*However, like all agents, a dual agent and intra-company agent must disclose any material facts about a property to the other party.

How Dual Agents Are Paid

Only the dual agent receives compensation on the sale of a property listed by that company.

If the financial bonus is offered to an agent who sells property that is listed with his company, this fact must be disclosed in writing to both the buyer and the seller.

I have read the above information, and I understand the terms of the dual agency. I understand that I do not have to consent to a dual agency, and that if I do not consent, there will not be a dual agency. I hereby voluntarily consent to have [Firm Name] act as dual agent for me as the:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seller</th>
<th>Buyer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

□ seller in the sale of the property at: ____________________________.

Buyer in the purchase of any property listed for sale with the above-referenced firm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

AFFIRMATION
The undersigned Seller(s) hereby affirms the consent to Dual Agency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The undersigned Buyer(s) hereby affirms consent to dual agency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Property Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
EXCLUSIVE BUYER REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT

DATE: _______________________

1. BUYER (List all): _____________________________________________________________

Mailing Address: _______________________________________________________________

Office Telephones: ____________________________ Office/Home Fax: _____________________

Home Telephones: ____________________________ Cell Phones: _________________________ / _______________________

Email Address(es): ____________________________ / _________________________________

2. BROKER: Hileman Real Estate, Inc.

Office Address: 11065 Cathell Rd., Berlin, MD 21811

Office Telephone: (410) 208-9200 Office Fax: (410) 208-9562

Buyer Agent: Sharon A. Curtiss Direct Line: (410) 208-9200 x108

Home Phone: ____________________________ Cell Phone: (410) 726-4260

Email Address: sharon@sharoncurtiss.com

3. BUYER AUTHORIZATION: ("Broker") is hereby authorized by the undersigned Buyer(s) or by the authorized representative of Buyer(s) ("Buyer") to represent Buyer as the exclusive real estate broker in the acquisition of real property, which shall include cooperatives. As used in this Agreement, “acquisition of real property” shall include any purchase or lease of property. The term “Seller” shall include lessor. The term “Buyer” shall include lessee. The Buyer seeks the following type of property:

4. BUYER AGENCY TERM/RIGHTS OF PARTIES FOLLOWING EXPIRATION OR TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT: This agreement shall be effective on ______________________ (m/d/y) and shall continue until midnight on ______________________ (m/d/y), (the “Term”) unless terminated in accordance with the provisions of this section.

As required under Section 17-534(b)(5) of the Maryland Real Estate Brokers Act, the parties agree to the following provision for the termination of this Agreement:

Either Buyer or Broker may terminate this agreement in writing with one day's notice for any reason.

An expiration or termination of this Agreement by Buyer or Broker shall be subject to the provisions of Paragraph 7 of this Agreement, and Paragraph 7 of this Agreement shall survive the expiration or termination of this Agreement. Notwithstanding the rights of the parties to terminate this Agreement as provided herein, Broker, in Broker’s sole and absolute discretion, may terminate this Agreement at anytime and effective immediately in the event Buyer provides any false information or misrepresents any fact to Broker or other third-party. If a Contract of Sale is entered into by Buyer during the Buyer Agency Term, which provides for settlement to occur after the expiration of the Buyer Agency Term, this Agreement shall be automatically extended until settlement has occurred or until the Contract of Sale is released in writing by the parties.
5. **BUYER RESPONSIBILITIES:**
   A. **Exclusive Relationship with Broker:** Buyer will work exclusively with Broker during the term of this relationship.
   B. **Financial Information:** Buyer will furnish Broker with necessary financial and personal information to reasonably establish Buyer’s ability to purchase property.
   C. **Signs or Advertisements for Property:** If Buyer sees any signs or advertisements for properties being offered for sale, Buyer will not contact the Seller or agent of the Seller but will first contact Broker named herein, who will provide information about the properties and then make arrangements to see them.
   D. **New Home Builders and Open Houses:** In order to avoid the possibility of confusion over the agency relationship and misunderstandings about liability for compensation, Buyer agrees not to make a first visit to any new home builder’s model nor contact any other agents representing sellers of new homes without being accompanied by Broker. Buyer agrees not to enter “Open House” properties unless accompanied by Broker or after having had Broker make arrangements with the listing broker.

6. **BROKER RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Agent and Broker agree to:
   A. **Locate Real Property:** Use professional knowledge and skills to locate and present real property, which is available for purchase and suitable for the Buyer’s needs.
   B. **Assist the Buyer:** Assist Buyer through the process of property acquisition.
   C. **Represent Buyer's Interests:** Represent the interests of the Buyer in all negotiations and transactions regarding the acquisition of real property.

7. **BROKER’S COMPENSATION:** The amount of Broker compensation is not prescribed by law or established by any membership organization with which Broker is affiliated.
   A. **Compensation to be Paid by Buyer:** In the event of a sale or lease, the Compensation to be paid by Buyer to Broker shall be the amount disclosed in the local MLS for the Buyer's Broker or Co-Op Selling Broker if listed; and 3% if property is not listed in a MLS.

The Compensation shall be deemed to have been earned by Broker and shall be due and payable to Broker if:

1. During the term of this Agreement or any extension thereof (i) Buyer or any person or entity acting on Buyer’s behalf executes a written agreement to purchase or lease any Property, through the efforts of anyone including Buyer, in which event Buyer, within seventy two (72) hours thereof, shall furnish Broker a copy of such written agreement; or (ii) if during the period of 30 days following the expiration or termination of this Agreement, Buyer executes a written agreement to purchase or lease any Property that Buyer inspected, made inquiry about, or negotiated to purchase during the term of this Agreement or any extension thereof, in which event Buyer, within seventy-two (72) hours thereof, shall furnish Broker a copy of such written agreement;
2. Buyer defaults or voluntarily agrees to terminate a sale; or
3. Buyer breaches this Agreement.

The Compensation due Broker shall be paid at settlement as a convenience to Buyer. Buyer acknowledges and agrees that settlement on the Property shall not be a condition precedent to Buyer’s obligation to Broker as herein provided. If Broker prevails in any action brought to obtain payment of the Compensation, Broker shall also be entitled to recover in such action Broker’s reasonable attorney’s fees and court costs. Buyer shall have no obligation to pay the Compensation to Broker if Buyer enters into a Buyer Agency Agreement with any other licensed real estate broker following the expiration of this Agreement, or any extension thereof, or following the termination of this Agreement as herein provided, unless such termination by Buyer shall have been made for the purpose of avoiding the obligation of Buyer to pay the Compensation to Broker.

B. **Fee Paid By Seller:** Broker is authorized to receive compensation from the listing broker/seller. Compensation may be offered from the listing broker to Broker through the multiple listing service or from seller as negotiated by Broker and seller for real property which is not listed with another broker. The amount of compensation received by Broker from a listing broker or from a seller shall be credited against the Compensation agreed upon in Paragraph 7.A. Buyer shall be obligated to pay any difference between the amount owed and the amount paid by the listing broker/seller. In the event the amount of compensation offered by the listing broker/seller is greater than that specified in Paragraph 7.A., Buyer authorizes Broker to receive such compensation and to retain any such additional compensation without pro ration or rebate to Buyer. The amount of any such payment made by listing broker/seller shall be with the seller’s and Buyer’s prior knowledge and consent and shall in no way affect the obligation of the Broker to act on behalf of the Buyer in the transaction.
8. DISCLAIMER AND LIMITATIONS:
A. Limitations of Broker’s Ability: Buyer acknowledges that Broker is being retained solely as a real estate agent and not as an attorney, tax advisor, lender, appraiser, surveyor, structural engineer, certified home inspector or other professional service provider. Buyer has been advised to seek professional advice for legal, tax and other matters.
B. Representation of Other Buyers: Buyer acknowledges that Broker may represent other Buyers and that other potential Buyers may consider, make offers on, or purchase properties through Broker. Buyer consents to Broker’s representation of other Buyers before, during, and after the expiration of this Agreement.
C. Subsequent Offers: Upon entering into a Contract of Sale/Lease pursuant to this Buyer Agency Agreement, Broker shall have no further obligation hereunder to procure any subsequent properties for Buyer.
D. Ministerial Acts: Buyer hereby consents to and authorizes Broker and Broker’s agents to provide ministerial acts as defined by law on behalf of Buyer to third persons in connection with the purchase of the Property.
E. Confidentiality of Offers: Buyer acknowledges the possibility that sellers or seller’s representatives may not treat the existence, terms or conditions of the Buyer’s offer as confidential information.

9. AGENCY DISCLOSURE: Buyer acknowledges receipt of “Understanding Whom Real Estate Agents Represent.”

10. INTRA-COMPANY AGENT REPRESENTATION: When the Buyer and seller are each represented by sales associates of the Broker, the Broker is a dual agent. Dual agency is permitted only when disclosed and with the knowledge and written consent of both parties. However, the sales associate assigned by the Broker as an intra-company agent may continue to provide the same services that a buyer’s agent can provide on a property listed with another broker.

In the event Buyer elects to consent to dual agency, buyer agrees to sign the required Consent For Dual Agency form as published by the Maryland Real Estate Commission. In the event Buyer elects not to consent to dual agency, Buyer acknowledges and agrees that Buyer will not be advised or shown properties listed by Broker and will only be shown properties listed by other real estate brokers.

11. LEGAL CONSTRUCTION: This Agreement is binding upon the parties hereto, and their personal representatives, successors, heirs and assigns. If this Agreement is signed by more than one person, it shall constitute the joint and several obligations of each. This Agreement contains the entire Agreement of the parties and cannot be changed except by the written agreement of the parties hereto. Buyer warrants that there are no other existing agreements or conditions other than as set forth herein. This is a legally binding Agreement; if not understood, seek competent legal, tax or other professional advice. Buyer has not relied upon any statement or representation of Broker except as set forth in this Agreement. This Agreement shall survive execution and delivery of the deed and shall not be merged therein. This Agreement shall be interpreted and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Maryland.

12. ADDENDA: The Addenda marked below, which are hereby attached, are made a part of this Agreement:
- Understanding Whom Real Estate Agents Represent
- Consent for Dual Agency

Other Addenda/Special Conditions:

RECEIPT OF COPY: Buyer acknowledges receipt of a copy of this Agreement at time of signing hereof.

Buyer Date

Broker (Company Name)

Buyer Date

Broker or Authorized Representative Date