

What YOU Need to Know About Virtual Staging

Staging is the act of presenting a property in the best light to allow it to sell as quickly as possible. That can include everything from changing the paint colors in the living room to completely emptying the house and bringing in rental furniture and fixtures. For the latter, though, it might make sense to hire a home stager. But there's a relatively new option in town: "virtual" staging.

How does this option work? Virtual staging is where you don't actually physically change anything about the property, but instead use the power of digital tools to alter photographs and present a picture of what the house *could* look like.

Of course, you know there has to be a catch, right? While there is nothing technically illegal or unethical about using virtual staging, you always need to be cautious when presenting any advertising that looks different than the actual state of the property.

The safest thing to do is to always disclose in the MLS (or wherever you post these pictures) that the virtually-staged scene is an example of how the property *could* look, not necessarily how it does look. When in doubt, make sure you disclose.

If you're a REALTOR[®], you also need to make sure you comply with Article 12 of the Code of Ethics, which requires you to present a true picture in your advertising. As long as you don't mislead consumers with your images (meaning that you are clear that the house doesn't look like this in real life), you should be fine.

Limit Your Risk

Make sure you explain to your clients the possible benefits of staging, whether done by a professional company or by you as the listing agent.

If you go the virtual staging route, be very careful to clearly state that the virtually-staged pictures are not representative of how the house actually looks. Otherwise, you could be in trouble for misleading advertising.

Interested in learning more? [Check out this full episode of the Caveat REALTOR[®] podcast.](#)