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## Could This Flood Have Been Avoided?

I was working away at my desk when I heard a phone call come in from a person who says he is a neighbor of a property we just purchased a week before. He goes on to explain that there is water rushing out of the front door of the property. When we got to the property we found about an inch of water throughout the rear of the house. Somehow the hose to the washing machine had broken, and it was running full blast and was also blowing water everywhere in the utility room – flooding the back part of the house.

After shutting off the water, the cleaning started by sweeping out the accumulated water from each of five rooms – bedroom, bathroom, utility room, closet and den areas. We had been in the property four days earlier and the water was not turned on at the property. The property is lakefront so I had brought buckets with me so as we cleaned out the property we would have water to fill the toilet bowls if we needed to flush them. Turning it on usually only takes a wrench (meter key) and just a ½ twist at the meter box in the front of the property.

As we started to discuss what caused the problem we realized that the rear bedroom is 3” below the rest of the property and the water rushing out of the property was running out the back door. This meant that for a neighbor to see the water coming out under the door he would have had to have been in the backyard – not driving by as he had said on the telephone call.

It was also obvious that the water meter cover had been removed and replaced but not by the water company. So, someone had apparently turned on the water for some unknown reason – probably to check to see what was working and what wasn't. To add to the mystery, the washing machine was completely filled with water and was overflowing before the hose burst.

I would love to know the real story of how this happened and why, but it is probably lost to infamy! Anyway, a “thank you” to the passing “neighbor”, who was really another investor and who went a little far in his effort to check out the property. Now our mini-palatial estate will have to be rehabbed to repair the water damage and the insurance company will have to foot the bill – always a silver lining if you look hard enough.

Since this incident, I better understand why the person who calls in a 911 emergency is always a suspect in those Police cases. I have said this many times before in my life and I'll say the same thing to the culprit who flooded our property, “Just tell me the truth – I can take it.”

This brings up an industry debate – “Should I give out the lockbox number to a caller or not?” Many realtors® will never allow a retail buyer access to a property without them

showing the property because they do have a better chance of selling the prospect. Expensive properties do have more fixtures and assets at stake that could be stolen.

However, as wholesalers we almost always (99% of the time) give a lockbox to anyone who calls to see our properties. We have done this for 34 years and only had a few problems – new carpet missing and a few appliances taken, but for the thousands of hours we would have spent showing the properties, it was very muck OK for us.

As always, the decision is yours to allow people to look at your property without you there. I can guarantee that for every 25 callers who say they are on their way, or will be at the property at a certain time, only 3 - 5 ever get there and usually they are 20 – 30 minutes late. We did call everyone BEFORE we left our office and still they didn't show. So, we learned a long time ago to give out the lockbox and don't waste your time trying to meet and greet prospects. As a caveat to this, ALWAYS have your property insured against vandalism as soon as you close just in case.

To your limitless success,  
Dave Dinkel