

It's not too early – renewal time approaches.

Time is relative so whether May 31 is fast approaching or is way far out is for you to decide. What I can tell you is that by the summer and fall of 2018, many of you will be calling for help with license problems. So what can and should you be doing now to avoid the potential problems that may be unfolding a year from now?

Brokers, you need a written policy. It doesn't have to be long or complicated. It should provide that your licensed affiliates are responsible for completing their continuing education. On time. Completely. Consider requiring your sales affiliates to report the courses they take and when they take them. The date, provider and topic should be recorded. By renewal date your records should demonstrate that all affiliates are in compliance with their CE requirements.

The purpose of obtaining the records is to satisfy the requirement of broker oversight.

Your policy should provide that those who do not receive renewals as of May 31, 2018 are prohibited from engaging in licensed activity of any sort thereafter until receipt of those certificates or unless and until you, as broker, approve. Why would you approve of an agent's engaging in licensed activity if they are not licensed? It is possible to verify through the Commission that a problem occurred on its end and that the licensee is deemed renewed. This is the exception, rather than the rule.

You'd be surprised how many brokers and licensees are unaware that their licenses have not been renewed despite having submitted the application and appropriate check. When a licensee practices beyond the expiration of a license, each licensed act constitutes a separate offense punishable by as much as \$10,000. The Commission does not seek these types of fines when the lack of licensure was due to an "innocent" mistake. A broker who allows a salesperson or associate broker to practice after expiration will have a hard time explaining away why they didn't verify receipt of that salesperson's/associate broker's renewed license. The fact that you may have submitted the applications and the appropriate fees for your affiliates is not the end of the inquiry. **You need to make sure that the licenses were in fact renewed.**

Salespersons/associate brokers. Your job is to take the courses that are required and record the date and course provider somewhere for easy reference. It is up to you to make sure that you have taken the required courses. For 2018 renewal, you will have to complete a course on the Rules and Regulations of the Real Estate Licensing and Registration Act. Know the biennial requirements and assure that you satisfy them.

You should also determine that the courses you take qualify for continuing education credits in Pennsylvania. It may be that certain classes that qualify for designations will not satisfy the State requirements. It is up to you to make the determination.

Practicing beyond the expiration of your license will be met with a fine. Avoid the fine by submitting your application early so that you can correct any errors in the application process.

Everyone. Do not assume that the submission of an application is the same as renewal. If you do not have your license or your affiliate's licenses within a reasonable time of application submission, contact the Real Estate Commission to find out the reason for the delay. The fact that you were vigilant and made inquiry is a mitigating circumstance when and if you are charged with practicing without a license.

Applications ask whether you have practiced during a period of non-licensure. If you have inadvertently missed a renewal application, be sure to answer the question truthfully. Falsifying an application is treated more severely than inadvertently missing a renewal date.