

Real Estate Agent Focus Group Interview Guide

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Interviewer instructions:

The purpose of the *Environmental contamination laws affecting single-family home sales* study is to understand how laws related to the environmental contaminants of radon and lead affect the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of homebuyers and real estate agents engaged in the sale or purchase of single-family homes. We will examine these domains among these two audiences across four study sites in separate states using a mailed survey to homebuyers in combination with real estate agent focus groups. This focus group will look at how laws related to radon and lead have affected you or your clients' decisions during the home buying process. By improving our understanding in these areas, we can better understand how these laws affect your community, identify future research needs, and inform the development of policies to decrease exposure to radon and lead.

This component of the study is exploratory. As such, we are using the qualitative method of focus group research. Focus groups are an efficient data collection technique to explore our research questions. Using a semi-structured guide will enable us to focus on our questions of interest while allowing us to explore emergent areas of inquiry.

These participant's knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding radon and lead are our interests in interviewing full-time real estate agents who specialize in single-family home sales. Environmental issues such as lead and radon, especially when coupled with policies suggests a need to explore this issue at each individual's own comfort level. Should any of the participants get upset or angry during the discussion they are free to leave and will be given the incentive.

Narrative to be read to participants:

Thank you for participating in this focus group today. Your participation is very important. I'm **(interviewer name here)** from **(or representing)** the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The purpose of this focus group is to learn more about your and your clients' knowledge, attitudes, and practices in regard to two environmental contaminants, radon and lead. Your

thoughts and suggestions are very important to us, and we appreciate your taking the time to talk with us. The focus group should take no more than 1 hour.

- Your name and anything you say here will not be released. Your name, address, and phone number will not be given to anyone, and no one will contact you about this focus group. When we write our report, we will not refer to you by name.
- We ask that you not share any comments made by other participants here outside the focus group. In addition, our observers have signed non-disclosure agreements to promise that they will not discuss your individual comments outside of this room.
- There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know about your feelings, thoughts, and experiences. You are the expert here.
- You have probably noticed the recorder. We are recording all of the focus groups we are conducting because we don't want to miss any of your comments. People often give very helpful feedback in these discussions and we can't take notes fast enough to capture them all. Because we are recording, please speak up, and please avoid having side conversations.
- Please turn your cell phones off or to silent during the focus group unless you are expecting a critical call. If you need to take a call, please excuse yourself from the room, and if you need to leave the focus group altogether, please let us know.
- For the purposes of this discussion, please consider the home buying process to be any interaction where you are helping the client offer, buy, or sell a single-family home.
- Finally, please note that your participation in this session is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the session should you feel uncomfortable.

Interviewer instructions: Begin Recording

Narrative:

First, let's talk about issues related to lead-based paint.

1. What do you know about lead-based paint?

Potential Probes:

What have you heard or read about regarding exposure to lead-based paint?
From what source?

2. What do your clients' know about lead-based paint?

Potential Probes:

What is the source of your clients' knowledge about lead-based paint?

3. How has lead-based paint affected your decisions while facilitating the home buying process?

Potential Probes:

What were the issues?

How did you and/or the client become aware of them?

How do home inspectors affect your understanding of lead-based paint?

4. Has lead-based paint ever been an issue that affected your clients' decisions during the home buying process?

Potential Probes:

What were the issues?

How did you and/or the client become aware of them?

How do the home inspectors affect your clients' understanding of lead?

5. What laws are you aware of regarding lead-based paint in homes?

Potential Probes:

How did you become aware of them?

How did these laws affect your actions during the home sale process?

6. What laws regarding lead-based paint in homes have your clients been aware of?

Potential Probes:

How did the clients become aware of them?

How did these laws affect their actions during the home sale process?

Narrative: Now let's talk about issues related to radon.

7. What do you know about radon?

Potential Probes:

Have you heard or read anything about whether exposure to radon is harmful?

What have you heard or read?

From what source?

8. Has radon ever been an issue in your decisions as a realtor during the home buying process?

Potential Probes:

Tell me more about how they came up and how they affected you

9. Has radon ever been a factor in your clients' decisions during the home buying process?

Potential Probes:

Tell me more about how they came up and how they affected the client.

If discussion about home inspectors comes up please defer conversation on this topic until the next question.

10. Have you ever had to interact with a home inspector or other person who tested or treated a home for radon?

Potential Probes:

If yes, were they certified to test for radon?

Followup – Who they were certified by?

How important was it to you that they were certified to test for radon?

Did certification of a radon tester affect your or your clients' decisions related to radon in any way?

11. What laws have you heard about regarding radon in homes?

Potential Probes:

Can you tell me more about how you interpret these laws?

How do these laws affect how you interact with your clients?

Interviewer instructions: The focus group facilitator will present participants with a radon notification packet containing the information in Appendices 2 and 3.

Narrative: In Illinois, a notification packet like this one is read and completed by all parties before a home sale. The packet includes a radon notification document to be signed by both parties and an information sheet about radon. Please take a minute to read through the packet.

[Wait for everyone to finish reading through the documents]

12. How do you think it would affect the home buying process if you, the buyer, and the seller reviewed and had to sign a notification sheet?

Potential Probes:

How do you think it would affect the buyer?

How do you think it would affect the seller?

13. How did the information in the radon packet change how you think about radon?

Potential Probes:

Was there a specific part of the notification sheet that captured your attention?

Was there a specific part of the information sheet that changed the way you think about radon?

14. How do you think the information from this radon packet would affect your clients during the closing process?

Potential Probes:

Can you tell me more about some positive aspects?

How about some negative aspects?

Closing

15. That was our last question. Is there anything that you think we should know that we haven't discussed?

Narrative: Those are all the questions we have for the group. We would like to thank you for your time and please remember to check in with the staff out front to pick up your pre-paid credit card and more information about radon and lead.