**Section 1450.610 Place of Business; Office and Virtual Office Requirements**

a) A licensee's place of business shall be the physical office or virtual office of the licensee's sponsoring broker.

b) Each sponsoring broker shall register all physical or virtual office locations with the Division in a format provided by the Division.

c) Physical Offices

1) An office is any fixed business location or physical structure that is owned, controlled, operated or maintained by a licensee who, at that business location or structure, is:

A) Engaging in licensed activities;

B) Offering real estate services to consumers;

C) Holding out to the public that the licensee is engaging in licensed activities;

D) Maintaining original real estate documents and records related to active or pending transactions;

E) Maintaining current escrow records;

F) Maintaining any record related to special accounts; or

G) Meeting consumers for the purpose of engaging in licensed activities.

2) The following places do not constitute a physical or fixed office. These places are provided as examples and are not intended to be inclusive or exclusive of other places:

A) A motor vehicle primarily used for transportation;

B) A place that is solely devoted to advertising real estate matters of a general nature or to making a sponsoring broker's business name generally known (e.g., trade show, expo);

C) A place that a licensee uses solely for storage or archiving of records;

D) A licensee's residence, unless it is held out to the public as a location where the person is engaging in licensed activities and satisfies all other requirements for an office; or

E) A post office box, mail drop location or other similar facility.

d) Virtual Offices

1) A virtual office is an office from which real estate brokerage services are provided, without a dedicated office space or fixed physical location, under the supervision of the designated managing broker, and that is owned, controlled, operated or maintained by a licensee who is:

A) Engaging in licensed activities;

B) Offering real estate services to consumers;

C) Holding out to the public that the licensee is engaging in licensed activities;

D) Maintaining real estate documents and records related to active, pending and completed transactions, securely stored in the format in which they were originally created, sent, or received. Documents originally created in physical form may be converted to an electronic format only if the content is not altered;

E) Maintaining current escrow records that are securely stored in the format in which they were originally created, sent or received;

F) Maintaining any record related to special accounts, securely stored in the format in which they were originally created, sent or received;

2) A virtual office shall have a digital infrastructure facilitating the transaction of business, communications, advertising, and real estate services through a virtual office website, URL, or other digital platform. Through this website or digital platform, the general public is invited to transact business and it is utilized to conduct the communication, advertising, and real estate services related to that business. The virtual website, URL or digital platform shall:

A) Be registered with the Division in a format provided by the Division;

B) Display a current registry of all sponsored licensees and their corresponding license numbers registered with the Division as set forth in Section 1450.730;

C) Display the city or geographic location and state where real estate brokerage services are offered;

D) Display contact information for the designated managing broker, including name, license number, valid phone number and email address. If the sponsoring broker has multiple designated managing brokers, display each designated managing broker's contact information and the name and license number of the licensees they supervise;

E) Maintain a secure intranet or secure portal that is accessible by employees, independent contractors, licensees and, upon request, the Division. The intranet or portal shall include the following:

i) Electronic records, securely stored in the format they were originally created, sent or received, and made accessible for inspection by the Division in a secure electronic format. Documents originally created in physical form may be converted to an electronic format only if the content is not altered;

ii) An updated registry of sponsored licensees, their designated managing brokers, identification of additional office locations registered with the Division, and the licensees associated with those offices; and

F) Comply with all advertising requirements under Section 1450.715 and 1450.720.

3) Service of Process. For those licensees who maintain a virtual office, a valid physical address in Illinois for the sponsoring broker must be provided to the Department for service of process. If licensees do not maintain a physical address in Illinois, an entity that is an applicant or licensee may utilize the same address provided to the SOS for its registered agent in Illinois.

(Source: Amended at 45 Ill. Reg. 2851, effective February 23, 2021)