

What's your username?

As social networking websites and blogs continue to gain popularity in the real estate marketing world, real estate professionals are striving to create unique and clever usernames that identify them publicly to others viewing the site. "Number1realtor" or "yourMichiganrealtor" or "jane_chicago_realtor" may sound like unique usernames, but each of these examples violates the National Association of REALTORS® trademark usage rules as well as the bylaws of the [INSERT NAME OF LOCAL ASSOCIATION].

The rules governing the use of the REALTOR® marks are the same regardless of the medium in which the marks are being used, i.e., print advertising, web advertising, URLs, e-mail addresses, usernames, and more. These rules require the REALTOR® marks to be used with the name of a member or with the legal name of a member broker's real estate business. A separate rule prohibits use of REALTOR® with descriptive words or phrases. Because domain names must be lowercase and cannot accommodate the R symbol, the requirements to use capitalization and the registration symbol "®" with the REALTOR® marks are relaxed for usernames. Here are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable usernames:

Acceptable usernames

janesmithrealtor
jsmithrealtor
smithrealtor
jane_smith_realtor
realtorjanesmith
realtorjsmith
realtorsmith
realtor_smith
chicagoassociationofrealtors
Illinois_association_of_realtors
jane_the_realtor
jane_a_realtor
realtorjanechicago
chicagojanerealtor
realtor_jane_number1

Unacceptable usernames

realtor
chicagorealtor
yourchicagorealtor
your_chicago_realtor
cyberrealtor
virtualrealtor
realtor_mom
realtorsolution
localrealtor
top_chicago_realtor
number1realtor
hotshotrealtor
residentialrealtor
commercial_realtor
janechicagorealtor

What's your username? Does it comply with the trademark usage rules? To learn more about proper use of the REALTOR® trademarks online, contact [INSERT NAME OF LOCAL ASSOCIATION]. Additional information is also available on the Law & Policy page of Realtor.org at:

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