

SOUTHERN TITLE INSURANCE CORP.

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Title Talk

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Fraud-How To Protect Yourself

It seems that stories of identity theft and check fraud are everywhere you look. As title professionals, you are potentially subjected to these crimes everyday. There are many preventative steps that you can take to help reduce your chances of becoming a victim.

When conducting business with parties to a real estate transaction, it is prudent to know that the person your dealing with is the person they say they are. That is sometimes easier said than done. Southern Title recommends requiring two forms of identification or one form of identification and a thumbprint from anyone that will be signing any documents. We have signs that we will be distributing to our business partners that you will be able to display in your lobby. The sign states that it's your underwriter that is requesting the two forms of identification of all sign-

ers. Additionally, we will be distributing thumb print kits to all our attorneys and agents. The thumb print can be affixed to a card, that will be provided by Southern Title, and placed in your file. These steps will help prevent most of the fraud perpetrated at the settlement table. Another form of fraud that you need to be concerned with is check fraud. What would happen if someone altered one of your checks, or worse yet, duplicated your checks? It's easier to do than you may think. For those who attended our summer continuing education seminar, you learned first hand of the ease with which these crimes are perpetrated. There are preventative measures that you can take to reduce your risk of being a victim. When writing or signing a check, use the Uniball 207. The ink in this pen is unwashable. It cannot

be erased or altered like other forms of ink. Southern Title has a supply of these pens if you should need some. They are also available at most office supply stores. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, reconcile your check book as soon as you get your statement. If you are a victim of someone forging or altering checks drawn on your account, and you want full remedy for this fraud, you have a limited time frame to report this to your bank. It is usually 15 to 30 days from the time you receive your statement. If you do not report it within this time frame, your bank is not liable for the loss. Be sure to ask your bank the terms of their coverage. Although we may not be able to avoid all forms of fraud, there are certain measures we all can take to help prevent it from happening.



Veteran's Day

Armistice Day, as November 11 became known, officially became a holiday in the United States in 1926. The holiday was to commemorate the armistice that officially ended the fighting between the Allies and Germany in World War I. The armistice went into effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. In 1954, the name was changed to Veterans Day to honor all U.S. Veterans. Thank you to all who served and to the families that supported them.



Southern Title Your Partner In Business

You have enough competitors for your business. Your underwriter should not be one of them. By working with our agents, and not in competition with our agents, Southern Title has become the business partner of choice.

**“Southern Title’s
2006 Financial
Stability Rating
A’ (A Prime)
Unsurpassed”
Demotech, Inc.**

**Southern Title’s
2006 Commercial
Real Estate
Recommendation:
Strongly Recommended
Demotech, Inc**

Future Title Talks to be Emailed Only

Starting in January 2007, our Title Talk will only be sent out electronically. This will allow us to deliver our newsletter more quickly and efficiently. If you would like to continue receiving Title Talk, please email Jessica Patterson at jpatterson@southerntitle.com under the subject “TitleTalk.” Thank you.

Quit Claim Deeds

One of the questions received by our underwriting staff concerns the consequences of quit claim or special warranty deeds in the chain of title. Any transfer of title to real property by any deed type other than a general warranty deed should raise a red flag. While quit claim deeds are a common form of transfer between related persons or entities, it should not be assumed that there is no other reason behind the selection of this form of transfer. Very often, quit claim and special

warranty deeds are used because the grantor is uncertain of the status of title or worse; the grantor knows there is a problem with the title. The existence of this red flag in the chain does not render the title uninsurable. However, it should increase the level of scrutiny the examiner applies to the reviewing of documents and indexes prior to the quit claim deed. A prudent title examiner, after encountering a deed without full warranties, should conduct the examination expecting to

find a title problem. Additionally, any transfer of title without warranties will break the chain, resulting in no chance of recovery against the grantor that caused the problem or from any intermediate warrantors. That leaves the errant title searcher/agent as the only source of recovery for the loss. Title insurance policies are issued everyday on titles with quit claim deeds in the chain. However, it is prudent to examine the reasoning behind the refusal to provide warranty.

Online Policy Jackets Coming Soon

Southern Title’s online policy jackets will be available to our agents in the very near future. The online policy jacket system is currently in operation and being tested by our Home Office and a few agents. Based on the feedback of the agents testing our online policy jacket system, we will

make any necessary improvements prior to offering to all of our agents. Our online policy jacket system will be a huge time saver for our agents. Paper jackets will still be available to those agents who prefer. Should you have any questions, please call Kevin Dodson at 1-800-468-0151.

Daily Planners

We are in the process of distributing the 2007 Southern Title daily planners. We should have them all distributed by the middle of November. Should you need one sooner, please feel free to call Jessica Patterson at 1-800-468-0151 or email Jessica at: jpatterson@southerntitle.com

Website of the Month

We all could use a few extra dollars in our pocket. Our Web site of the month can help you save money on some of the things you buy everyday. Wow Coupons allows you to print coupons right from your computer. The web address for this site is:

www.wow-coupons.com

Holiday Schedule

Southern Title will be closed on the following days:

Thurs. Nov. 23rd.....Thanksgiving
Fri. Nov. 24th.....Thanksgiving
Mon. Dec. 25th.....Christmas
Mon. Jan. 1st.....New Years Day

We extend our warmest holiday wishes to you and your family.