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**Legal Requirements when Selling your own Home**

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After 20 wonderful years in our family's beautiful 3 bedroom ranch home in Jenison, my husband and I decided it was time to take the plunge and finally build our dream home. With the real estate market finally picking up again, we decided to try our hand at selling our Jenison home by owner. Although we were very fortunate to find the right buyers in less than two days, there were still several important things we, and all sellers, were required to do when selling our homes ourselves:

- **Seller's Disclosure Statement.** Under Michigan law, a seller must complete a seller's disclosure statement when selling a home in which they reside. Be sure to be complete, honest, and thorough in your disclosure statements. Trying to downplay or hide a defect in your home for a bigger sale price now could lead to expensive litigation in the future.
- **Lead-Based Paint Disclosure.** Make sure you complete this and provide it to the buyers.
- **Purchase Agreement.** Michigan law requires that all sales of real property are in writing. If your buyers are not represented by a Realtor, you need to make sure that all offers are in written form. It may be a good idea to contact an attorney if you have any questions about a proposed purchase agreement from an unrepresented buyer.

A good rule of thumb is to keep everything in writing so there are no questions about what is included in the sale of the home. After you have a signed purchase agreement, find a reputable title agency that will give you a competitive rate on a closing package. The title company will prepare all of the documents necessary for closing of the sale and will assist you with obtaining a payoff for your home.

Most real estate transactions go smoothly, but if you have any questions or concerns along the way, it's a good idea to contact an attorney sooner rather than waiting for a situation to devolve into a litigation nightmare.