

# BRICK UNDERGROUND

## What NYC apartment showings are like under the new Covid rules



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It's been a month since New York City entered Phase 2 of reopening, which allowed in-person showings of apartments and houses to resume, and so far, buyers and renters seem to be adapting to the changes.

If you are starting an apartment hunt, know that you'll have to plan ahead in order to see apartments, because [most showings are appointment-only](#) (no more dropping by open houses). You'll also have to wear a face mask, remain socially distanced from others, and likely fill out a health disclosure form.

Brick Underground reached out to a few NYC brokers to find out how showings are going these days as a result of the new rules. They say renters and buyers appear to be taking the precautions seriously and that everyone has been mostly cooperative with the new way of doing things.

"I don't think anyone would call the situation ideal, but they understand," says Andrew Sacks, a broker at [Corcoran](#). "When I pre-register clients for a showing via email, I outline the requirements and ask them to complete the disclosure form. The universal response is 'of course.'"

### Safety first

Brokers tell Brick they wouldn't show an apartment to anyone not wearing a proper mask. According to the [Real Estate Board of New York's](#) guidelines, face masks and social distancing are mandatory during in-person showings.

Some brokers are also taking safety measures up a notch.

Leonard Steinberg, chief evangelist at [Compass](#) and vice chairperson of NYRAC, says that he requires everyone to remove their shoes or he provides shoe covers “and a good dose of humor.”

Some brokers are providing hand sanitizer and gloves if you don't have your own.

“I always have extra sanitizer to share. It's the house wine of 2020,” says Brian K. Lewis, associate broker at [Compass](#).

Victoria Vinokur, associate broker at [Brown Harris Stevens](#), says she asks people not to touch anything. She's the only one who opens doors and closets, for example. She also brings extra gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer.

In small apartments socially distancing can be a little tricky, but there's not supposed to be more than two clients and one broker in an apartment at any given time, which can help in smaller spaces. Vinokur says she is currently showing a small rental, and although some clients have accidentally gotten a bit too close, you have to make the best of it and establish boundaries.

Brokers mentioned that it's also essential to leave behind a clean apartment for whoever comes in next, since the [virus can live on surfaces](#) for days.

Sacks says that he wipes down door knobs, cabinet door handles, and other high-touch surfaces with a Clorox wipe after each showing.

### **New requirements in the Covid era**

Another big change is the required health disclosure forms that everyone is supposed to fill out prior to in-person showings. Most agree that although the forms are important, they're a bit of an annoyance.

“The legal Covid forms and disclosures that we are required to complete are a time-intensive new level of bureaucracy that we agents and our clients have to endure,” Lewis says.

REBNY's [health questionnaire screening form](#) is relatively short. It asks you five questions regarding if you've been in close proximity with anyone who has Covid-19, if you have tested positive, and if you have shown symptoms of the virus, in the last 14 days.

The form says that it should be “distributed to all attendees within 24 hours of any scheduled meeting,” but according to Vinokur, not everyone is sending the forms in advance.

“These forms are mandatory and just show whether the parties are serious or not, respectful or not, and perhaps what they will be like during the negotiation,” she says.

Steinberg says he also does extra pre-screening and has a discussion about the property prior to a visit.

Every building has their own rules when it comes to guests and in-person showings so make sure your broker is familiar with the building in advance—or you might not be able to access the apartment.

“Many appointments must now first be blessed by managing agents—sometimes with 24 to 48 hours of notice,” Lewis says. He recommends that you [get familiar with the apartments](#) that you like as much as possible before making the effort to see them in person.