

**BEFORE THE IOWA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION  
1920 SE HULSIZER  
ANKENY, IOWA**

---

<b>IN RE:</b>	)	
	)	<b>CASE NUMBER: A09-023</b>
<b>Merle L. Kopel</b>	)	
<b>Broker (B12111)</b>	)	
	)	<b>COMBINED STATEMENT OF</b>
<b>Kopel Realtors &amp; Associates</b>	)	<b>CHARGES, INFORMAL</b>
<b>585-8<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>	)	<b>SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT</b>
<b>Marion, Iowa 52302</b>	)	<b>AND CONSENT ORDER IN A</b>
	)	<b>DISCIPLINARY CASE</b>
<b>Respondent.</b>	)	

---

The Iowa Real Estate Commission (Commission) and **Merle L. Kopel** (Respondent) enter into this Combined Statement of Charges, Informal Settlement Agreement, and Consent Order in a Disciplinary Case (Order) pursuant to Iowa Code Sections 17A.10(1) and 272C.3(4) (2009).

1. The Commission issued the Respondent real estate broker license number B12111 on October 16, 1986. Respondent's license is current and in full force and effect through December 31, 2009. At all times relevant to this matter, the Respondent was a licensed real estate broker sole proprietor located in Marion, Iowa.

2. The Commission has jurisdiction of this disciplinary matter pursuant to Iowa Code chapters 17A, 272C, and 543B (2009). Licenses issued by the Commission are subject to the laws of the State of Iowa and to the administrative rules of the Commission.

**STATEMENT OF CHARGES**

COUNT I

3. Respondent is charged with engaging in practices harmful or detrimental to the public in violation of Iowa Code sections 543B.29(1)(c), 543B.29(1)(j), 543B.34, and 543B.46 (2009) by:

- (a) Failing to maintain at all times a record of the Respondent's trust account. See 193E Iowa Admin. Code §§ 13.1(6) and 18.14(5)(e).
- (b) Failing to maintain the general ledger, individual ledgers, and bank reconciliation to reflect accurate current balances. See 193E Iowa Admin. Code §§ 13.1(6), 18.14(5)(e).
- (c) Failing to properly maintain individual ledgers for each real estate transaction. See 193E Iowa Admin. Code §§ 13.1(6)(b), 18.14(5)(e)(2).

- (d) Failing to conduct and/or document monthly reconciliation on a written worksheet to ensure the agreement of the general ledger balance, reconciled bank balance, and individual ledger totals. See 193E Iowa Admin. Code §§ 13.1(6)(a)(3), 18.14(5)(e).

#### CIRCUMSTANCES

4. On or about July 15, 2009, an audit of the Respondent's trust account and records was conducted.
5. The auditor found the Respondent is not updating the general ledger on a daily basis.
6. The auditor found that the Respondent is not properly creating and/or maintaining individual ledger accounts for each real estate transaction.
7. The auditor found the broker had non sufficient funds in the trust account for April, May and June of 2009.
8. The auditor found that all receipts and disbursements were not being accurately recorded.

#### SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

9. Respondent admits each and every allegation in the above-stated Statement of Charges.
10. Respondent acknowledges that he has a right to receive notice of the above-stated charges and to request a hearing before the Commission on the merits of the charges. By freely and voluntarily entering into this Order, the Respondent waives his right to notice and a hearing and all attendant rights, including the right to seek judicial review. This Order constitutes discipline against the Respondent, and is the final agency order in this contested case pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.10 and 193 Iowa Administrative Code 7.4.
11. Respondent agrees that the State's attorney and/or Commission staff may present this Order to the Commission and may have *ex parte* communications with the Commission while presenting it. Respondent waives any right of notice of this meeting or any right that the Respondent might have to participate in the discussion of this Order among the Commission, the Commission staff and the State's attorney.
12. This Order shall be part of the permanent record of Respondent and shall be considered by the Commission in determining the nature and severity of any future disciplinary action to be imposed in the event of any future violations of the laws and rules governing the practice of real estate by the Respondent.

13. Failure to comply with the terms of this Order shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of Iowa Code sections 543B.29(3), 543B.34(2) and 272C.3(2)(a) (2009) and shall be grounds for further disciplinary action. However, no action may be taken against the Respondent for violations of this Order without a hearing, or waiver of hearing.

14. This Order is not binding on the Iowa Real Estate Commission until it has been formally approved by a majority of the Commission members.

(a) In the event that this Order is rejected by the Commission it shall be of no force or effect to either party, and it shall not be admissible for any purpose in further proceedings in this matter.

(b) If the Commission approves this Order, it shall fully dispose of all issues in this case.

15. Upon acceptance by both the Commission and Respondent, this Combined Statement of Charges, Informal Settlement and Consent Order shall be a public record available for inspection and copying in its entirety in accordance with the requirements of Iowa Code chapter 22 (2009).

### **CONSENT ORDER**

#### **IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:**

16. REPRIMAND. Pursuant to 193E Iowa Administrative Code section 18.14(1)(j), the Respondent is reprimanded.

17. CIVIL PENALTY. The Respondent shall pay a civil penalty to the Commission in the amount of \$2,500 no later than 30 calendar days after acceptance of this Order by the Commission. The civil penalty must come under a cover letter addressed to the Commission's Executive Officer and refer to case A09-023.

18. EDUCATION. The Respondent shall attend the Commission approved eight (8) hour course "Trust Accounts." These hours shall be in addition to any real estate continuing education required by law for license renewal. The original certificate of attendance must be submitted to the Iowa Real Estate Commission within twelve (12) months of the signing of this agreement by the Commission and must come under a cover letter addressed to the Commission's Executive Officer and refer to case A09-026.

**WHEREFORE**, the terms of this Combined Statement of Charges, Informal Settlement Agreement, and Consent Order are agreed to and accepted by the Iowa Real Estate Commission and the Respondent.

**FOR THE RESPONDENT:**

Voluntarily agreed to and accepted by **Merle L. Kopel** on this 2 day of ~~Dec~~ January, ~~2009~~ 2010

[Redacted Signature]

**MERLE L. KOPEL**, Respondent

State of Iowa

County of Linn

Signed and sworn to before me on this 2 day of January, ~~2009~~ by: 2010

[Redacted Signature]

Notary Public, State of Iowa

Printed Name: Christina T. Sundberg

My Commission Expires: 11/21/11



**FOR THE COMMISSION:**

Voluntarily agreed to and accepted by the **IOWA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION** on this 21 day of January, 2009.

[Redacted Signature]

**LAURIE DAWLEY**, Chair  
Iowa Real Estate Commission



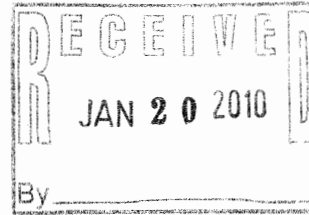
STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER  
GOVERNOR  
PATTY JUDGE  
LT. GOVERNOR

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
PROFESSIONAL LICENSING & REGULATION

January 5, 2010

Merle Kopel  
Kopel Realtors & Associates  
585-8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52302



Re: Complaint Case No. A09-023

Dear Mr. Kopel;

I am in receipt of your signed Settlement Agreement and your request for additional time to pay the assessed civil penalty. It has been the Commission's practice to allow additional time for payment up to 180 days from the date the Agreement is accepted by the Commission.

As you have already signed the Agreement and it will be formally accepted at the Commission meeting on January 21<sup>st</sup>, this letter shall authorize you up to 180 days to remit the penalty. This will put the due date for your submission no later than July 21, 2010.

If this is acceptable, please sign and date in the space provided below, and return to this office within fourteen days.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact this office at any time.

Sincerely,

David Batts  
Executive Officer  
Iowa Real Estate Commission  
515/281-7397  
E-mail: david.batts@iowa.gov

Merle L. Kopel

1-15-2010

Date