Apartments: An Overview

Introduction

The Apartments function allows you to enter, examine, and modify information about units available for rental or sale. This information may come from listings placed with your agency, listings gathered from publications such as daily papers, and listings shared between co-brokers.

Before examining the Apartments function in detail, there are a few key points with which you should be familiar. Understanding these concepts will allow you to use the Apartments function easily and efficiently.

Apartments and Owners

Each time you use the Apartments function to enter information about an available unit, you are creating a *listing record*. This listing record contains basic information about the unit, such as its location, size, type, and price. In addition to this information, the listing record identifies the party responsible for managing the unit in question. In many cases, this is a property management firm. In other cases, this may be the actual landlord. Each listing record must be linked to an Owner.

As you might expect, one Owner can be responsible for many units, especially in the case of a property management firm. Therefore, Owners are stored in their own data table, which is linked to the Apartments data table through the Apartments function.

You must select an Owner for each listing record you create. You may choose an Owner who is currently on file or you may add a new Owner if the listing is managed by someone with whom you have not yet worked. You can add an Owner right in the middle of the process of adding a new listing or you can choose to add the Owner first and then select the Apartments function from the Main Menu.

Sales and Rentals

A unit may be available for both sale and rental. For example, a property owner may say "I'll rent the place until I can find a buyer" or there may be a "rent-to-own" option available. That's why the Apartments Form allows an entry for both Rental and Sales amounts.

Unit Charges

In addition to the rental amount or sale price, there may be other charges associated with the unit, such as condo maintenance fees. Depending on the entry in the Purchase Type field, the system will prompt you to enter appropriate costs. If there are no costs required, the screen will display the message "Not Required".

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Restrictions

Certain restrictions apply when you enter or examine information via the Apartments function. These are:

- Length of the field
- Valid values
- User level

Length of the Field

Each field in the listing record is a certain length. The length is sometimes difficult to identify simply by looking at the form. At the end of this chapter is a table listing each field in the listing record, a brief description of the field, the source of the field, any special information about the field, and the field's length.

Valid Values

Certain fields should contain values determined to be valid by the AutoList system. This validity check provides a measure of protection against data entry errors and helps to keep your data uniform so that the Search function yields the best results. For example, without restrictions on size options, you might enter 2BR for a two-bedroom unit, another person might enter 2BED, and yet another 2BD, while everyone means the same thing: a two-bedroom apartment. Then, if the Search function is set to look for 2BED, listing records with those other values would not qualify.

The AutoList system supplies you with standard values for many fields. Your system administrator can add to these data tables if your agency has a specialized need.

User Level

There are three user levels in the AutoList system: User, Admin, and Super. Your user level will determine which listing records you can examine and which you can edit. Here are the rules:

- If you are a Super level user, you can examine and edit records entered by anyone on the system, including other users at the Super level.

- If you are an Admin level user, you can examine and edit records that you have entered and you can examine, but not edit, records entered by others.

- If you are just a plain old User, you examine and edit records that you have entered and examine records entered by others, except that you will not see the Owner information. The agent responsible for the listing will be identified on the listing record. You must discuss the listing with that person to uncover the Owner information.