

Northeast Florida MLS Introduces TOKEN “Strong Authentication” and SAFEMLS®





A few weeks ago Northeast Florida MLS announced plans to implement a TOKEN based security initiative designed to provide optimum protection for valuable MLS and customer data. Our reliance on usernames and passwords as the sole form of user authentication is no longer an option. With the advent of easy-to-use web-based systems, password sharing has become even more widespread. Whether these passwords are used by non-members who fail to pay their fair share, or unauthorized data pirates, the simple truth is that the MLS is no longer a truly private members-only system. The cost of system usage (hardware, Internet bandwidth and software) is increasing at a faster rate than the increase in dues paying members.

Controlling access to the MLS is now more critical than ever, since it is no longer just listing information at stake. MLS systems now include a host of contact management applications that store personal information about clients and prospects. With the use of transaction and document management systems on the rise, access to the MLS system now includes open access to a whole new world of sensitive property and personal financial information. The Northeast Florida MLS and its members have an *ethical* obligation to protect the personal information of customers and clients. It is only a matter of time before members may also be *legally* obligated to protect this information.

In order to deal with the inherent weaknesses of the current password-based login authentication system and to provide a greater level of protection for listing, consumer and financial information, Northeast Florida MLS will implement a TOKEN based security process known as “*strong authentication*.” In reality, we are all familiar with “*strong authentication*” already. A common example of strong authentication is an ATM or bank card. Such cards are called ‘tokens’ in IT security parlance. TOKENS require something you have (your card), and something you know (your PIN). “*Strong authentication*” eliminates password risks by providing multi-factor (more than one level) authentication. Best of all, “*strong authentication*” is not a new behavior for our members, as we can all relate to the ATM card example. The NEFAR electronic lockbox system is another form of “*strong authentication*” as it operates on something you have (your lockbox key) and something you know (your PIN code).

During the week of July 18th, Northeast Florida MLS will begin phased implementation of the TOKEN based SAFEMLS® product in partnership with Clarity Security. Secure, one-time-only-use passwords for MLS access will be delivered to the optional device of your choice. Northeast Florida MLS users will be able to choose the type of authenticator (device that generates the passwords) they use. The optional choices include a key-fob (TOKEN), the GE Supra DisplayKEY, the GE Supra eKEY (PDA), and TEXT-pass (Smartphone and Cell Phone). With SAFEMLS®, the choice is yours! See next page.

Watch for further details on where and how this process will be implemented.

<p>Hardware token, or key-fob</p> 	<p>Description: The original authenticator, the SAFEMLS® blue token, is cost-effective, convenient and easy to use. The slim line device measures about 1" X 2" and easily attaches to a key chain for quick access. Just press the small gray button to obtain a password!</p> <p>Is it for you? If you are cost-sensitive, the blue token is the least expensive option. The letters and numbers on the face are large and easy to read.</p> <p>Cost: First token No Fee for NEFMLS members</p>
<p>GE Security's DisplayKEY</p> 	<p>Description: If you carry a DisplayKEY, you can choose to receive your passwords right on your existing DisplayKEY device, consolidating the number of total devices you need. It's simple. You "sync" your key in the cradle, and you'll automatically receive a SAFEMLS update. The next time you scroll through the DisplayKEY menu you will notice a new menu item, "MLS Token." Select this option and the DisplayKEY will show your one-time password.</p> <p>Is it for you? If you are a Display Key user, like over 80% of all GE Key holders, and you always have this device with you when you log into the MLS, then you may find this tool to be convenient.</p> <p>Cost: \$25.00 (July 18-August 18) \$50.00 (After August 18)</p>
<p>GE Security's eKEY</p> 	<p>Description: For eKEY users, receive your SAFEMLS password right on your eKEY supported Smartphone or other approved SUPRA device. Once your eKEY has been updated with new software, you will notice a new menu option in the Supra menu, "SAFEMLS". Click the SAFEMLS menu option, and your screen will display your one-time MLS password. Your phone is now an all-in-one PDA, electronic lockbox key, and SAFEMLS token!</p> <p>Is it for you? Most people who use eKEY find that they carry their smart phone or PDA with them almost all the time, which makes this option very convenient. The password display is clear and easy to read.</p> <p>Cost: \$25.00 (July 18-August 18) \$50.00 (After August 18)</p>
<p>TEXT-pass®</p> 	<p>Description: With TEXT-pass, one-time use passwords are delivered to the end-user's mobile phone as a SMS text message. There is no special device, download or software required to use TEXT-pass, making it a true zero-footprint solution. Once a user is enrolled in TEXT-pass, they can send a text message to Clarity Security and within seconds, a single use password will be delivered to them in response. Any cellular phone or Smartphone that supports SMS messaging is TEXT-pass ready!</p> <p>Is it for you? If you always carry your cell phone when working and are comfortable with text messaging, this may be a great option for you. It's as easy to use as your cell phone because it <i>is</i> your cell phone! (price does NOT include your provider's text messaging charges)</p> <p>Cost: \$50 for 1 year contract/\$110 for 2 year contract (July 18-August 18) \$75 for 1 year contract/\$135 for 2 year contract (After August 18)</p>

Northeast Florida MLS wants to assure each of our members that we are working to protect the valuable data and information in the MLS. More information on the SAFEMLS® product will be provided to each of our members in the coming weeks. In the meantime, members can learn more about MLS security at www.safemls.com.