

Stewart – Massachusetts Mid-Week Update – June 24, 2020

It's Wednesday, and time for the mid-Week update. As always, we hope that you, your family, colleagues, and staff continue to be well and are enjoying the beginning of summer. The July 4th holiday is just around the corner, and some registries will be operating a reduced schedule on either the Friday before the holiday or the Monday after the holiday. Be sure to check out our Registry of Deeds update for the various operating schedules at all the registries of deeds around the July 4th holiday. Our Stewart Underwriting attorneys will be here and available for you on both Friday July 3rd and Monday July 6th. If your "go-to" underwriter isn't available, just email massuwing@stewart.com and your email will be directed to an available counsel.

In addition to our Registry Update, we've included information on a recent Special Alert involving property in Massachusetts, online access to Probate Court records, and information from the SJC, NAR, and ABA regarding racial equity.

- *Massachusetts Registry of Deeds recording / filing update*

The Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket, Norfolk, and Berkshire South Registries have told us they are closed on Friday July 3 (i.e., not accepting e-recordings) and so please plan accordingly.

- *Stewart Special Alert Issued*

On June 18, 2020, we issued a Special Alert Bulletin. The bulletin can be accessed here: <https://www.vuwriter.com/en/bulletins/2020-5/sa2020027.html> If you haven't already reviewed the bulletin, please take a moment and do so now.

In case you don't know, a Special Alert Bulletin is one that will generally involve specific people and/or property. Prior to issuing a policy of title insurance insuring the property identified in the special alert, or if the buyer or seller are individuals or entities identified in the special alert, underwriter approval is required. As a reminder, Stewart maintains a Special Alert database, and before closing a transaction, all issuing offices must search the names of the parties to the transaction, including the seller, buyer/borrower, payoff lender and new lender, using the Special Alerts database. The database can be accessed here: <https://specialalerts.stewart.com/Search>

- *Accessing Probate and other Court Records online (there's more there than just the docket!)*

Did you know that many court records are available online, including **probate court** records? As a member of the bar, you have access not only to the docket list, but also PDF copies of pleadings that have been filed and orders that have been entered by the court through the attorney portal at the www.masscourts.org site. This is particularly useful if you need a recent probate file and your examiner cannot obtain the information due to court closures. You just need to set up a password and the world is your oyster. Here is a link to the attorney quick-access guide: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/quick-reference-card-using-the-attorney-portal/download>

- *Letter from the Seven Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court and Discrimination*

On June 7, the seven Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court issued a letter to the members of the judiciary and the bar addressing the need to recognize and address injustice and inequality which continue to exist today. Many other organizations have likewise made public statements in response to the killing of George Floyd and have recognized that part of the solution is understanding, acknowledging, and recognizing discrimination and bias in ourselves.

There are two interesting and worthwhile items we want to pass along. The first is a 50 minute video which dives into implicit bias. Although designed for Realtors®, the majority of this information can be applied in any setting. The video is available on the NAR's (National Association of Realtors®) website and by following this

link: <https://www.nar.realtor/videos/bias-override-overcoming-barriers-to-fair-housing>

The other item we wanted to share is called a 21 Day Racial Equity Challenge. We learned about this through the Hampden County Bar Association. The challenge, presented by the American Bar Association, is designed to explore and deepen our awareness of and engagement in issues of racial equity. To check out the syllabus and daily challenge items see the American Bar Association's link

here: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/labor_law/membership/equal_opportunity/

- *Stewart Underwriting \Upcoming Webinars*

We've got two upcoming webinars:

- No Stress Distressed Properties on **August 5, 2020 at 10 AM**
- Probate Perils and Perfecting Title on **September 16, 2020 at 10 AM**

To register follow this link:

<https://www.stewart.com/content/dam/stewart/Microsites/massachusetts/pdfs/Summer-2020-Series-Invitation-Form-6-17.pdf>

If you have any webinar topics you'd like to see us offer in the future, please reach out to us at massuwing@stewart.com.

- *Stewart's Massachusetts COVID-19 Resource Page*

Please view our resource page which contains all the local information relative to underwriting guidance, affidavits, registry closures and frequently asked questions. This site will be updated regularly. To access click **HERE** and make it a favorite on your web-browser. You can also copy the following URL and paste it into your web

browser: <https://www.stewart.com/content/stewart/stewartcom/en/stg/massachusetts/underwriting-resources/forms-policy-information/covid-19-info-resources.html>

stewart title®

200 5th Avenue, Suite 301, Waltham, MA 02451

Phone: 800-628-2988 **Fax:** 781-697-3336

Monarch Place - 1414 Main Street, Suite 1835, Springfield, MA 01144

Phone: 413-930-8090 **Fax:** 978-964-0565

Tiziano Doto, Agency Services Manager - tiziano.doto@stewart.com

Jutta R. Deeney, VP, State Counsel - jutta.deeney@stewart.com

Shannon Coleman, Underwriting Counsel - scoleman@stewart.com

Christine Provost, Associate Senior Underwriter - christine.provost@stewart.com

Tracie Kester, Underwriting Counsel - tracie.kester@stewart.com

Paula M. Cuculo, Underwriting Counsel - paula.cucoulo@stewart.com

Aaron Monahan, Senior Paralegal - aaron.monahan@stewart.com

General MA Underwriting Mailbox - massuwing@stewart.com

Tracy Hawkins, Agency Sales Representative Sr. - tracy.hawkins@stewart.com

Rita Kelly-Parsley, Agency Sales Representative Sr. - rita.kelly-parsley@stewart.com

Tom Potito, Agency Sales Representative Sr. - tom.potito@stewart.com

Mary Blomerth, Agency Sales Representative Sr. - mary.blomerth@stewart.com

Lyslie A. DeMeo, Agency Sales Representative, Sr. - ldemeo@stewart.com