

Stewart – Massachusetts Mid-Week Update – December 9, 2020

Dear Stewart Partners,

As always, we hope all of you, your colleagues and family remain safe and healthy. As we head into winter and the holidays, while COVID infections rise, it is more important than ever that we put into practice the recommendations from the CDC and health officials. To read the CDC's guidance on how to protect yourself and others, follow this link: [How to Protect Yourself & Others | CDC](#)

In addition to keeping physically healthy, we want to be sure you are healthy from a technology standpoint. In that regard, we're providing a link to the latest SANS Security Awareness newsletter, called OUCH! Also, we wanted to alert you to recording and search issues at Bristol South. Lastly, we wanted to pass on some recent information we were alerted to by HUD regarding payoffs on reverse mortgages and partial claim mortgages, secured with a mortgage to HUD. For more see information below.

- [Payoffs for Home Equity Conversion Loans \(HECM a/k/a reverse mortgage\) and Partial Claims held by HUD](#)

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) published new Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as a reminder of the method by which payoff funds for Secretary-Held Home Equity Conversion Mortgages (HECMs) and Partial Claims can be submitted to FHA. All payoffs for Secretary-Held HECMs and Partial Claims must be sent to HUD's Loan Servicing Contractor, Novad Management Consulting, in the form of certified funds, such as a cashier's check. Wires are not an acceptable method to remit these payoff funds. To read the published guidance, follow this link: [SFH FHA INFO 20-92.pdf \(hud.gov\)](#)

Keep in mind that these Partial Claim Mortgages are currently being recorded because of COVID forbearance programs. Just like the HUD Mortgages that were recorded during the so-called "great recession," these mortgages will require a separate payoff letter and must be paid off and discharged just like any other mortgage.

- [Bristol South Registry of Deeds – Searching and Recording issues](#)

On Monday December 7, the Registrar of the Bristol South Registry of Deeds issued an email memorandum outlining issues the Registry is having with searching and recording. The issues are isolated to Bristol South and the registry is working with their IT vendor to resolve. As of yesterday, the registry was only accepting recordings that were delivered in person, including overnight mail. No e-filed documents were being accepted. Hand delivered documents are being held and will be recorded in the order received once their systems are up and running. Searching is presently compromised and the records can only be searched through November 27, 2020 – anything after that date will not appear in the search.

The Registry anticipates that recording capabilities will be resolved today; but we recommend that you check with the Registry directly for specific updates. If you have a pending transaction, and you are unable to complete a rundown or recording due to ongoing issues with the Registry, please check in with one of our Massachusetts underwriters for options relative to gap coverage.

- [OUCH! Security Awareness December Newsletter](#)

This month's newsletter contains tips on how you can help family members who may be not be as sophisticated or aware of security risks develop and maintain safe and secure technology habits. This is particularly timely because many holiday gifts this year will be electronic devices which can be vulnerable to bad actors such as hackers. The newsletter can be accessed here:

<https://www.sans.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/OUCH%21%20Dec%202020%20-%20Securing%20the%20Grandparents%20v3-English.pdf>

- [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>



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