Pushy salespeople in Dubai: how to protect yourself

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In the middle of my purchase in Dubai, I contacted the developer's customer service just to get the payment details. By the end of that call, I had signed a new deal for a completely different home. This is how it happened, how I cancelled it, and what to do so it does not happen to you.

In short

- Ask for everything in writing, and do not sign anything in the same conversation.
- Check that the agent is registered and that the ad has a permit.
- Dubai law has no cooling-off period. Once you have signed, cancelling depends on the contract and the developer.

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01 What happened

I was in the middle of buying a property I had already chosen, through an agent who was guiding me. To make the payment I needed the escrow account details, so I contacted the developer's customer service.

Instead of giving me a technical answer, they passed my request to a salesperson, and within minutes I was on a video call. He spoke to me in Arabic, built a warm, personal, "friend and brother" conversation, and showed me a completely different home from the one I had chosen. Under pressure, and with quite a few tricks, he got me to sign a new deal directly with him, bypassing my agent.

At that point I had not transferred any money.

02 How I cancelled

Once I realised what had happened, I asked to cancel the new deal and go back to my original one. I went to the company's management and explained that I only work through my agent for this deal. The new deal was cancelled, and from then on, everything was back on track.

03 Six signs of sales pressure

1. A technical request is passed to a salesperson instead of customer service.
2. You are immediately offered a video call.
3. You are shown a different property from the one you already chose.
4. The conversation turns personal, in your language, in a "friend and brother" style.
5. You are asked to close the deal directly with the salesperson, bypassing the person who represents you.
6. You are asked to sign during that same call.

04 What to do instead

- **Ask for technical details in writing,** by email or message, not on a call.
- **Check the escrow account details yourself** in the official Dubai REST app, rather than taking them from a call. The four-step checklist.
- **Do not sign anything during the same call.** A good offer will still be there tomorrow.
- **Do not close with a developer's salesperson without the person who represents you.** A developer's salesperson represents the developer, even when the conversation is warm and personal.
- **If you have already signed,** go to management right away and ask to cancel, in writing. It worked for me, but whether you can cancel depends on the contract and the stage, so it is better not to sign in the first place.

05 How to check an agent and an ad

- **The agent:** the Land Department app has a service for checking licences. Enter the licence number of the agent or the agency to see whether it is valid.
- **The ad:** according to RERA, every company that advertises a property in Dubai needs an advertising permit, and ads must include the permit number. Since April 2023 a QR code must

also be shown in print ads and in visual and audio ads, and it leads to the permit details of the ad. An ad without a permit number should make you suspicious.

06 There is no cooling-off period

Dubai law does not give you the right to cancel a contract to buy an off-plan apartment just because you changed your mind. You can only go to court if the developer breaches the contract, for example, if it departs materially from the specifications. I only managed to cancel because I went to management right away. It is better not to sign in the first place.

Frequently asked questions

How do I recognise sales pressure?

Three clear signs: a technical question gets passed to a salesperson instead of customer service, you are offered a different property from the one you chose, and you are asked to sign during the same conversation.

I signed under pressure. Can I cancel?

What worked for me: I contacted management right away and asked in writing to cancel. Whether you can cancel depends on the contract and the stage, so it is better not to sign in the first place.

Where do I get the escrow account details?

From the official Land Department app, not from the developer's sales representative.

Sources

- The story: my own experience during my purchase in 2024.
- Escrow accounts and the Dubai REST app: the FAQ on this site, and the Dubai Land Department.
- Checking licences and permits: DLD, Validate licenses and permits. Permit number in every ad: Dubai Media Office, 20.10.2020. QR codes in print and audiovisual ads from 24.04.2023 (Madmoun): DLD, Gulf News.
- No cooling-off period: Chambers, Khaleej Times, Mondaq.

Got an offer under pressure?

Send it to me before you sign, and we will go through it together.

Send a WhatsApp message →

This is my own experience. It does not replace legal advice or a review of your specific contract.