

FREE HOMEOWNER GUIDE

The 60-Second Letter Checklist: Real Notice or Look-Alike?

 3 Parts, 14 Checks  Printable PDF  MVP Law Group, APC

The envelope looks like it came from the county. The letter inside knows your parcel number, your square footage, and the day your deed was recorded. There is a barcode, a deadline, and a fee. Before you reach for the checkbook, give it sixty seconds and these six checks.

WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

The letter our clients ask about every week

One version landing in Los Angeles mailboxes right now calls itself “Property Records” and asks for a **\$132.50 processing fee** for a “property profile” and a copy of your recorded deed.

The county sells the same recorded document for **a few dollars**, and your original deed was already mailed back to you after recording.

California law, Business and Professions Code section 17533.6, **forces these mailers to admit** in print that they are not from any government agency. The confession is on the page. This checklist teaches you to find it.

I The sixty-second checks

☐ **Check the sender's name against a real office.**

Los Angeles County's recording office is the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk. Property taxes come from the Treasurer and Tax Collector, and assessments from the Assessor. "Property Records," "Record Transfer Services," and similar names belong to no government office. If the name sounds official but matches nothing, that is the first tell.

☐ **Hunt for the disclaimer box.**

Look in the corners and the fine print for words like "this product or service has not been approved or endorsed by any governmental agency." California law requires that sentence on look-alike solicitations. Finding it ends the mystery: the letter is an advertisement.

☐ **Test the price.**

A copy of a recorded document costs a few dollars from the LA County Registrar-Recorder. If the letter wants \$89, \$110, or \$132.50 for a "property profile" or "deed package," the markup is the message.

☐ **Question the deadline.**

"Please Respond By" dates on these letters expire nothing. Real government notices state what happens if you miss them, cite a statute or account, and never threaten you into buying a copy of your own paperwork.

☐ **Look at where the money goes.**

A personal check payable to a company name at a P.O. box is how solicitations collect. County offices take payment through official channels, list government addresses, and give receipts tied to your parcel.

☐ **Ask the deciding question: do I already have this?**

After recording, the county mails the original deed back to the owner, and MVP Law Group clients also have a copy in their trust portfolio. You cannot be sold a thing you already own, unless you forget that you own it.

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What to do with a look-alike

☐ **Do not pay it, and do not call the number on it.**

There is no scenario where you need the service. Calling the printed number only confirms your address is live.

☐ **Keep it or shred it, your choice.**

It is not a bill and creates no lien, penalty, or consequence. Its own fine print typically concedes you are under no obligation to pay.

☐ **Need the actual document? Get it for a few dollars.**

Our companion guide, [Get Your Deed Without Paying \\$132.50](#), walks through ordering from the county in about ten minutes, online, by mail, or in person.

☐ **Report it if you want to push back.**

The FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov, the California Attorney General at oag.ca.gov/consumers, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service all take these reports. Five minutes each, and the record helps the next enforcement action.

☐ **Expect more mail, and warn the neighbors.**

Mailing lists get sold. A recorded deed often draws several waves of solicitations, and your neighbors who just bought or refinanced are getting them too. Forward them this checklist.

Most official-looking mail about your home is noise. A few pieces are not, and the difference matters more than anything else on this page.

☐ **A county e-notification about a recording you did not make.**

The Registrar-Recorder's free alert service emails you when a document records under your name. If that alert ever describes a deed or lien you do not recognize, call us the same day. That is the rare, real version of deed fraud, and speed matters.

☐ **Anything from a court with a case number naming you.**

Court mail is never junk. Do not ignore it, and do not panic either. Bring it to a lawyer before responding.

☐ **Property tax and exemption notices, verified at the source.**

Real tax bills exist, and so do fake ones. Never pay from the letter. Look up your parcel directly with the LA County Treasurer and Tax Collector or the Assessor, using the addresses on the real offices card below, and pay what the county's own records show.

The real offices card

KEEP THESE, IGNORE THE IMITATIONS

Who	What they actually handle	Where
LA County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk	Recorded deeds and document copies, a few dollars each, plus the free e-notification alert for recordings under your name.	lavote.gov
LA County Assessor	Assessed values, ownership records, and the homeowners' exemption. Free parcel lookup.	assessor.lacounty.gov
LA County Treasurer and Tax Collector	The real property tax bill. Verify any tax letter here before paying anything.	ttc.lacounty.gov
Federal Trade Commission	Reports about misleading mail solicitations.	reportfraud.ftc.gov
California Attorney General	Consumer complaints about deceptive business practices.	oag.ca.gov/consumers
MVP Law Group, free letter check	Send a photo of any letter about your home or trust and we will tell you whether it is real, usually in about a minute.	(818) 788-7881

FREE LETTER CHECK

Sixty seconds was not enough?

Some letters are genuinely hard to read, and that is by design. Send us a photo of yours and we will tell you whether it is real, free, usually the same business day. If it traces back to your estate plan, we will explain exactly what was

recorded and why. For the full story behind these mailers, read [our article on the deed mailer](#).

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