

Avoiding Rental Scams and Dishonest Landlords *Don't get scammed!*

Watch out for these warnings signs that are often used by scammers.

- If the landlord will not meet you in person
- If the landlord tells you to ignore the property management company and instead work with them directly
- If the landlord asks for the security deposit in cash, or payable to a personal name, rather than a business name
- If the rental price seems very low, or too good to be true.
- If the landlord rushes you to pay the deposit or else someone else will get it, or if they ask you to pay a security deposit before you sign the lease
- If you see the property advertised on different sites by different people or different management companies
- If the property has a for-rent sign and the phone number on the sign isn't the same as the landlords
- If the landlord lives out of state and doesn't have a local management company with whom you can have regular contact
- If the landlord will not provide you with their office or home address
- If the landlord asks you for money up front to help you find a property
- If the landlord doesn't have an official Rental Application form for you to complete
- If the landlord does not require that you sign a legally binding lease and give you a fully executed copy

Questions to ask your potential landlord:

On what criteria do you accept or deny a rental application?

- They should have specific criteria to tell you

Are you the owner or do you represent the owner?

- If it is not the owner, then it should be a licensed real estate agent

Will you hold my security deposit in an escrow account until my lease us up?

- Your deposit should be held in a security deposit escrow account

How quickly will my security deposit be returned after I move out?

- It should be returned in no more than 30 days from your move-out date

How do you assess damage to the home regarding the security deposit refund?

- You should have a inventory sheet to document any damage prior to your move-in. You should take pictures of the entire home for your sake of documentation

When/How/Who do I contact for maintenance items?

- There should be someone to call 24/7 in case of an emergency as well as someone to contact during the day

How many methods of payment are available for my monthly rent?

- Online payments options should be made available

When is the rent due and what are the late fees?

- Make sure you know when you have to pay, when you'll get late fees assessed and how much those late fees will be

Can I have time to read the lease in full?

- The most important thing to do is read your lease agreement and know what it says.
Ask questions and do not make any verbal agreements