# How to Avoid the Most Common Rental Scams

## Description

More and more Americans are choosing to rent instead of own, and this competitive rental market can mean skyrocketing prices, but it also translates into higher rates of identity theft and rental scams. Use reputable sites like https://www.rent.com/california/san-francisco-apartments/1-bedroom to make sure your search is safe and secure. If youâ€™re on the hunt for a new apartment or house rental for you and your family, be sure you donâ€™t fall into the trap of common cons by following these tips.

**Look for Comparable Rates**

Before signing your name on any lease or even checking out an apartment, be sure to research the rent rates in the specified neighborhood. Use a site like Zilpy.com to make better housing decisions. If the apartment in question is listed for a price much lower than comparable homes in the area, thereâ€™s a high likelihood the rental could be a scam. At the reverse end of the spectrum; opportunistic landlords that charge an arm and a leg for an apartment could be attempting to swindle you out of your money. You can always consult with a property management company prior to checking out places on your own, as they can usually navigate the process with ease.



**An Overly Enthusiastic Landlord**

If the landlord seems too eager to place you in their home, take caution. With the competition being as it is, landlords have no reason to â€œcourtâ€• individuals to live in their home; too much eagerness is suspicious behavior. If they donâ€™t ask for references, donâ€™t desire to run a credit check, and are more than willing to place you in the home sooner rather than later, trust that itâ€™s a too good to be true situation. In this case, it might be a good idea to use Trusted Person Tracing Services with Bond Rees to ensure you are working with honest people.

**Never Wire Money**

Absolutely, under no circumstances, should a landlord ever need you to wire money to them, whether theyâ€™re asking for a security deposit, first monthâ€™s rent, or even a small application fee. This is most common way rental con artists make money off of their unsuspecting victims, so take caution. The moment you wire money away, thereâ€™s no way of getting it back, so take preventative measures instead of feeling regret after the fact.

**Always See the Apartment First**

Itâ€™s understandable that a degree of desperation accompanies the rental search, especially in highly saturated markets where thereâ€™s 20 people vying for a single home on any given day. However, donâ€™t let this desperation force you to make a rash decision and find yourself on the bum side of a con artistâ€™s deal. Never offer to send money without having seen the apartment and landlord first. The listing might seem legitimate, but it could be completely fake. Worse, it could be a real listing stolen from another website that a scam artist took on as their own; the apartment is real and available, but sending your money to the wrong person will see you out of a home and out a month of rent.

**Identity Theft Issues**

Protecting your money is one thing, but safeguarding your identity is an entirely different process. During the rental process, youâ€™ll be asked to provide a bevy of personal and sensitive pieces of information, and itâ€™s to be expectedâ€”after all, how can the landlord determine if you are who you say you are without it? While this is usually unavoidable (and you should be wary if a potential landlord doesnâ€™t ask for your social security number or partial bank records), there are still ways to keep yourself safe while providing the requested information. Instead of handing your SSN over immediately, ask the prospective landlord if they use a certified service. If they respond positively, youâ€™re probably in the clear. Companies that offer rental screenings, like Transunion Smartmove services, are designed to protect both landlord and tenant. They provide all the necessary information like credit checks, criminal histories, and past evictions for landlords, while the tenant can rest assured that their sensitive information remains out of the hands of potential scammers.



If youâ€™re pounding the pavement in search of a new rental home, be sure you do your research on every listing that comes your way. Protect yourself by following these guidelines and look out for suspicious behavior that might indicate a scam.

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