Detecting Potential Rental Scams

You're Asked for Money Upfront

A landlord should never ask for you to pay any kind of touring fees, security deposits, etc. prior to seeing the rental unit. Also be weary of how you agree to send money to a landlord. Sending money via Western Union, gift cards, CashApp, etc. is difficult to trace and a preferred method for scammers.

It Seems Too Good to Be True

If a listing looks too good to be true, it probably is! Be weary of listings with picture-perfect homes that are priced below the average rental prices for the area.

There's No Credit Check or Screening Criteria Involved

Not all landlords perform credit checks, but most will at the very least ask for your rental history and/or references prior to approving your application.

The Landlord Won't Meet You In Person or Speak on the Phone

If the landlord is unable to meet you in person to show you the unit, there is a good chance that it may be a scam. Also be weary when landlords say they are unable to speak with you via phone or video call and insist on communicating only via text or email.

You're Pressured to Lease Right Away

Landlords understand that potential renters want to tour the property before making any decisions. It should be a major red flag to you if the landlord is pressuring you to sign a lease or other official documentation prior to seeing the rental unit.

The Listing Has Errors

If the listing has numerous grammatical, spelling or formatting errors it was likely created by a scammer.

If you suspect that you have been scammed: file a report with the local police department, file a claim with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC.gov), and consider setting a fraud alert on your credit reports through the major credit bureaus (Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion.)