

Know Your Budget

- Is your take-home pay enough to comfortably pay the rent for this particular apartment?
- Would unexpected emergencies, such as short-term job layoff, illness, etc., cause you to fall behind in your rent?
- You should keep at least one-month's rent in savings for emergencies.

Know the Neighborhood

- Are other properties around it well kept-up?
- Check with the police, if possible, as to whether there are reports of crime or other incidences in the neighborhood.
- Check with a neighbor or other tenant in the building as to whether there has been any kind of "trouble."

Check Out the Manager

- Ask one or two other tenants whether they have had trouble getting emergency and general repairs made.
- Does the Manager seem cooperative and willing to help?
- Does the Manager have an office on the building site? Who do you give your rent to?

ASK FOR A WALK-THROUGH INSPECTION

The Living Room

- Check the carpet for stains, tears, or worn spots.
- Check the doors for broken hardware. Does the front door lock work?
- Check the windowsills to see if there is any dust that might have blown through leaks in the windows.
- Are all the window/door screens in good condition? Venetian blinds?
- Inspect ceiling for signs of past water leaks.
- Check the thermostat to see if it works. If in winter-time, make sure there is heat from the furnace. If there is air conditioning, make sure the controls work.

The Bathroom

- Flush the toilet to make sure it works.
- Turn on the sink and tub/shower. Do they work? Is there hot water?
- Check around the base of the toilet and tub. Are there water stains on the floor or signs of past leaks?
- Check for stains or signs of patches in the ceiling indicating possible plumbing leaks from the apartment above.

The Kitchen

- Check the stove burners and oven. Do they all work? Does the stove have all its handles?
- Look under the sink for water stains indicating previous plumbing leaks or floods. Does the garbage disposal work?
- Check the refrigerator. Is it working? If not, ask the Manager to show you or assure you that it does work.

The Bedroom(s)

- Check the closet sliding or hinged door. Are there signs of damage to the door or hardware?
- Is there some kind of emergency (fire) exit or path should a fire break out while you sleep?

The Washer and Dryer

- Make sure you know the rules as to use of the washer and dryer.
- If you have a "private" washer and/or dryer for the apartment's use only, ask the Manager who pays for any repairs? Can you tell whether they are "old" or out-of-date models that might develop repair problems?

Parking

- Check to see if there is a parking place or slot for your use. As where your visitors may park. If you have a lease, make sure provision for parking is in your lease.

Stairways and Halls

- If in an apartment building, notice the condition of any stair or hallway carpeting. Is it worn or torn indicating it may be too old or unsafe – especially stairs?
- Are the stairs or hallway lights working?

TIPS FOR RENTERS

1. Whatever repairs, etc. the landlord agrees to do, make certain it is in writing. Verbal agreements or promises rarely can be accurately remembered, relied upon or enforced.

Without anything in writing, the tenant may be presumed to have accepted the apartment or house on an "as is" basis!

Even if the landlord/manager will not give you anything in writing as to promised repairs, you should still walk-through, with or without the landlord, and note defects showing the condition of the property when you first rent it. This will be useful when time comes for the return of your Security Deposit. A similar walk-through should be made as you vacate the property.

2. If you are given a lease, (a) make sure you read and understand it; and (b) make sure you are given a copy of the lease and keep it in a safe place.
3. Never pay rent in cash if you can at all avoid it. Pay by check or money order. If cash payment is necessary, get and keep a dated receipt at the time you pay.
4. Be business-like in your dealings with the landlord. Keep all receipts, copies, letters, etc. that you send or receive during your tenancy.
5. Treat the apartment or house as you would treat your own property.

This basic form is for your convenience and is not intended to cover all situations. If you have any questions, please get professional help or call us at 303.237.0230.