

Online Rental Scams

Online rentals scams are very common. Here is some useful information to help you *detect*, *avoid*, and *report* a rental scam.

How to **Detect** a Rental Scam

- Rental amount is unusually low
- Landlord is unable to show you the rental
- Landlord claims to be out of town, state, or country
- There is a sense of urgency
- Requests of advanced payments through wiring, cashier's check, money order, escrow service, Western Union, or MoneyGram
- Landlord does not ask for rental application or reference check
- Third party is involved
- Many misspellings
- Excessive use of capitalization
- Email is from a free email provider such as yahoo, gmail, hotmail, etc.

How to **Avoid** a Rental Scam

- Never wire money
- Always meet the landlord or property manager in person before signing rental documents
- Never give out bank account information
- Call the county assessor's office to look up property ownership at (831) 454-2002
- Do a web search of the landlord's name

How to **Report** a Rental Scam

- Call the Federal Trade Commission Consumer Response Center toll-free hotline: 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)
- FTC online complaint form: www.ftc.gov
- Internet Fraud Complaint Center: www.ic3.gov

For more information about rental scams, please visit:

<http://rentalscams.org/>