



Rental Scams

Stay alert and protect yourself from rental scams with the following tips. Here is how to recognize fraudulent listings, prevent falling victim, and what actions to take if you suspect you have been scammed.

What is a rental scam:

A rental scam occurs when someone **fraudulently uses a rental listing** to steal **money** or **personal information**. Scammers may copy legitimate listings, invent fake properties, pose as owners or agents, pressure applicants into sending money before verifying anything.

Common signs of a scam:

- The “owner” will not meet you in person, claiming to be out of the country or on missionary work.
- They want to move you in immediately – no tour allowed.
- They insist on wire transfers, gift cards, or cryptocurrency for payment.
- They request rent and/or security deposit before the lease is signed.
- The price seems unrealistically low compared to similar rentals.
- The listing contains typos, poor grammar, or odd punctuation.
- There is no tenant screening process.
- They ask you to sign an incomplete or vague lease.

Protect yourself from a rental scam:

- Always request a property tour.
- Ignore listings that appear suspicious of anything that feels “off.”
- Insist on speaking directly with the property owner.
- Never pay using cash, wire transfers, gift cards, or cryptocurrency.
- Do not share personal or financial information with anyone claiming to represent the owner or rental company.
- Verify property ownership via the Franklin County Auditor (www.franklincountauditor.com/online-tools) or the rental company website.

How to report fraud:

If you think you have been a victim of a rental scam, immediately contact the police, notify the ad publisher, and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and/or the Ohio Attorney General’s Office.

Federal Trade Commission
1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357)
<https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/>

Ohio Attorney General’s Office
1-800-282-0515
<https://www.ohioprotects.org/file-a-complaint>