

Corporal's Corner: Beware of Rental/Lease Scams

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With the time of year approaching when people are looking to travel or move to a new residence, it is vital to know that if something seems too good to be true, it could be a scam.

As we live in a digital age, online platforms have replaced printed newspapers for places to rent. It has also allowed people to be taken advantage of, especially in rental scams. When looking at places for short-term rentals like Air BNB or numerous other services, use a verified site with some validity indicator.



The same is happening with long-term rentals like houses. Rental ads on websites like Facebook Marketplace or Craigslist are widely used but are inherently dangerous. People pretending to be the owner or real estate agent will trick you into thinking they have the legal authority to rent the residence out to others. They may even provide an official-looking document, making it seem more legitimate. Here are some things to know:

1. Remember that most professional businesses and people will not take money from applications (apps) like Cash App, PayPal, Zelle, Venmo, or wire transfers. Also, asking for payment before signing a lease or rental agreement is a sign of a scam.
2. Professionals will have identification associated with a legitimate company.
3. An agent will be willing to meet you in person, not only over the phone or through email, and will gladly provide you with a receipt.
4. These scams often involve high-pressure sales tactics.

Research carefully and know who you are giving your private information and hard-earned money. Even taking every precaution, there is a chance that the listing is a scam. Officers are always ready to check it out before you make a financial commitment.

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