



STUDENT ADVOCATES FOR FINANCIAL EDUCATION

RENTAL SEARCH CHECKLIST

For first time home hunters and old hands alike, checking out potential places can be a daunting task. It is often hard to remember what you liked and disliked from each place. To make it easier, here is a checklist to track important aspects of a potential home, and tips every tenant needs to know.

Terms and Conditions	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Date available				
Deposit				
Pet rules/ deposit				
Late payment charges				
Penalty for breaking lease				
Physical changes allowed (painting)				
Rent amount				
Rent due				
Subletting				
Utilities included				
Water				
Heat				
Garbage				
Other				
Rental Unit Features / Inspection	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Type of unit (apartment, house, etc)				
Number of bedrooms				
Bedroom privacy				
Ample outlets				
Air conditioning				
Type of heat				
Blinds/ curtains				
Cable TV connection				
Carpet				
Hardwood floors				
Closet space				
Fireplace				
Furniture				
Light fixtures				
Natural light				
Paint/ wall conditions				
Patio/ balcony				
Phone jack in each room				
Storage				
Upstairs/ downstairs				
View				
Water pressure				

Continued
On
Back

Kitchen	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Age of refrigerator				
Counter space				
Dishwasher				
Garbage disposal				
Gas/electric stove				
Microwave				
Smoothly opening drawers				
Community	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Laundry facilities				
Noise level				
Parking				
Bike racks				
Elevators/stairs proximity				
Soundproof walls				
Mailbox				
Safety	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Emergency exits				
Fire extinguishers				
Functioning windows				
Lead hazards				
Locks on all doors				
Outside lighting				
Screens				
Smoke detectors				
Neighborhood	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Average community age				
Public transportation proximity				
Distance from school/work				
Proximity of grocery, bank, post office, etc.				
Other	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4

TIPS FOR TENANTS

- **Be prepared!** When meeting a prospective landlord be sure to have a completed rental application; written references from landlords, employers, friends, and colleagues; and a current copy of your credit report. Give yourself a competitive advantage over other applicants!
- **Carefully review all the important conditions of the tenancy before signing the lease.** Lease or rental agreements may contain provisions that a tenant finds unacceptable. Be sure to agree with lease items before signing anything.
- **Get it in writing.** Keep copies of any correspondence, plus follow-up an oral agreement with a letter. This applies to any alterations made in the lease or rental agreement, as well as any agreements made in regards to alterations or repairs to the living unit.
- **Keep communications open with the landlord.** If there is a problem, talk to the landlord to see if the issue can be resolved short of a nasty legal battle.
- **Protect privacy rights.** Tenants need to understand their privacy rights to protect themselves, but also need to understand the landlords rights to the unit.
- **Take Pictures.** Document any existing damage before you move in.
- **Know what rights exist to live in a habitable rental unit.** Landlords are required to offer their tenants livable premises including adequate weatherproofing, heat, water, and electricity, and clean, sanitary; and structurally safe premises.
- **Make sure the security deposit refund procedures are spelled out in the lease or rental agreement.**
- **Learn whether the building and neighborhood are safe.**
- **Purchase renters' insurance to cover valuables.**
- **Know when and how to fight an eviction notice.** If the tenant loses and eviction lawsuit, he/she may end up hundreds of dollars in debt and face negative credit rating.