

YOU'VE FOUND IT.....WHAT NOW?

An essential lesson in searching for apartment or home rentals is to be prepared to act when you find the place you have been looking for. The following are a few important rental tips.

Money

Many landlords require first and last month's rent and some form of cleaning and/or security deposit before you move in. Be prepared to pay when you find the appropriate living situation. **Always get a receipt when giving someone money and write on your check exactly what it covers.** When planning your budget, do not forget expenses like utility start-up costs.

References

Be prepared to give references from former landlords, neighbors, employers and family. The landlord can and may ask for a co-signer. Landlords are sometimes hesitant to accept persons without a credit rating. This is where references will be of value.

Appearance

How you dress and groom can have a tremendous impact on potential landlords. Most landlords draw a quick correlation between a neat and clean appearance and the manner in which an individual will care for their property.

Pets

Many landlords have very specific restrictions concerning pets - especially dogs and cats. Devoted pet owners with no one except themselves to care for their pets are best advised to be candid with potential landlords and to anticipate that it just may take longer than normal to find the desired rental.

Agreements

Once a rental has been selected, you will usually receive a written or oral agreement. Whether it is a month-to-month agreement or a long-term lease, a written agreement is

preferable because an oral agreement offers you, the tenant, little or no legal protection. The basis for your rights and obligations as a tenant are found in your rental agreement. The landlord can put almost any terms in the rental agreement, and with certain exceptions, they can be enforced once you agree to them. Therefore, it is imperative that you thoroughly understand the terms and conditions of the agreement. More importantly, are the house rules acceptable to your needs and life style? Read and retain a copy of any agreement that you sign and be sure that your copy is completed exactly as the agreement form. Sample Roommate Agreements, Lease Agreements and Room in Private Home Agreements are available in the Housing and Residential Life Office.

Fair Housing Foundation

Located at 200 Pine Ave., Suite 240, 90802 (562) 901-0808, the Long Beach Fair Housing Foundation works cooperatively with students, staff, and faculty members in assisting them in landlord - tenant disputes.

Legal Assistance

Although the Housing & Residential Life Office offers services to assist students seeking community housing, we cannot assist students in taking legal action against landlords. Students seeking to take legal action are advised to contact their own attorney, or the Legal Aid Center in the University Student Union, 201D, (562) 985-8672.

How You Can Help Us

There is no question that the manner in which students conduct themselves greatly influences the landlords' views the next time a rental becomes available. Students can also be a tremendous resource to other students by informing one another of vacancies and encouraging landlords to list rentals with the Housing Office.

Thanks for helping!