



Helpful Hints for Apartment Hunters

This handout offers information on things to consider when working with apartment managers. Also included is a list of several questions that might be helpful when looking at a prospective apartment or house. Utilize the questions on the back of this page when interviewing apartment managers.

Things to Watch for in Apartment Managers

(From the Arizona Apartment Association)

When you rent an apartment, you rent services along with it. The person responsible for these services should be a capable, professional apartment manager. The kind of treatment you receive when looking for an apartment is the best indication of the service that you will be given as a resident.

Searching for an apartment begins with the first phone contact. Professional managers know not to rent you an apartment before they have shown you the property. The manager should be willing to answer a few intelligent, specific preliminary questions and give you directions to the unit. If the manager is abrupt, long winded, or sounds uninformed, you can assume he/she will be the same the day the heater beaks down. Expect to be asked for your name and a time that you can arrive to view the apartment. The manager's initial capabilities are an indication of efficient time management.

When arriving on the premises, take notice of the manager's own apartment. If he/she has been relegated to a former coal bin, you can be certain that the owner does not care who is minding their building. If you are visiting a big complex, expect an office complete with secretaries and respectable furniture. One look at the manager's appearance can tell you if you are dealing with a neat business-like individual. If the person who shows you the apartment is not the manager, try to find out who can give you straight answers and prompt action.

Enthusiasm is a valuable trait for a manager to have, but do not be carried away by his/her excitement. A good manager will know their competition, and make honest comparisons without being derogatory. Flexibility is a characteristic of a manager who is in command. If you suggest something out of the ordinary – painting a wall, perhaps – the manager should be able to say yes or no within a reasonable amount of time. Be cautious of the manager who promises to fulfill your every request. Chances are that they are desperately making idle promises they hope will be forgotten as soon as you sign a lease.

If a manager gossips about residents, they will gossip about you. Whenever a manager has excuses why an apartment is not in the best shape, expect just as many on moving day when promises have not been fulfilled. This is not an indictment of the majority of apartment managers who deserve the highest praise and appreciation for their patience and tact in meeting problems involved with building management. Apartment owners who have efficient and conscientious managers for their units have the most valuable asset contributing to the successful operation of any complex.

What to Look for in an Apartment

Before signing a lease, paying a deposit, or agreeing to rent anything, check the property very carefully. Your landlord may not show you the things he/she does not want you to see. Take the list of questions below with you when you go to look any available rental. If the landlord refuses to be perfectly frank about your concerns, take heed. You may also want to jot down some things while looking to help you make a decision.

1. Can I afford it?
2. Who pays for utilities?
3. Who pays for cable TV? Is it mandatory?
4. Is the place furnished?
5. Who controls the heat?
6. Is parking space available? Is there a cost?
7. What are the rules on guests and visitors?
8. Are pets allowed? What are the restrictions?
9. Is there storage space?
10. Is there enough closet space?
11. Is there adequate outside lighting?
12. Are all locks working?
13. Are there enough lights and electrical outlets?
14. Who is responsible for yard care?
15. Is redecorating allowed? How much?
16. Are there laundry facilities in or near the building?

Essential information to obtain before signing your lease:

When is the rent due? Is there a charge for late payments?

What deposit and fees are required?

Is subletting permitted? Is there a fee for subletting?

Can the rent be increased if the number of tenants increases?

Who has right-of-entry to conduct inspections? When?

Do your roommates have to be approved by the landlord?

Can the lease be terminated for illness, academic failure, or other problems?

Does the lease cover vacation periods?