

Don't Be the Victim of a **Rental Scam!**

If it sounds too good to be true, it may be a scam

Some ads placed on websites for rental homes are fraudulent. They target people who need housing and scam them out of their money and personal information.



Common tactics of scammers

- They require a detailed rental application requesting personally identifiable information and a photo ID, which can make the sender a victim of identity theft.
- They require an application fee, usually between \$50 and \$100, but it may vary.
- They tend to use phone numbers that are difficult to verify.
- They often operate out of state or out of the country, making it hard to recover lost funds.

Red flags

- The rental price is much lower than similar properties in the area.
- Payment is requested via payment apps, cryptocurrency or other hard-to-trace methods.
- An application fee is required before the address of the property is provided.
- The ad says “disregard For Sale” sign in yard.
- The ad poster will not meet you at the property before you send fees and may say they live out of state due to employment, etc.
- The ad has poor grammar or spelling errors.

Tips to avoid being a victim of a rental scam

- Check the Pinellas County Property Appraiser website for owner information.
- Compare other real estate websites for listings for the same property.
- Use a licensed realtor to find legitimate properties for rent.
- If you can't verify the business or landlord, do not give up personal information or pay a fee.



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