



LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE

HELPFUL HINTS

Helpful Hints When Calling a Landlord about an Apartment

- Ask to speak to the person listed in the advertisement.
- Introduce yourself.
- Ask if the apartment is still available.
- Are the utilities included in the rent?
- If the tenant must pay for the heat, is the heating system gas, oil, or electric?
- Is there a lease or will it be month-to-month?
- Where is the apartment located?
- Is it on a bus route (if you don't have a car)?
- Is there on or off street parking (if you have a car)?
- If you have assistance from Section 8 or the Department of Social Services (DSS) in paying your rent, the landlord may not discriminate based on your source of income (this new law passed in April 2019)
- Ask to see the apartment at a time convenient to both you and the landlord
- Thank the landlord for his/her time and consideration



****SEE BACK****

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- When possible, leave yourself around 2 months to look for an apartment. If you are currently renting, make sure you **give proper notice to your current landlord before you move out** (see month to month or leases handout)
- Check the ownership of the apartment you are interested in. This is public information. In the City of Albany, you can call the local tax assessors at (518)434-5155 to find out the owner of an apartment.
- Who pays for the utilities? If you are to be responsible, the landlord by law is responsible for supplying you with information as to what the utilities have been for the past two years. This request must be in writing—keep a copy. Be sure to find out: 1-size of apartment, 2- type of heat (gas, electric or oil), 3- who controls the heat, 4- access to meters/fuse box; get a key to that area. By law tenants must have access to the meters in case of an emergency.
- ****When you go to look at the apartment**, check for broken windows, if there are storms or screens (which are not mandatory by law), number of outlets, ceiling stains for leaks, working faucets, sinks in both bathroom and kitchen, peeling paint, deadbolt locks, solid doors (front and rear exits), window locks, sufficient working heating equipment. If stoves and refrigerators are included, be sure that all parts are included and that the appliances are functioning.**
- Make a list of all problems in the apartment and request that they are corrected **in writing**. Date and sign your request with tenant/landlord and or witness(es). Consider using a move-in checklist.
- **Application fees: The cost of a background check/application fee may not exceed \$20 or the actual cost of the check, WHICHEVER IS LESS. (RPL 238-A 2019 Amendments)**
- **Security Deposit**— cannot exceed the value of one month's rent (GOL 7-108 2019 amendments) and is for damages which a tenant causes outside normal wear and tear. It can only be used for the last month's rent with the permission of the landlord. Take pictures of damages moving in, date them. See security deposits handout for more information.
- Think about whether you want to ask for a fixed-term lease. A lease, once signed by both parties, is binding. A landlord can put anything in a lease that they want to, but, N.Y.S. law overrides anything in a lease that is illegal. See leases handout for more information.
- If you and the landlord would rather go month to month— this means that certain notices are required to make any changes in a tenancy (rent increases, notice to move, utility change, pets, etc.). See month to month tenants handout for more information.
- ****Once you've located an apartment that you think you'd like to rent, call your local code enforcement agency to make sure the landlord has their rental permits in place. This will usually indicate that a semi-recent third party inspection has been done in the apartment to ensure the space is safe. In the City of Albany, we strongly recommend you call (518)434-5995 to find out if there is a valid residential occupancy permit at the apartment before moving in!****