

# QUICK GUIDE FOR TENANTS RENTING A HOME

If you're looking for a rental home, here are a few tips for preventing problems and protecting yourself from fraudsters.

## Ask!

- Get the full name and contact information of the person or company whose services you use.
- If you buy a list of rentals from a company, ask to see the company's Department of Real Estate license.
- Make sure the company that sold you the list of rentals offers refunds.
- Check that the company had the homeowner's consent to place the home on its list and that the information on the list is factual and current.
- If you rent a home through a property manager, ask to see the manager's Department of Real Estate license. (Note: Property managers do not need a license to manage properties they own or to be resident managers.)
- Ask the property manager for the homeowner's full name and contact information.
- Get a receipt for any payments you make, including fees, security deposits, and rent payments.

## Read!

- Read all rental documents before you sign them and get copies.
- Make sure you understand how and when rent must be paid, how repairs will be made, and what happens when you move out.
- Review all of the disclosures that are provided to you about the home.
- Study *California Tenants: A Guide to Residential Tenants' and Landlords' Rights and Responsibilities*, a Department of Consumer Affairs publication available at [www.dca.ca.gov](http://www.dca.ca.gov).
- If the home is in a common interest development, read the rules and regulations of the homeowners association.

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## QUICK GUIDE FOR TENANTS RENTING A HOME *(cont.)*

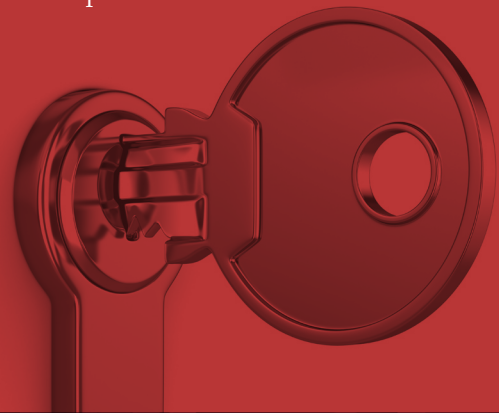
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### Research!

- Call the Department of Real Estate at (877) 373-4542 or go to [www.dre.ca.gov](http://www.dre.ca.gov) to check the license. Make sure the license status is "Licensed" and that an agent with a salesperson license works for a broker. Look into any prior disciplinary action on the license.
- Check the Better Business Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and other sources for reviews and complaints.
- When you find a home you like, verify who owns the home by contacting a licensed real estate agent, the county recorder's office, or a title company.
- Research the landlord by searching the Internet and local court records for reviews and any lawsuits.
- Check out the property by looking at county records to make sure the home is not in foreclosure.

### Be Aware!

- Scammers may try to rent you a home that is not available or that is in foreclosure.
- A below-market rent amount is usually a red flag that the home is not truly available for rent.
- Be wary of individuals who won't meet with you in person.
- Be on the alert if the property manager or landlord will not let you tour the property.
- Do not pay anything in cash or by wire transfer.
- Consider that you may be able to file a claim with the Department of Real Estate against an agent who defrauds you if the agent is licensed by the Department of Real Estate.



Most importantly, trust your instincts and common sense. If you have a feeling that something isn't right, call the Department of Real Estate at (877) 373-4542 or go to [www.dre.ca.gov](http://www.dre.ca.gov).