

## How to Make the Initial Phone Call on a Rental

Most landlords receive many messages regarding a rental listing. Follow these tips to make a good first impression and improve your odds of receiving a return phone call.

Speak slowly and clearly. Repeat your phone number. Frantic messages with quick speech and an unorganized speaker do not encourage landlords to return calls.

### Things to do before making the call:

- Be ready to fill out or turn in a rental application. Being serious about renting makes the landlord more likely to work with you.
- Know your schedule so that you are ready to make an appointment to view a rental.
- Review the rental advertisement to see if you have any major questions about the rental in case the landlord answers the phone. For examples of questions you might ask, see CRO's flyer, "Questions to Ask About a Rental."
- Decide how you would like to present yourself to the landlord and how to best show that you are a responsible individual (i.e. your part-time job, volunteer work, research projects, past experience as a tenant).
- Take a deep breath and prepare yourself to speak calmly, comprehensibly and concisely.
- Consider telling them where you found their ad. This will help them when they place ads in the future.

### Here are some examples of what to do and what not to do when leaving a message in response to a rental ad:

**Caller #1:** "Yeah, my name is Tom and I'm calling about your rental. I'm at 555-5555. Thanks." (Spoken very quickly)

**Caller #2:** "Hi! My name is Tom Jones, and my number is 555-5555. I'm very interested in your Bay Avenue unit, which you say is in a quiet building. I am a student at UCSC majoring in chemistry, and I am quiet and studious. I am a very responsible person and I can afford the rent because I support myself with part-time work. I also receive financial support from my parents and they are willing to co-sign a rental agreement. I'd really like an appointment to see the place, so please call me. Again, that's Tom Jones, 555-5555, and I'll be here between 7 to 9 p.m. tonight. Thank you."

### There are several reasons why Caller #2 is much more likely to get a call back from the landlord:

- Caller #2 speaks clearly and slowly and repeats the number for the return call.
- Caller #2 indicates that he is quiet, responsible and is able to pay the rent.
- Caller #2 gives an indication of how he is able to pay the rent.
- Caller #2 speaks in greater detail, implying that he is a thinking, caring individual.

### If the landlord answers the phone:

- Speak clearly and know what you want to say to the landlord and what questions you would like to ask.
- Be prepared to take notes on the landlord's answers so that you can reference them later. This is especially important if you are calling on behalf of a group of people.
- Set a date and time to see the rental. Inform the landlord that you will be ready to turn in an application if you like the rental.