

Questions to Ask About a Rental

Rental ads are generally brief and may not provide enough information about the rental. Below you will find examples of questions that you can ask a landlord over the phone or at an open house.

This list is by no means exhaustive and questions should be tailored to your specific concerns. Read the rental advertisement thoroughly before calling to avoid wasting both the landlord's and your time. Focus on any holes in the information. For example, if the rental is listed as being in a neighborhood you are unfamiliar with, ask for the cross-streets or local landmarks.

Financial questions:

- How much is the deposit?
- Can it be paid over two or three months?
- Is the deposit negotiable?
- Are any utilities included?
- Has there been a recent rent increase? (Relevant if the landlord would like a month-to-month agreement.)
- Do you accept multiple rent checks or do you require that the entire amount is written in one check?
- How much do the utilities for this property usually run?
- How are the utilities split? (Relevant in shared housing or if there is only one meter for more than one rental.)

Tenants:

- How many tenants will you allow in the unit?
- Do you allow small pets such as turtles and fish?
- Is subletting permissible?
- How long do tenants usually rent here?

Amenities:

- What appliances are there?
- Does the unit have off-street parking?
- Is the unit furnished?
- Does the unit have heating or air conditioning?
- Do appliances run on gas or electricity? (This will impact your gas/electric bill.)
- Is there a back yard?

Other:

- Does the house have any recent noise violations? (This would mean that in the event that you receive a noise violation, it would not count as the first one and would be more expensive. Call the Police Department at 831-420-5850 to find out if the rental has been flagged in the last twelve months.)
- Are the tenants responsible for the upkeep of landscaping?
- How long will the rental be available for? (For example, some landlords may only plan on renting during the school year while you may want to keep the rental over the summer. It is best to know this up front.)
- Where is the rental located?
- Is there a bus stop near by?
- Is there space set aside for planting flowers and vegetables?
- Are parking permits required for street-parking?

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