How to Spot a Rental Scam Before You Pay

Scammers copy real listings, then rush you to pay. If you spot any of these 12 signs, stop and check before you send money.

1. **The price is far below similar places** ☐
   Compare it with other listings of the same size nearby.
2. **The landlord can't or won't meet you or show the place** ☐
   Never rent a place you or a trusted person hasn't seen.
3. **They ask for money before you have seen the home** ☐
   Don't pay a deposit or application fee for a place you haven't visited.
4. **They only accept wire transfers, gift cards, crypto or cash** ☐
   These are hard to reverse. Be very careful.
5. **They push you to decide right now** ☐
   Scammers create urgency so you skip checks.
6. **The owner is 'out of the country' or 'away on a mission'** ☐
   A common story used to avoid meeting you.
7. **The photos are copied from somewhere else** ☐
   Do a reverse image search on the listing photos.
8. **There's no lease, or the lease looks strange** ☐
   Read it fully and ask questions in writing.
9. **No application or screening at all** ☐
   A real landlord usually checks tenants.
10. **Messages are generic and email-only** ☐
    Look for copied text or poor grammar.
11. **The person isn't the owner or the manager** ☐
    Check county property records or the management company's website.
12. **The 'agent' asks you to pay a hold fee** ☐
    Confirm the agent and the building by phone yourself.