

APARTMENT HUNTING DO'S AND DON'T'S

Looking for a new apartment can be hard work. Sometimes your new home may be as close as a phone call and an appointment away. Sometimes it takes many phone calls and walks through many grim and dingy apartments before you find a new place to rest your head. The following suggestions may make your search both shorter and easier.

Read all “Apartment Available” ads carefully. Make sure the apartment listed is one you might want.

- Do you have a dog? Does the ad say no pets? It's not the apartment for you.
- Does the landlord want first month's rent, last month's rent and security? If you don't have it, look elsewhere first.
- Do you need a lower or upper level apartment?
- Do you need a stove and a refrigerator? Does the apartment come with one?
- Do you smoke? Does the ad refer to smoking/non-smoking?

Remember: Your landlord's first impression of you will come from your first phone call.

- Be friendly and polite when you call about an apartment.
- Speak clearly.
- Call at a time when there is not a lot of background noise (loud music, crying or fighting children) in your home.
- If you have to leave a message, give your name, phone number and why you are calling. Tell the landlord a good time to call back.

Ask the landlord questions when you make the first phone call:

- Find out when the apartment is available.
- Ask how utilities are paid. (Ask for estimate of monthly costs.)
- Confirm the amount of the monthly rent.
- Ask what the rent includes.
- Ask exactly where the apartment is.
- Ask if the landlord has a written lease. If so, how long is the lease term?
- If needed, ask whether there are laundry hook-ups available.
- If needed, ask if there is parking available.