“It is far better to have **no tenant** than to have a bad tenant.”

**Tenant Screening for Landlords**

**Set Criteria**
- Pets / Smoker
- Tenant/Co-Signer makes sufficient income to afford your rent
- Stable employment
- History of paying rent on time
- No criminal record

**Include your Requirements in your Rental Listing**

“All applicants are required to submit a rental application, authorize a credit and background check, and pay a $45 application fee.”

**Ask questions during the initial phone call**
- Current living situation, why moving, when moving?
- Monthly income?
- Have references from former landlords & employers?
- Written Consent to a credit & background check?
- Pets? Smoke?
- Roommates?
- Ever refused to pay rent, been evicted, or filed bankruptcy?

**CHECKLIST**

- Require a complete Rental Application, including:
  - Personal information should include date-of-births, cellphone numbers and email addresses
    - Check listings on Facebook, Myspace, Blogs
    - Google the name of the person in quotes
  - Personal References
    - Speak with personal references
  - Get information on all adults, children (including date-of-births), and pets to be living in the residence
  - Financial and Employment History (dates, position, salary) and Written Consent for checking both
    - Ask for a pay stub to verify income
    - Reach out to Tenant’s Employer
      - Find a number for the company using the phone book or an online search, instead of calling number provided
      - Verify employment & salary
      - How long, position, how responsible?
    - Verify bank accounts
  - 5-Year Residence history with landlord contact information
    - How often did they move?
    - Look for gaps
    - Contact Prior Landlords (before the current one)
      - Paid rent on time?
      - Took care of property?
      - Left clean and in good order?
- Didn’t disrupt neighbors?
  - Signed Authorization to obtain a copy of tenant’s credit report(s)
  - Non-Refundable Deposit and Screening Fee Agreement
    - Take application fees by personal check
    - Verify the information on the check vs. the information on the application
- Make a copy or take a photo of the tenant’s ID/driver’s license
- Run a Credit Report
- Run a Background Check

**REDFLAGS**

- If they can’t pay the security deposit in full
- If they have a Big Story, and have to explain their situation
- If they can’t follow the rules and fill out the application completely, they probably won’t respect your other rules either.
- Do they do what they say they are going to do?
  - Meet you on time
  - Deliver the applicant and deposit when they say they will
  - Return calls/emails promptly

Tenants that don’t do these things in the beginning will never do these things later on.