

Letter to the Editor...
Beware of Latest Internet Landlord Scam



Dear AOA:

I am a victim of an internet and mail fraud and want to warn other landlords not to make the same mistake.

I recently placed a listing on Craig's List for a vacancy in my apartment building. Among the replies I received, was one who stated she was from London and was very interested in my apartment. She told me that she was being sent to the United States by her employer for at least a year.

I was reluctant to consider her because it would be almost impossible to check her credit. However, she said that she would agree to Federal Express a cashier's check for first and last month's rent plus a security deposit in the amount of \$4,250.00. She also gave me the name and phone number of her employer.

I phoned "her employer" who said she was a solid and good employee and verified her story of moving to Los Angeles. Ultimately, however, she procrastinated in sending the FedEx and in the mean time, I rented the apartment to someone else. I then informed her that she did not get the apartment.

The very next day, I received her check by FedEx and shortly thereafter, she told me that she had found another apartment and begged me to send another cashier's check payable to her new landlord in Florida so that the same problem would not arise. Feeling guilty for not renting to her, I deposited her cashier's check into my account and I quickly sent her "new landlord" another cashier's check in the amount of \$3,700.00. Upon her request, I also sent a personal check for the remaining balance of \$500 to her "travel agent."

A week later, I received her original cashier's check back from my bank stating that it was counterfeit. Fortunately, I was able to stop payment on the \$500 personal check I had mailed, but was scammed for balance in the amount of \$3,700.

Please warn all landlords of this scam. If I can stop just one person from being as kind and trusting as I was, it will be worth all my efforts.

Sincerely,

Sally E.
Apartment Owner