



September 25, 2017

## **Beware of These Red Flags When Apartment Hunting in New York City**

*A New York City realtor gives AD 5 tips to remember before signing a lease*



It goes without saying that apartment-hunting in New York City is a stressful, tiring, and confusing process. You can spend hours looking at photos on sites like *Streeteasy* and *Zillow*, but how do you know if you're being apartment catfished? We spoke to *CORE* realtor Bryan Baltimore, who gave us five tips to remember when signing your lease—before spending hundreds on good-faith deposits and application fees.

### **1. Learn how to spot a rental scam**

"There are definitely scams out there, as homes are easily misrepresented by faulty photography and even descriptions that stretch the truth," says Bryan Baltimore. "There's no easy substitute to seeing a home first-hand, in-person." To get to the bottom of faux

photo's Baltimore recommends visiting the apartment at least one time to get a good feel for how the space flows. This is also helpful when it comes to understanding the layout— You won't know if that bedroom is railroad-style until you see it for yourself.

## **2. Question the cheap rent**

Always second-guess an apartment when you think you've hit the jackpot. Baltimore advises, "Every now and then, you come across what seems to be a good deal, but if the rent seems too good to be true, it almost always is." Try checking out the apartment at different times of the day to get a good feel for the area. "Ask about cleanliness and pest control of the building," he suggests.. "Make sure all appliances are in working order. Do your best to find out as much as possible about the apartment before you rent it."

## **3. Know your neighbors**

Most people don't think to ask current residents how they feel about the apartment they are interested in, but it can be enlightening. "There have been occasions where I have run into current tenants of a building and asked them how they like living there," he says "A couple of times, their responses have made me dig deeper and once prevented me from showing a client a space." Inquire about how fast management responds to a repair request and if they have had any problems with rodents or roaches.

## **4. Look into the quality of the building**

Proper pest control, a good superintendent, and reliable upkeep of facilities are important when searching for a new home. Baltimore always makes sure the building operates well and that the superintendent is reliable. "I take time to understand what the application process entails, which is different for each building. I inquire about the management company and see what I can find out about how well the building is maintained." Look for holes and chipped paint, as well. If you find something, say something; the landlord should have no problem fixing the unit before you move in.

## **5. Read through the lease agreement line by line**

Always do research on your landlord and know your rights in a lease agreement. Every legitimate landlord should be happy to give you a copy of the document for review. Baltimore once heard a horror story of a condo renter who moved in, only to find out that "six months later, the owner had put the apartment on the market for sale and the purchasers wanted to move in right after close. This forced the renter to vacate the space six months before the lease was up and start over with the search of finding a new apartment."

At times, New York City's rental market can seem daunting, but don't despair! With these five tips in mind and you'll soon be moving into the apartment of your dreams—with no strings attached.