



Renting an Apartment

In the United States, apartments or 'condos' as they are commonly called, have one or more bedrooms in addition to a kitchen, dining room and living room. "Efficiency" or 'studio' apartments provide an inexpensive alternative if you want to live by yourself. They are quite small, often combining the living and sleeping areas into one room. You can also find furnished apartments. The cost of renting varies considerably depending on the part of the country and the local supply and demand. Once you know the area in which you are going to be working, it will be easier to locate a place to live. In case you are going to travel to and from work via public transportation, ensure that you have easy access to a bus or train station. If you are going to drive to a bus or train station, then get information on parking accessibility and cost.

Information Sources

Information regarding apartments/condos available in the area can be gathered from the sources mentioned below.

- 1) Free Rental magazines available at the entrance of supermarkets like Shoprite, Pathmark, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, etc.
- 2) The following websites can be accessed for accommodation rental information. These sites can further reduce the search listing if you enter details like number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms, what appliances you need, etc.

www.rent.net

www.apartments.com

www.rentals.com

www.forrent.com

www.findanest.com

www.abracat.com

www.apartmentguide.com



- 3) The classifieds section in the local newspaper is a good source of information. Weekends are probably the best time to look for rental ads. The classifieds section of the following newspapers can be looked up either online or by purchasing the paper from the local supermarket, convenience store or gas station. You can also look up your local newspaper name and website address based on the town and state you live in by visiting <http://www.usnewspaperlinks.com>

Connecticut	News Times (http://www.newstimes.com/class/index.htm) Hartford Courant (http://www.ctnow.com/) Connecticut Post (http://www.connpost.com) Fairfield County Weekly (http://www.fairfieldweekly.com)
Delaware	The Wave (http://www.delmarvaclassifieds.com) The News Journal (http://www.delawareonline.com) Dover Post (http://www.doverpost.com) Newark Post (http://www.ncbl.com/post/)
New Jersey	Asbury Park Press (http://www.appclassifieds.com/) The Star Ledger (http://www.starledger.com/) The Jersey Journal (http://www.jjournal.com/) Princeton Packet (http://www.pacpub.com)
New York	New York Times (http://realestate.nytimes.com) New York Post (http://www.nypost.com) Daily News (http://www.nydailynews.com) Village Voice (http://www.villagevoice.com)
Pennsylvania	www.pennsylvania.com covers rentals in the entire state Philadelphia Inquirer (http://ing.philly.com/) Philadelphia Daily News (http://dailynews.philly.com) Delaware County Daily Times (http://www.delcotimes.com) The Morning Call (http://www.mcall.com)



- 4) A rental agency can also help you find an apartment within the local area. Rental agencies can be looked up via the yellow pages in the phone directory, through advertisements in the newspaper or searching the Internet. A homeowner may put up a house for rent through an agency to avoid the extra work. The agency would show the house, perform a check on the renter, do all the paperwork, etc. Any issues regarding the apartment that arise during the renting period, would also be addressed to the agency that would in turn communicate with the landlord. Sometimes the owner of the rental property pays the fees associated with using a rental agency; sometimes the fees are the responsibility of the renter. Clarify who pays what expenses at the beginning of the process.

The Renting Process

Once you come across an advertisement mentioning an apartment that you consider suitable in terms of size, location and monthly rent, call the number provided in the advertisement immediately. More details regarding the home can be found when you make a call ... for example, is a microwave and fridge



provided along with the apartment, will the landlord pay the association fees, are any utilities included in the rent, how much down payment does the landlord/association require, how soon can you move in, etc.

The owner of the apartment may handle the renting process by himself or might use a rental agency. On the other hand, there are many apartment complexes in the United States where the housing is entirely for the purpose of renting. In this case, you would not deal directly with individual owners but instead with an association or management office which handles the rental of all the apartments within the complex.

The landlord/association would either schedule a time to show the property when you call or would have already scheduled a day for showing. Make sure you are there on the day and time mentioned. You would be taken around the house/apartment and are free to ask any questions.

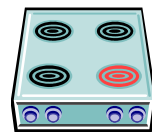
Most owners/associations would perform a background check on you before renting the apartment. In such a case, you would be asked to fill in a form providing some information about yourself including social security number, employer information, salary, etc.



If the rental goes through, you would be asked to submit a deposit, which is usually 1-1.5 month's rent. This amount would be returned to you whenever you vacate the property. A lease is signed for the duration of stay. The lease is renewable at the end of this duration, depending on both parties agreeing. Make sure to check for all lease breakage clauses. These relate to your responsibilities to the landlord in case you cannot stay the entire duration of the lease. The owner and you, both should keep a copy of the lease.

As soon as the owner provides a move in date, you should call the utility companies in the area and sign up for service starting the day you move in. The common utility services required are electricity, gas, water, cable and phone. The cost of water or heat may be included as a part of the rent in some areas.

Most homes in the winter are heated using gas although some may be using electricity for central heating. The same goes for the kitchen stove ... some may use gas as the energy source with burners while others might have hot plates that heat using electricity. Remember that electricity is a lot more expensive than gas.



Also, remember to get renters insurance to cover any losses, if they ever occur.

Each state has its laws for tenants and owners. These can be easily accessed on the Legal Rights site of every state. Tenant laws for all the 50 states in the United States can be downloaded from <http://www.ohiolandlordtenant.com/all50.html>.