

TENANT SCREENING CHECKLIST

Choose tenants who protect your investment, pay reliably, and maintain your property.

INITIAL SCREENING (BEFORE SHOWING THE UNIT)

- ❑ **Review the rental application carefully**—ensure it's complete and legible.
- ❑ **Verify ID** to confirm the applicant's identity.
- ❑ **Review stated income**, employment, and number of occupants.
- ❑ **Conduct a quick online search** (Google, Facebook, etc.) to check for red flags like public complaints or legal disputes.
- ❑ **Decline incomplete or suspicious** applications early to save time.

EMPLOYMENT & INCOME VERIFICATION

- ❑ **Contact the employer directly** (use company number, not personal cell).
- ❑ **Verify** position, start date, and income stability.
- ❑ **Request recent pay stubs** or a T4 slip.
- ❑ **For self-employed applicants**, ask for recent tax returns or bank statements.
- ❑ **For students or unemployed applicants**, confirm alternative income sources (savings, co-signers, parental support).

CREDIT & BACKGROUND CHECKS

- ❑ **Run a credit report** through a reputable service (Equifax, TransUnion, or TenantVerify).
- ❑ **Review credit score**, payment history, and any major debts.
- ❑ **Check for bankruptcies**, collections, or judgments.
- ❑ **Conduct a criminal record** check where legally allowed.
- ❑ **Interpret results with nuance**—past mistakes don't always reflect current reliability.

RENTAL HISTORY & REFERENCES

- ❑ **Call at least two previous landlords.**
 - Did they pay rent on time?
 - Were there any complaints or damages?
 - Would you rent to them again?
- ❑ **Be alert to evasive answers** or vague responses.
- ❑ **Confirm the landlord's identity** (some tenants list friends as references).

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IN-PERSON INTERVIEW OR SHOWING

- ☐ **Meet the applicant in person** (or via video if remote).
- ☐ **Observe punctuality**, communication style, and respectfulness.
- ☐ **Ask open-ended questions** such as:
 - How long do you plan to stay?
 - How many people will live in the home?
 - Why are you moving?
 - Do you have pets?
 - How will you care for the property?
- ☐ **Trust your instincts**—if something feels off, it often is.

FINAL CHECKS & DECISION

- ☐ **Compare all applicants** using consistent criteria to remain compliant with fair housing laws.
- ☐ **Verify tenant insurance** requirements and confirm move-in date.
- ☐ **Request first and last month's rent** before handing over keys.
- ☐ **Save all screening notes** and documentation for your records.

PRO TIPS FROM EXPERIENCE

- Never skip reference calls. A 10-minute call can save you months of stress.
- Always Google applicants. You'd be surprised what shows up online - everything from eviction stories to glowing reviews from past landlords.
- Don't rush the process. A few extra days of vacancy are better than months chasing rent.
- Follow your gut. Numbers tell one story, but demeanour tells another.

