

# BUSINESSSAFE

*BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.*

Florida Fusion Center 22-036

April 2022, Issue #74

## BusinessSafe Rental Scams

With the summer months fast approaching, some travelers may have started looking to relocate or seek out rental properties for vacations. Criminal actors may try to take advantage of potential renters using a variety of rental scams. Scammers may copy the information from a legitimately placed rental ad and repost the information in another location with the scammer's contact information. If the scammers receive rental inquiries, they will then try to convince the potential renter to send them money for the rental, either in the form of a deposit or the first month's rent. Criminal actors may also create fake rental ads for properties that don't exist or aren't for rent.

This article includes common methods used by criminal actors to commit rental scams along with warning signs and mitigation tactics individuals can use to protect themselves from falling victim to rental scams.

### Potential signs of a rental scam

- The renter requests a deposit or fee be made by wire transfer, gift card, or cash.
- The listed rental price is well below other similar rentals in the area without reason.
- The renter refuses to meet or show the rental property in person.
- The renter requests a security deposit or rental payment before you view the rental.
- The rental posting is available on multiple websites with different contact information or much lower pricing.

### Ways to protect yourself from rental scams

- Ensure you have the terms of the rental in writing, including fees, rent cost, and maintenance.
- Don't wire money or use gift cards as a form of payment for deposits or rent.
- If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- Don't give sensitive information, such as a Social Security number, to a property owner or management company without first verifying their identity and authenticity.
- Don't rent a property that you are unable to see before signing an agreement.
- Research the rental company or website platform to ensure it is reputable and verified.



Florida Fusion Center  
(800) 342-0820

[FLBusinessSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us](mailto:FLBusinessSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us)

Author: FL8642, Approval: FL8600, HSEC:1, 4 FSIN:1.2.2, 3.1.7, 3.3.2, FFC: 4.3, 4.4, 6.2

### How to report a rental scam

- Report rental scams to your local law enforcement.
- Vacation rental scams in Florida can be reported to the Florida Office of the Attorney General [online](#) or by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on their [website](#).
- Rental scams can be reported to the [Federal Trade Commission](#).
- Report scams to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by visiting the [Internet Crimes Complaint Center](#) website.

### Resources

- USAGOV has information and resources on [housing scams](#).
- The Federal Trade Commission has more resources and tips to help [renters avoid home rental scams](#).
- The Florida Office of the Attorney General offers more information and resources on [vacation rental scams](#).



Florida Fusion Center  
(800) 342-0820

[FLBusinesSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us](mailto:FLBusinesSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us)

Author: FL8642, Approval: FL8600, HSEC:1, 4 FSIN:1.2.2, 3.1.7, 3.3.2, FFC: 4.3, 4.4, 6.2