

THE TENANT SCREENING PROCESS THAT FILTERS PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY BEGIN

How smart landlords protect their property—and their peace of mind—before the lease is even signed.

Why Screening Matters More Than You Think

If you've ever had a bad tenant, you know the deal:

Late rent.

Damaged property.

Evictions, complaints, and nonstop stress.

But here's the truth:

90% of tenant headaches could've been avoided with a better screening process.

This bonus shows you exactly how to filter out the red flags *before* they become your problem—using a repeatable, fair, and legally sound approach.

Let's walk through the system. 

What Is Tenant Screening?

Tenant screening is the process of evaluating rental applicants to determine whether they're a good fit for your property.

That means:

- Paying rent on time
- Respecting the lease
- Taking care of your asset

- Not creating drama with neighbors or city code enforcement

Done right, it protects your investment *and* sets the stage for a smooth landlord-tenant relationship.

The Step-by-Step Tenant Screening System

Let's break down the process smart landlords follow every time.

Pre-Screen Before You Show the Property

Save time by asking a few key questions up front via phone, text, or email:

- Why are you moving?
- When do you want to move in?
- Do you have pets?
- Do you smoke?
- Are you currently employed?

 If their answers don't fit your criteria, don't schedule a showing.

Use a Full Rental Application

Every adult applicant should fill out and sign a complete rental application.

It should include:

- Employment info
- Rental history
- References
- Authorization for background and credit checks

Pro Tip: Use a secure online application tool (like Avail, [RentRedi](#), or TurboTenant).

Run a Background + Credit Check

Use a reputable screening service to pull reports.

What you're looking for:

- Late payments
- Bankruptcies
- Evictions
- Criminal history
- Collections or charge-offs

 One red flag isn't always a deal-breaker, but patterns are.

Verify Employment + Income

Ask for proof of income (pay stubs, bank statements, offer letters).

Follow the 3X rule:

👉 Monthly income should be **at least 3X the rent**.

Also verify:

- Current job title
- Length of employment
- Whether they're W-2, 1099, or self-employed

Call Previous Landlords

Ask for references from at least **two previous landlords**, and ask:

- Did they pay rent on time?
- Did they take care of the property?
- Any lease violations or complaints?
- Would you rent to them again?

🧠 Watch out for fake landlord references - cross-check phone numbers.

Bonus Tip: Bust a Fake Landlord Fast

Not sure if the “landlord” is legit? Have a friend or family member call the number they gave and casually ask if there are any rentals available.

If the person says, “Wrong number” or sounds confused...

 **Busted.**

That might not be a real landlord after all.

This simple move can save you from renting to someone who's trying to fake their past.

Interview the Tenant (In Person or Virtually)

A quick face-to-face (or Zoom call) can tell you a lot:

- Are they respectful?
- Do they ask good questions?
- Do they seem honest and realistic?

You're not looking for perfection—you're looking for someone who treats the process seriously.

Smart Landlord Screening Checklist

- ✓ Pre-screen tenants before showings
- ✓ Collect a completed rental application

- ✓ Run credit + background checks
- ✓ Verify employment and income
- ✓ Contact two prior landlords
- ✓ Interview tenant live (or via Zoom)
- ✓ Review everything before making a decision

Best Practices to Stay Protected

Even with the right tools, **how you screen matters** just as much as what you screen.

Follow Fair Housing Laws

Never discriminate based on:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion
- Gender
- National origin
- Family status
- Disability
- Sexual orientation (where applicable by state)

Use the same criteria for everyone—no exceptions.

Be Consistent With Your Process

Apply your rules to **every** applicant the same way.

If your policy is:

- 3x rent income
- No recent evictions
- No open collections

...then stick to that, every time. No "gut feeling" shortcuts.

Communicate Clearly

Let applicants know:

- What your process is
- How long it will take
- What they need to submit

If you reject someone based on credit or background, send a written notice (called an *adverse action letter*) explaining why.

Keep Info Confidential

You'll collect sensitive info like:

- Social Security numbers
- Pay stubs
- Background data

Keep it secure. Don't leave printed apps lying around. Use encrypted software or password-protected folders.

Final Word

Bad tenants are expensive.

But great tenants?

They're *priceless*.

Use this guide to build a screening process you trust. One that's:

- ✓ Legal
- ✓ Repeatable
- ✓ Fair
- ✓ Protective of your time, money, and property

Because once the right tenant is in place, everything else becomes easier.

Enjoyed this bonus?

If this helped you build a smoother, smarter tenant screening process, the best way to say thanks is by leaving a quick review of the book.

 [Leave a review on Amazon »](#)

Every review helps more landlords discover tools like this—and keeps the good stuff coming your way.

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