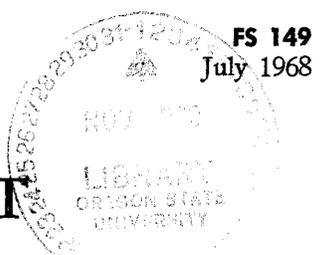


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What to look for when RENTING A HOUSE OR APARTMENT

Chances are you will not find any one house or apartment which suits you perfectly. However, if you ask the following questions, you can get needed information to help make decisions and avoid misunderstandings. Some points may be more important to you than others, depending on how long you expect to live in the house. Expect to make some compromises.

Additional special questions to ask about apartments are listed at the end of this fact sheet. However, most of the questions about houses also apply to apartments or duplexes.

Location

- Is the neighborhood acceptable to you in appearance? Is it accessible to work, friends, and relatives?
- Are there shopping centers, schools, churches, parks, and transportation nearby?
- Is there fire and police protection?
- Is the street free from heavy traffic?
- Are obnoxious industrial fumes or wastes in the direction of prevailing winds relative to the property?
- Is the neighborhood well lighted?
- Do the neighbors appear to be congenial?

Relationship to the landlord

- Is the owner planning to put the building up for sale at a later date? Or could you live there as long as you found it suitable? If the house is for sale, will you be asked to permit prospective buyers to see it?
- Are you or the landlord responsible for care and fertilization of lawn and shrubbery? If there are nut or fruit trees, who sprays them?
- Is the amount of lawn reasonable for you if it is your responsibility?
- Are you permitted to alter or add to the plantings?
- Will the landlord do any painting for you before you move in if you feel it is needed?

• How often will the landlord paint or refinish the interior and exterior—or will this be your responsibility? Will he buy the materials if you do the work?

• Who is responsible for other maintenance and repairs, such as plumbing, heating system, water heater, appliances (if furnished), termite control, roof, door locks, screens, and septic tank?

• How much rent must you pay in advance? (In some locations, two months rent must be paid before you move in. This serves as security for the landlord and means that you would not pay rent the last month you live there.)

• If a breakage deposit is charged, is this refundable if there is no damage to the property? How much is the deposit?

• If a cleaning deposit is required, how much and is this refundable? Under what conditions?

• Is there a limit to the number of people the landlord will allow to live there? For example: If another person or couple wanted to share a house or apartment, would this be permissible without additional rent? Could you rent a room to another person?

• Does the landlord have personal liability insurance? (For example: if a step collapsed and you broke a leg, would his insurance cover you?)

• Does the landlord have property insurance to protect against damage to your belongings? (For example: if a water pipe breaks and ruins your furniture, is the landlord responsible?)

• Is a lease required? If so, for how long? Is it renewable? Under what circumstances can the lease be broken by either the tenant or landlord? Read the lease carefully before signing.

• Are you permitted to sublet the house or apartment?

• Without a lease, how many days' notice must the tenant give to the landlord before moving? How much notice will the landlord give the tenant if he wishes the house or apartment vacated?

• Will everything in the house or apartment, as it is shown to you, be left for your use? If not, which items will be left?

• Which, if any, utilities will be furnished?

- Who pays for garbage collection?
- How much are heating bills likely to be?

• After living in the house, if you wanted to buy it, would the owner sell? Would your rent be applied toward the down payment?

Condition of house

• Are which walls, ceilings, and floors, if any, are insulated.

• Is there any indication of moisture condensation or mildew on the walls? (Peeling paint may be caused by excess moisture.) If there is a crawl space, does it have a vapor barrier and adequate ventilation (especially in humid climates)?

• Do the windows open easily? Are they weather stripped?

• Do doors fit tightly without sticking?

• Are bathroom fixtures stained, indicating iron in the water or misuse?

• Are walls or ceilings badly cracked?

• Do any walls need repainting? If the house is furnished when shown, check condition of paint behind pictures and large furniture.

• Is the roof in good condition? (Note any signs of leakage on ceilings and walls inside.)

• Are floors in good condition?

Orientation and lot

• Is the house located on the high part of the lot for good drainage toward the street?

• Are there shade trees for protection against excessive heat in the summer?

• Are you satisfied with the view from the living and dining areas?

• Do rooms have good light and ventilation?

• Are outside entrances protected from the weather?

• Is there a patio or deck, or is this important to you? Is it on the protected side?



Floor plan

- Are front and rear entrances convenient to the drive?
- Are living, working, and sleeping areas separated from each other?
- Are kitchen and living room free from cross traffic?
- Is bathroom or lavatory easily accessible from bedrooms and from play yard or patio?
- Is the number of bathrooms adequate?
- Is the bathroom properly ventilated to avoid moisture condensation and mildew in humid climates? (A ventilating fan or window which can be opened may be needed.)

Living and dining areas

- Are interior wall colors satisfactory to you?
- Is the living room large enough for seating your family and guests?
- Does the living room have sufficient wall space for your furniture?
- Is there a fireplace, or is this important to you?
- If there is a fireplace, is there a storage area for firewood?
- If there is a family room, can furniture be arranged to allow for dining, watching TV, for card games, or for sitting in front of the fireplace?
- Does the house have a TV antenna or cable?
- Is there a separate dining room, or do you feel this is needed?
- Is there storage near the front entrance for guests' wraps?

Sleeping areas

- Are there enough sleeping areas for your family?
- Are the bedrooms large enough for your furniture?
- Is there space for overnight guests?
- Is the closet space in each bedroom adequate for clothing and bedding?
- Are closets 24 to 28 inches in depth?
- Is there storage here or elsewhere for out-of-season clothing and bedding?

Activity areas

- In accordance with your family needs, is there an area in the house which might be used for: Writing, typing, studying; desk

or office space for family business and records; children's play, indoors and out; hobbies and adult recreation; sewing, mending, knitting; and storage of supplies for these activities and sports?

Kitchen and laundry areas

- Is the kitchen large enough for the number of people who will work there at one time?
- Is there adequate storage space for supplies and small equipment which will be used there?
- Are major appliances included? If so, are they in good condition? If appliances are not furnished, will your appliances fit in? (Consider both dimensions and type of fuel—gas or electricity.)
- Are there sufficient electrical outlets for your needs?
- Is there a work area for laundering? Are washer and dryer furnished? If not, is there plumbing, wiring, and vent so that the appliances can be installed?
- Are work areas well lighted?
- Can children's play be supervised from work areas?

Utilities

- Is the electric service and wiring sufficient for the appliances you expect to use?
- Are there enough electric outlets properly located?
- Are there enough switches so that you can light your way ahead of you?
- Is there adequate water supply and safe sewage disposal?
- Is the water heater large enough for the family and the water-using appliances to be included? Ask your electric or gas utility for information about this in relation to your needs.
- Is the heating system adequate for keeping the house comfortable? Is the thermostat in a satisfactory location? Are bedrooms heated?
- Will there be need for an air conditioner in the summer?

Miscellaneous

- Is there storage space for gardening equipment and supplies?
- Is there storage for children's bicycles and large play equipment?
- Is the garage or carport adequate in size?

Questions About Apartments

The following questions apply particularly to apartments.

- Is the apartment furnished or unfurnished? Will the landlord remove any furnishings you do not want or add others for you? Is the quality of the furnishings acceptable? Check underside of chair and sofa cushions.
- If the apartment is unfurnished, are draperies or carpet provided?
- Is there a locked storage area outside the apartment for keeping trunks, unused items, and out-of-season supplies?
- Is the entrance private, or located so that guests can easily find you?
- Are walls soundproofed so the apartment will be quiet?
- If there is an apartment above you, are floors and walls soundproofed? How many and what age people live above or next to you? Are their living habits objectionable to you? (People who work a night shift or entertain extensively late at night may disturb you.)
- Is the apartment near a stairway or elevator where there may be noise late at night? Are the stairs carpeted?
- Are neighbors the type who might object to your activities?
- Are you responsible for care of the halls? Are halls well lighted?
- Are children and pets permitted?
- Is a garage or parking space available? Is there extra charge for this?
- Is there a laundry room with sufficient equipment in proportion to the number of tenants in the building? What is the cost of using the equipment? What hours is it available?
- If there is no laundry in the building, is there a self-service laundry near?
- Does the owner have a reputation of keeping the building in good repair and try to attract a good class of tenants?
- Is there a resident manager on the premises?
- To whom is the rent paid? On what date?
- Can any pictures or other objects be fastened to the walls?
- Is the building fireproof?
- Is there a set of rules for the occupants of the building?

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