

PHONE CHECK - WHAT TO ASK PAST LANDLORDS

LANDLORDS OF IOWA, INC.

[Phone script of **objective questions**]

Identify yourself and ask for the landlord's/manager's assistance in answering about 10 short questions; you must first find out if the person will be giving you truthful answers. You may begin by asking the landlord (or person posing as a landlord) to verify one piece of information on the application: Ask the landlord to verify information NOT using the same answers given on the application. For example, if the applicant stated that his/her current rent is \$400, ask the landlord to verify the current rent at \$500. If the landlord fails to correct you, you know that either the landlord is not willing to give you truthful responses or that you may be talking to someone other than the landlord [who will be willing to say "yes" to whatever you ask.] If the landlord corrects you, you can continue with the remainder of suggested questions:

FIRST ASK - How do you happen to know _____? Unless you know the landlord\manager, do not immediately identify yourself as a landlord. Just say that "I am ____ and _____ has given your name as a reference and I want to check out some information on the person.

1. Is \$_____ the current rent being paid? (Use a different figure than that stated by tenant)
[OR some other question to test the veracity of the respondent]

[Do **NOT** proceed with the following questions, if you believe that you are not actually speaking to the landlord or that you are speaking with a landlord who will not provide you truthful information.]

2. How many weeks advance notice has the tenant given you that he\she was moving? Skip out without notice?
3. Is the tenant presently up-to-date on the rent due you?
4. Was the tenant late once or more than once during the last 12 months? Ever more than 30 days late?
5. How many months did the tenant reside in your property? Did he/she leave before the full term of lease?
6. Did you receive any complaints from neighbors regarding the tenant? If so, for what alleged reason?
7. Have you had to give a notice to the tenant for any reason during the last 10 months? For what reason?
8. What type of animal(s) was on the premises during the tenant's residency? Any complaints regarding it?
9. Was the tenant asked to move because he/she broke the agreement? Did he move voluntarily or after judicial eviction?
10. Did you have to withhold any deposit to cover any damages? Did you have to repaint or clean carpets?

Avoid general questions like "Would you rent to the tenant again?" or "Was this a good tenant?" Conclude by thanking the landlord/manager for his/her cooperation.

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