



Green Flags vs. Red Flags in Apartment Listings

AKA How to Avoid Getting Catfished by an Apartment

GREEN Flags (a.k.a. signs you're onto a real one):

- ✓ **Verified Listings** – If you're on Apartments.com, Zillow, etc., look for that "Verified" badge. It means the platform has confirmed details with the property manager or owner.
- ✓ **Realistic Photos** – Listings that show the space as is, including slightly imperfect details (like a slightly outdated stove or a normal-looking bathroom), are actually a good sign. Overly perfect = overly staged.
- ✓ **Specific Details** – Look for listings that mention square footage, natural light, pet policy, lease terms, utilities, and move-in dates. If they're answering your questions before you ask? Major green flag.
- ✓ **Contact Info Matches the Property** – If the phone number or email matches a management company you can Google? That's a good sign you're dealing with professionals—not Craigslist ghosts.
- ✓ **Tour Options** – Virtual or in-person tour options offered without pressure = someone confident in the space.

Red Flags (a.k.a. here comes the catfish):

- ✗ **Too Few Photos or All Stock Images** – If there are only 1-2 photos or they look like generic staged images pulled from Pinterest, beware. If you can't see the bathroom or kitchen? That's usually not an accident.
- ✗ **Vague Descriptions** – "Cozy space, great vibes" tells you nothing. If there's no info on square footage, lease length, or what floor it's on, you're probably not getting transparency later, either.
- ✗ **Suspiciously Low Price** – If it's way under market for your area, that's a red flag unless there's a clear reason (e.g. basement unit, short-term sublet, etc.). Ask yourself: "Is this too good to be true?"
- ✗ **Can't Tour Before Paying** – If someone asks you to send a deposit before you've seen the place or spoken to a real human? 🚨 That's a scam. Period.
- ✗ **Weird Contact Behavior** – Poor grammar, late-night messages, or evasive answers to basic questions? Trust your gut.

Pro Tip:

Screenshot everything. Listings vanish, especially the scammy ones. Keep records of listings you inquire about and conversations you've had—just in case you need to report something shady.

If it looks too good, reads too vague, or makes you feel rushed? That's not your apartment soulmate. And if it shows up looking nothing like the photos? Congratulations—you've been catfished. Time to swipe on.

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