

Comprehensive Tenant Screening Checklist

A tenant screening checklist is a detailed framework landlords use to evaluate potential tenants before finalizing a lease. It outlines the sequence of steps and specific criteria to be checked, such as identity verification, income confirmation, credit review, and rental history, ensuring the process remains structured and compliant with applicable laws.

Application Form

- ☐ Request the applicant's full legal name and accurate contact details.
- ☐ Collect detailed employment history and current income information.
- ☐ Record rental history with landlord contact information.
- ☐ Obtain signed authorization for credit and background checks.

Income and Employment Verification

- ☐ Review recent pay stubs or W-2 forms for accuracy.
- ☐ Request bank statements showing regular deposits.
- ☐ Contact the employer to confirm job status and length of employment.
- ☐ Ask self-employed applicants for tax returns or business invoices.

Credit Check

- ☐ Pull a credit report from a reputable service.
- ☐ Examine payment history for late or missed payments.
- ☐ Check for high debt levels or collections.
- ☐ Compare findings with your minimum score criteria.

Background Check (Including Criminal and Eviction History)

- ☐ Use a compliant background check provider.
- ☐ Review allowed criminal records relevant to tenancy.
- ☐ Check eviction records for patterns or recent cases.
- ☐ Document findings and follow proper adverse action procedures.

Rental History

- ☐ Contact past landlords to verify payment timeliness.
- ☐ Ask about property care and adherence to rules.
- ☐ Confirm if there were any lease violations.
- ☐ Record whether the landlord would rent to the tenant again.

References

- ☐ Request at least two references from different sources.
- ☐ Call each reference to confirm their relationship with the applicant.
- ☐ Ask about punctuality, communication, and overall reliability.
- ☐ Note whether they would recommend the tenant for a lease.

Screening Fees

- ☐ Disclose the screening fee amount before processing applications.
- ☐ Ensure the fee is within California's legal limit for the year.
- ☐ Use collected fees only for screening purposes.
- ☐ Provide a receipt or proof of fee use upon request.

Evaluating Eviction and Criminal History

- ☐ Compare findings to pre-set evaluation standards.
- ☐ Weigh older or resolved cases with context.
- ☐ Apply the same review process to every applicant.
- ☐ Document the reasoning behind acceptance or denial.