

Warning for Landlords: **Housing Scam! PLEASE READ!**

Several landlords have been contacted with housing requests from people posing as international students or transports. This scam typically works like this:

- Landlord is contacted via email or by telephone by the interested tenant who is moving to the U.S. from an international destination.
- The tenant expresses urgency in completing the rental agreement and agrees to send a check or money order for the cost of the first month's rent and security deposit ASAP.
- However, the potential tenant sends a counterfeit/over drafted check or money order for more money than is needed to cover this and requests that the landlord send them the balance (in a check or money order).
- The tenant states that they are planning to use the balance to purchase their plane ticket or may state that they need the money for another seemingly urgent cause, and ask that the landlord send the money ASAP.
- Banks have typically accepted the counterfeits from landlords upon the initial deposit, but will contact the landlords within a couple days to notify them that the check or money order was fake.
- If a potential tenant sends or gives you more money than you requested, we advise that you do *NOT* to send or give them any money back until the check or money order has had ample time to clear with your bank.
- This way you are not scammed out of any of your own money.
- Also if you feel suspicious that a potential tenant may be attempting a scam, please request that the bank or a post office investigate checks or money orders.

Please take notice of this warning and be suspicious of anyone contacting you with requests similar to the ones mentioned above. Please contact the Commuter Housing Office at URI with any questions or concerns.

Suggestions for Combating Renter Fraud:

If there are concerns about whether someone is a viable renter, below are some things that you can do to help you determine if they are affiliated with URI:

1. Ask them to send you an email from their **URI email account**.
2. If they are coming to URI to do special work with a professor and do not have a URI account, ask for the **name and contact information of that professor**. Then check the **URI website for his/her information** and call the professor and department to ask about the person that inquired.
3. **Check the URI academic calendar** to determine when it is most likely that you will be expecting students to be coming to campus. For example: The fall semester begins after Labor day, anyone contacting you stating that they will be arriving in the middle of October would not be starting classes then