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NEWS RELEASE

SPD issues tips to avoid rental scams this summer

Seaside, Ore. – May 10, 2019 – With the busy tourist season just around the corner, as well as the limited availability of long-term rentals in our area, it is a good time to remind ourselves that not everything on the internet may be what it appears – especially when it comes to short and long-term rental listings found online. Rental scams are a common issue on Facebook, Craig’s List, VRBO, Airbnb, and other places you may be looking for rentals online.

Scam listings often steal photos, descriptions, and other information from pre-existing (real) rental listings. The scam listings will make their property appear to be a better deal than other listings in the area. Many times, the false listings are placed by people in other countries, which make it near impossible to adjudicate and/or get your money back.

Tips to avoid being a victim of a rental scam:

- **Don’t wire money or pay with a prepaid or gift card for a vacation rental.** Once the scammer collects the money, it is almost impossible to get it back. A legitimate property owner will never ask you to purchase gift cards and send them photographs of the card number.
- **Don’t be rushed into a decision.** If you receive an email pressuring you to make a decision on the spot for a rental, ignore it and move on.
- **Look out for super cheap rates for premium vacation properties.** Below-market rent can be a sign of a scam. Do some extra research to confirm the deal is legitimate before jumping in and consider calling the Seaside Visitors Bureau at (503) 738-3097 for additional lodging research.
- **Read carefully.** When suspects are located in other countries, they will often use an online translator for their communications. There will be misspellings, strange wording, and other grammar indications which may indicate a false ad.
- **Phone calls.** If you want to call the property owner and they communicate telling you they suddenly had to leave the country and can’t call, call at odd times of the day, become angry when you don’t immediately send them money, you may be looking at a scam listing.

If you are the victim of a rental scam you can report it to your local police department by calling (503) 738-6311 and/or to the [FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center](https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx). (<https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>)

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