

## Report scams

If you think you may have been scammed:

- Do not delete your e-mail communication!
- Report it to your local police and take the bank transfer or remittal with you.

## Where to get help

- Studierendenwerk Stuttgart  
Phone: 0711 95 74 – 410  
Email: [info@sw-stuttgart.de](mailto:info@sw-stuttgart.de)  
Free legal counselling available, prior appointment requested. For more information please visit: [www.studierendenwerk-stuttgart.de/rechts-sozialberatung](http://www.studierendenwerk-stuttgart.de/rechts-sozialberatung)
- [www.sichere-immobiliensuche.de](http://www.sichere-immobiliensuche.de)  
Information and tips provided by ImmobilienScout24.de
- [www.wohnungsbetrug.blogspot.de](http://www.wohnungsbetrug.blogspot.de)  
Collection of over 12.000 names, (email) addresses and examples of phony ads
- [www.schutz-vor-immobilienbetrug.de](http://www.schutz-vor-immobilienbetrug.de)  
Information page provided by the online real estate portal Immowelt.de about the tricks used by fraudsters
- [www.polizei-beratung.de](http://www.polizei-beratung.de)

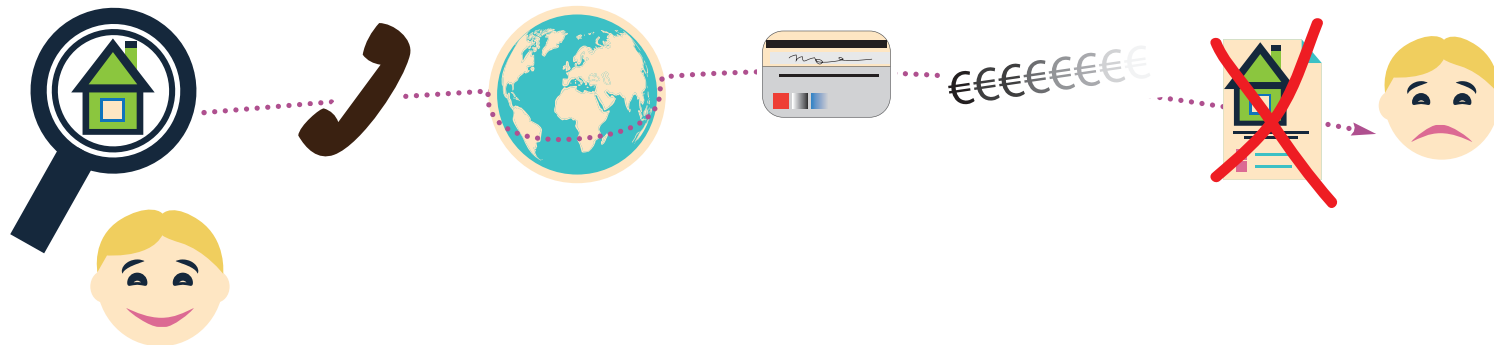
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## Beware of Phony Rental Ads!

Every week there are hundreds of online rental listings posted by scammers on real estate websites. They offer very affordable flats or rooms, insist on a security deposit or first month's rent, to be paid in advance and transferred to a foreign bank account. They never engage in any personal contact with their potential renters except by e-mail, and by e-mail alone. Another scam used is using phony online companies.

Real estate websites such as Immobilienscout24 or Immowelt try to delete as many of these phony ads as possible because once the money has been paid, people find out soon enough that they have become the victim of a phantom rental property scam. Fraudsters take advantage of the ongoing housing shortage, especially among students and apprentices.



## How rental scams work

- Flats are usually listed with way below-market rental rates.
- The landlord/owner does not himself/herself want to show you the flat.
- The landlord/owner states that at the moment he/she is temporarily abroad.
- Usually, English is used in the e-mail communication.
- The payment process is done via cash transfer, wiring money that is. That means that the money is not transferred to an account, but instead to an individual. To collect the money, the transfer data and a (forged) ID card are sufficient.

## 9 ways to avoid fraud

- Beware of unrealistically low rental rates.
- Never make any payment in advance, neither in cash nor via bank transfer.
- Set up a meeting to visit the flat before you sign a lease or pay any money. Reputable property owners do not rent their flat without inviting potential renters to visit the flat.
- Make an effort to contact the landlord/owner of the flat. He/She should at least talk to you on the telephone.
- Always insist on a written lease.
- Always be accompanied by someone you trust.
- If you are uncertain, make your own internet research for similar cases, names, phone numbers, and key words on the internet.
- Whenever you spot signs of a rental scam, get in touch with the Portal Provider.
- Never send a copy of your ID documents, nor disclose any personal information, including your bank coordinates, to strangers. Fraudsters could use your personal data for other crimes.