

## **Beware of Rental Scam**

*July 21, 2016*

St. Albert RCMP is warning potential renters in St. Albert to be aware of some ads for places to live. The rental scam is a common one involving rental properties. Rental scams vary but here are two of the more common scenarios:

A fraudster has somehow obtained access to a property or place. They pose as a landlord / property manager and show the victim the property. They then request an immediate down payment to secure the property and inform the victim they can move in at a later date. On the move-in date, the victim arrives only to discover it wasn't actually a rental and there have been other victims as well.

A fraudster poses as a landlord and says they are out of the country and require a deposit on the rental. Once the money is paid, usually through a money transfer, the new tenant discovers there isn't actually a rental.

As a renter, there are some precautionary steps you can take to protect yourself from falling victim to scams such as this. First and foremost, apply common sense.

### **Tips**

- Ensure a proper tenancy agreement is drafted and signed by both parties. This agreement should include names and addresses for the landlord.
- Ask the landlord to show picture identification as proof he / she is the person named in the document. While it is not a requirement that they produce identification, the renter should be suspicious if they refuse.
- As a renter, you might consider asking to see previous utility bills for the residence to confirm identity of the landlord.
- Check rental rates in the same area. Often fraudsters will try to entice their victims with low prices to elicit multiple victims.
- Avoid wiring money ie Western Union. There's never a good reason to wire money to pay a security deposit, application fee, first month's rent, or vacation rental fee.

For general information relating to entering into a tenancy or ending a tenancy, please visit the Edmonton Landlord and tenant advisory boards and info services at [www.edmonton.ca/ltab](http://www.edmonton.ca/ltab)

If you have information about this incident, please call the St. Albert RCMP at 780-458-7700 or call your local police. If you want to remain anonymous, you can contact Crime Stoppers by phone at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), by internet at [www.tipsubmit.com](http://www.tipsubmit.com), or by SMS (check your local Crime Stoppers [www.crimestoppers.ab.ca](http://www.crimestoppers.ab.ca) for instructions).