



Be aware of fake landlords in Germany and recognize scam apartment ads

Again, and again, scam ads are posted in social networks and on apartment portals of the type Immobilienscout, WG-gesucht, Airbnb and many more. You, as an international student, should pay special attention when looking for an apartment in Germany and act according to our recommendations in order to recognize a rental scam at an early stage.

Concrete tips to avoid rental fraud

- √ Never send your personal bank data and copies of your identity documents to strangers
- √ Never transfer money before you have seen the apartment/shared room yourself or sent a trusted person to check out the apartment
- √ Never transfer money before you have your fully completed rental agreement signed by the landlord and a copy of the landlord's passport in your hands
- √ Never transfer money to a foreign bank account. A German bank account can be recognized by the country code in the IBAN: DE.
- √ Check with Streetview programs whether the address really exists. Is there an apartment building at this location?
- √ The reverse image search via search engine provides information whether the photos have already been used for another advertisement with a different address

The fraud has occurred - what should I do now?

If you have already transferred the money, you should file a criminal complaint at the closest police station as soon as possible. Please bring the correspondence and account statement with recipient account as a printout.

Then you should immediately contact your bank or the payment service provider. Sometimes it is possible to cancel the money transfer. If the payment was made by credit card, you should initiate a payment claim ("chargeback").

In addition, you should report the case of fraud to the corresponding online portal so that they can delete the advertisement and block the scam user.

More info about rental fraud

<https://www.study.eu/article/finding-an-apartment-as-a-student-5-telltale-signs-that-youre-being-scammed>