



This preview includes the complete first section of the Rent Reality Check Workbook.

The full workbook also includes worksheets, tools, and ready-to-use AI prompts.

RENTAL FEES & CHARGES

The Rent You See Isn't Always the Rent You Pay.

A rental may be advertised at **\$1,800 per month**, but that may not be your actual monthly housing cost.

You could also be responsible for administrative fees, technology charges, trash fees, utility charges, pet rent, parking, or required services.

Before you compare rentals, find out the total cost.

WHAT TYPES OF FEES MIGHT YOU SEE?

Rental charges can include:

- Application or screening fees
- Administrative fees
- Security deposits
- Move-in fees
- Monthly service fees
- Utility and billing charges
- Pet fees or pet rent
- Parking or storage fees
- Required services
- Move-out or other charges

Not every charge is treated the same way, and whether a particular fee is permitted can depend on the lease and applicable law.

MANDATORY OR OPTIONAL?

One of the most important questions to ask is:

"Do I have a choice?"

Ask:

Is this fee mandatory?

If it's optional, can I decline it and still rent the property?

Is it one-time or recurring?

Can the amount change?

Where is it disclosed?

A fee that is required should be included when you're calculating the actual cost of the rental.

THE REAL COST OF RENT

Don't compare apartments based on advertised rent alone.

Monthly Cost

Rent + mandatory fees + required services + other recurring costs

Move-In Cost

Application fees + deposits + first month's rent + required move-in charges

Other Costs

Utilities + parking + pets + insurance + other required expenses

What will this home actually cost me?

That's the number that matters.

BEFORE YOU PAY

Before applying or signing a lease, ask for a complete list of required costs.

Ask:

- What is the total monthly cost?
- Which fees are mandatory?
- Which are optional?
- What will I pay at move-in?
- Which utilities are included?
- Are there required services?
- Can any charges change?
- What could I owe when I move out?

KEEP YOUR RECORDS

Save copies of:

- The rental advertisement
- Fee information
- Application materials
- Lease and addenda
- Emails and messages
- Receipts and payment records

If the information changes, save the original information whenever possible.

WHEN A FEE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

Don't assume that an unfamiliar fee is automatically illegal.

Instead, ask:

What is it for?

Is it required?

Where is it disclosed?

What does the lease say?

What law or rule applies?

Rental requirements vary by state and locality, so verify the rules that apply where you live.

Understand the fee before you agree to pay it.

QUICK FEE CHECK

- ☐ Advertised rent
- ☐ Mandatory monthly fees
- ☐ Optional fees
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Parking
- ☐ Pet costs
- ☐ Application costs
- ☐ Security deposit
- ☐ Move-in charges
- ☐ Potential move-out charges
- ☐ Required services
- ☐ Changes to fees during the lease

Know the cost before you sign.

That's your Rent Reality Check.

WANT TO GO FURTHER?

Knowing what to look for is the first step. The complete **Rent Reality Check Workbook** takes you further with practical worksheets, tools, and ready-to-use AI prompts designed to help you examine your lease before you sign.

Rent Reality Check provides general educational and informational content and is not legal advice. Rental laws and regulations vary by state and locality. Verify current requirements with the appropriate government agency or qualified professional.

