

MAKING THE FIRST PHONE CALL TO A LANDLORD

Most landlords receive many messages regarding a rental listing. Follow these tips to make a good first impression and improve your odds of receiving a return phone call.

Chances are good that you will reach someone's voicemail. Speak slowly and clearly. Repeat your phone number at the end of the message. Frantic messages with fast talking, or an unorganized manner of speaking does not encourage landlords to return the call.

Things to do before making the call:

- Review the rental advertisement to see if you have any questions about the rental in case the landlord answers the phone. For example, see the "Housing Fact Sheet" included in this packet.
- Know your schedule so that you are ready to make an appointment to view the rental unit you are calling about.
- Decide how you would like to present yourself to the landlord and how to best show that you are a responsible individual (e.g., through your part-time job, volunteer work, research projects, past experience as a tenant).
- Tell them where you found their ad.
- Take a deep breath and prepare yourself to speak calmly, clear, and concisely.

Here are some examples of *what to do* and *what not to do* when leaving a message:

- **Caller #1:** "Yeah, my name is Tom and I'm calling about your rental. I'm at 555-5555. Thanks."
- **Caller #2:** "Hi! My name is Tom Jones, and my number is 555-5555. I'm very interested in your Bay Avenue unit. I am a quiet and responsible person. I can afford the rent. I'd really like an appointment to see the place, so please call me. Again, this is Tom Jones, 555-5555, and I'll be available between 7 to 9 p.m. tonight or you can leave me a message at any time. Thank you."

There are several reasons why Caller #2 is much more likely to get a call back from the landlord:

- Caller #2 speaks clearly and slowly and repeats the number for the return call.
- Caller #2 indicates that they are quiet, responsible and able to pay the rent.
- Caller #2 speaks in greater detail, implying that they are a thinking and caring individual.

If the landlord answers the phone:

- Speak clearly.
- Know what you want to say to the landlord and what questions you would like to ask.
- Be prepared to take notes on the landlord's answers so that you can reference them later. This is especially important if you are calling on behalf of other people who will be renting with you.
- Set a date and time to see the rental application.
- If you are nervous, arrange for someone you trust to attend the rental unit viewing with you that will help you to make a good impression on the landlord.