

# CONSUMER ALERT

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

[datcp.wi.gov](http://datcp.wi.gov)



## Beware of Online Rental Scams

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MADISON – Beware of rental scams hitting Wisconsin using online advertising sites such as Craigslist.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has received reports from various partners that consumers in the Madison and Milwaukee areas have “rented” properties advertised online only to find out later that the property was never available for rent. Consumers wired money to the “landlord” to hold the property. Now the consumers have no place to live and the “landlord” can’t be found to return their money.

The Bureau of Consumer Protection advises consumers when renting property, whether for vacation or longer-term housing, to:

- Know exactly with whom you are doing business. Does the person / management company actually exist?
- Verify the property address exists and is actually for rent.
- Inspect the property (inside and out) before you put any money down.
- Get a rental agreement in writing, if possible.
- Never wire money.
- Be cautious if you are asked to send money out of state when the property you are renting is located in Wisconsin. Ask why and verify the reason.

It is also a good idea to rely on friends, family, co-workers or local professionals to assist you in your search.

For more information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at <http://datcp.wi.gov>, send an e-mail to [datcphotline@wisconsin.gov](mailto:datcphotline@wisconsin.gov) or call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-422-7128.

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