Before You Rent a Room: Renter Checklist

Use before you pay anything for a room, on any website. Free printable from CoRent.AI.

Golden rule: no money moves until you have seen the actual room (in person or on a live video call), checked who controls the property, and have the terms in writing. Never pay by wire transfer, gift card or crypto, or to someone who moves you off the website you found them on.

1. Is the listing real?

- ☐ Photos are of the actual room, not stock photos (reverse image search them).
- ☐ The price is in line with similar rooms nearby. Far below everything else is a warning sign.
- ☐ The host did a live video walkthrough of the room and shared areas, or you toured in person.
- ☐ The host's name matches the property owner in county records, or they showed written permission (management agreement or owner's letter).
- ☐ No pressure tactics: "pay today or it's gone", "I'm out of the country, I'll mail the keys".

2. What does the price include?

Item	Included?	If extra, how much?
Rent per week / month		$
Electric, gas, water		$
Internet		$
Furniture: bed, dresser, desk		
Laundry		$
Parking		$
Deposit (refundable? when?)		$
Application or other fees		$

Weekly to monthly: multiply the weekly rate by 4.33. Example: $150 a week ≈ $650 a month.

3. The house and the people

- ☐ How many people live there, and how many share each bathroom?
- ☐ How long have current housemates stayed?
- ☐ Written house rules: quiet hours, guests, cleaning, smoking, pets.
- ☐ Your room door has a working lock. Smoke alarm works.
- ☐ Who to call for repairs or a lockout, and how fast they respond.

4. The paperwork

- ☐ Written agreement naming your exact room, the rent, due date, deposit and notice to leave.
- ☐ Notice to leave, and whether the last week or month is prorated.
- ☐ Payment method has a record and dispute protection (platform payment or card).
- ☐ Move-in photos of the room, dated, shared with the host.

Message to send a host

"Hi, I'm interested in the private room at [listing]. I'd like to move in on [date] for about [length]. I can share proof of income and a reference. Is the room furnished, and which utilities are included in the rate? Could we do a live video walkthrough this week?"

If something feels off, stop and report it. USA.gov lists where to report a housing scam: usa.gov/housing-scams.