



**REAL ESTATE REPORT**

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## Expert Weighs In On Finding A Good Roommate

By: Jill Urban



*Finding a good roommate can be a pain, but experts say it's worth making the effort to avoid problems in the future. NY1's Jill Urban filed the following report.*

With the cost of living on the rise and with many people troubled by financial uncertainty, more and more New Yorkers are looking for a roommate.

Before taking the plunge, there are some key tests of compatibility to be aware of. Barbara Ireland of DJK Residential says there are several things to do and questions to ask when looking at prospective roommates.

First, she says its best to get candidates by referrals from family and friends or even an online matching service. She suggests approaching it like searching for a candidate for a job.

"Ask them for a business resume, a letter of verification from their employer, references such as a landlord or current roommate, and a credit report," says Ireland.

These will indicate if a person is financially reliable. Red flags to look for are long periods with no employment, bouncing from job to job or city to city and late payments listed on their credit report.

After narrowing the search down to a few candidates, meet face to face. Find out why they want a roommate situation and see if lifestyles are compatible. See if schedules complement one another, if they like to entertain guests or stay out all night, what furniture they'll bring and so forth. Make sure everyone understands financial obligations.

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"Make sure you have a signed agreement. Included in the agreement should be the date of the lease, the monthly rent, the due dates for the rent, any penalties, a security deposit term and how you will handle shared expenses like cable TV, electricity, telephone and even renters insurance," says Ireland.

Also make sure the person is willing to co-sign the lease and be legally responsible for the apartment. If not, that's a red flag.

Another test of compatibility is cleanliness. Neat freaks may not be a good match for those who aren't. Ask about their cleaning habits and maybe even establish some guidelines.

Also, establish rules regarding guests and significant others, like how often they can stay and if they'll get a key.

The bottom line, though: make sure to *like* a candidate. Settling for just anyone could lead to a bad situation.



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