

# AVOID

STAY SAFE

RENTAL SCAMS

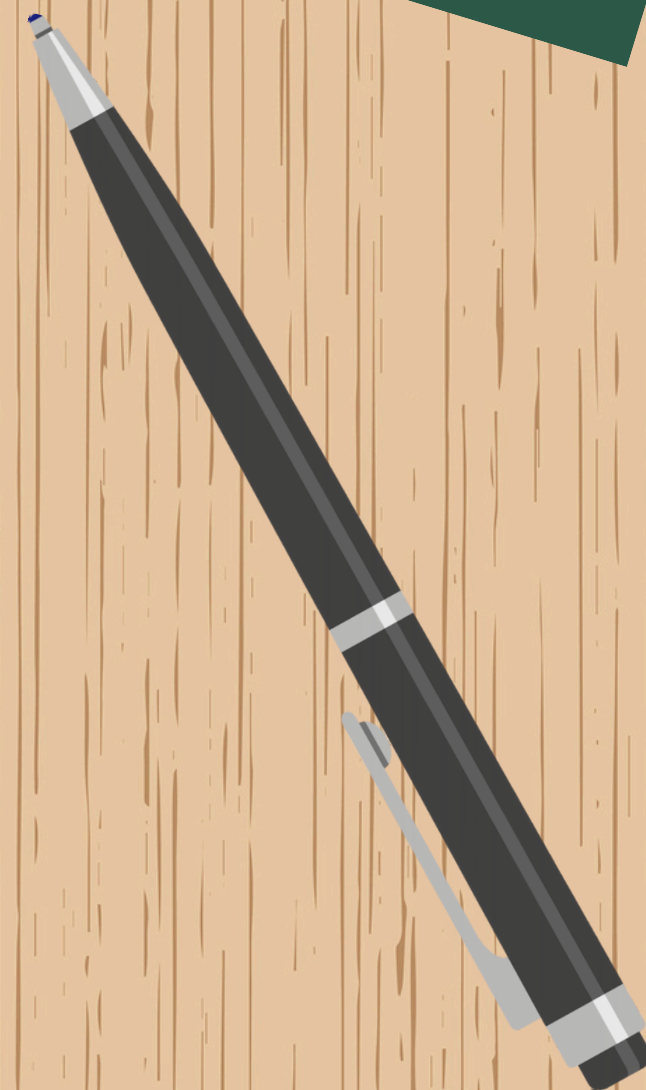
The notes aim to

HELP US  
AVOID RENTAL SCAMS

Stay Alert! Be Smart. Be Safe. Don't Get Tricked!

**CONTACT US**

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# CONTENT



01	Common types of rental scams
02	Warning signs to watch for
03	Tips for safe and smart renting
04	What to do if you've been scammed
05	Real Case Study



# COMMON RENTAL SCAMS IN HONG KONG

Type	Feature
Fake Listings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Scammers post non-existent or unavailable properties online.</li><li>2. Photos may be stolen from other listings.</li><li>3. Prices are often unusually low to attract victims</li></ol>
Impersonation of Agents or Landlords	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Fraudsters pretend to be licensed agents or property owners.</li><li>2. They may use fake names, stolen IDs, or even wear uniforms to appear legitimate</li></ol>
Upfront Payment Scams	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Victims are asked to pay deposits or rent in advance before seeing the property or signing a lease.</li><li>2. Once paid, the scammer disappears</li></ol>
Bait-and-Switch	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The property shown or promised is different from the one actually rented.</li><li>2. Victims may only discover the switch after payment or move-in</li></ol>
Tech-Enhanced Scams	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Scammers use AI-generated listings, fake websites, or social media ads to appear professional.</li><li>2. These scams are harder to detect due to their high-quality presentation</li></ol>





1

Rent that seems

Too Good to be True



**WARNING  
SIGNS OF  
RENTAL  
SCAMS**



3



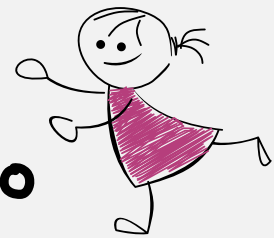
Landlord or agent

refuses to meet in person

2



Pressure to



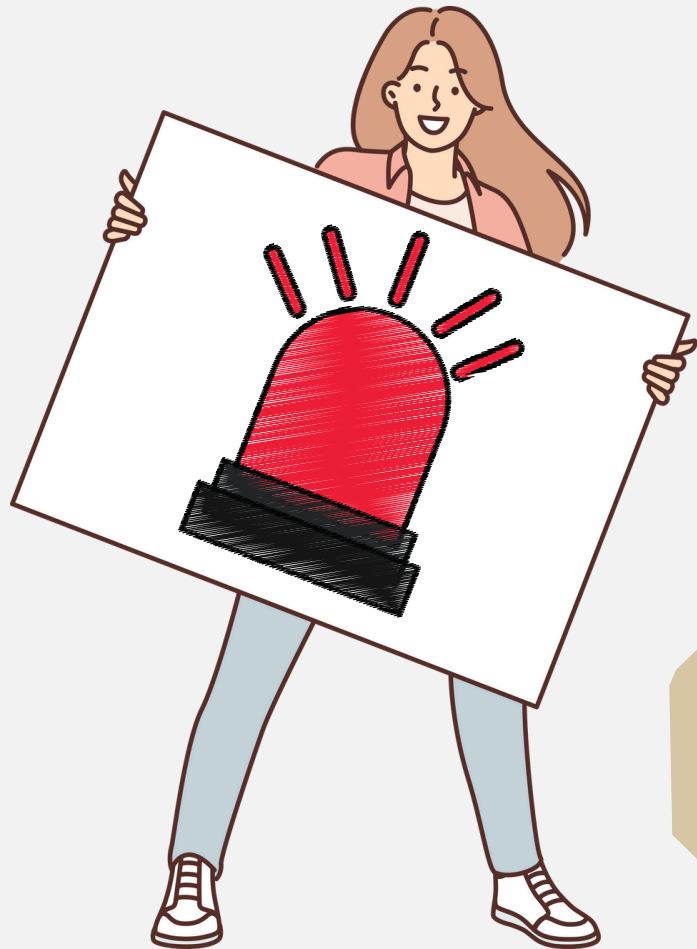
pay quickly or without a contract

4



Asked to pay via

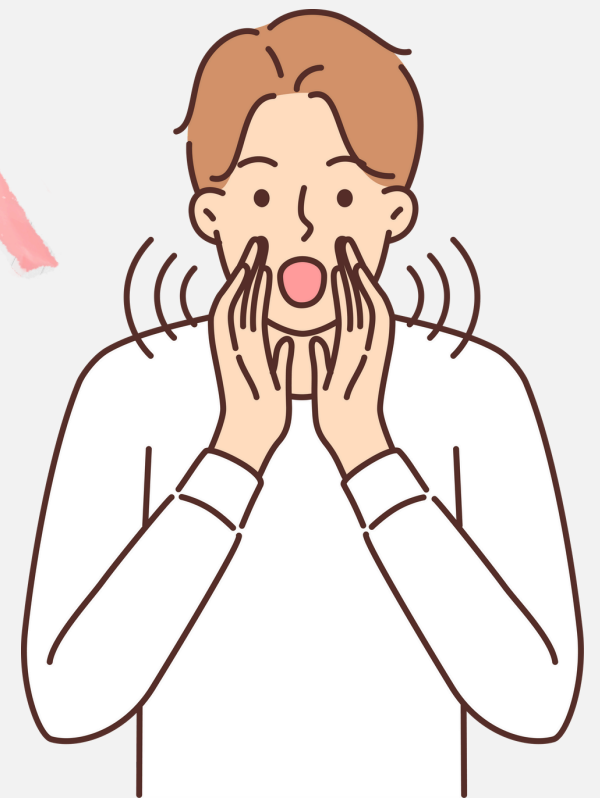
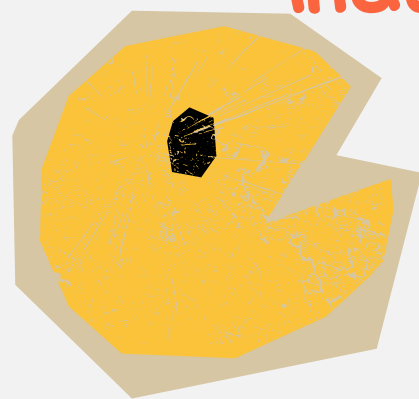
cash, cryptocurrency or untraceable methods



5



Industrial building or subdivided unit  
with unclear legality





# HOW TO PREVENT RENTAL SCAMS



USE LICENSED AGENTS

**VERIFY ON THE ESTATE AGENTS AUTHORITY (EAA) WEBSITE.** [CLICK HERE](#)

地產代理監管局  
ESTATE AGENTS AUTHORITY



VISIT THE PROPERTY

**BEFORE PAYING OR SIGNING ANYTHING.**

**AVOID CASH.** X

USE TRACEABLE PAYMENTS ✓

**IDENTIFICATION CARD**

ASK FOR DOCUMENTS  
LANDLORD ID  
AND  
PROOF OF OWNERSHIP.

VERIFIED



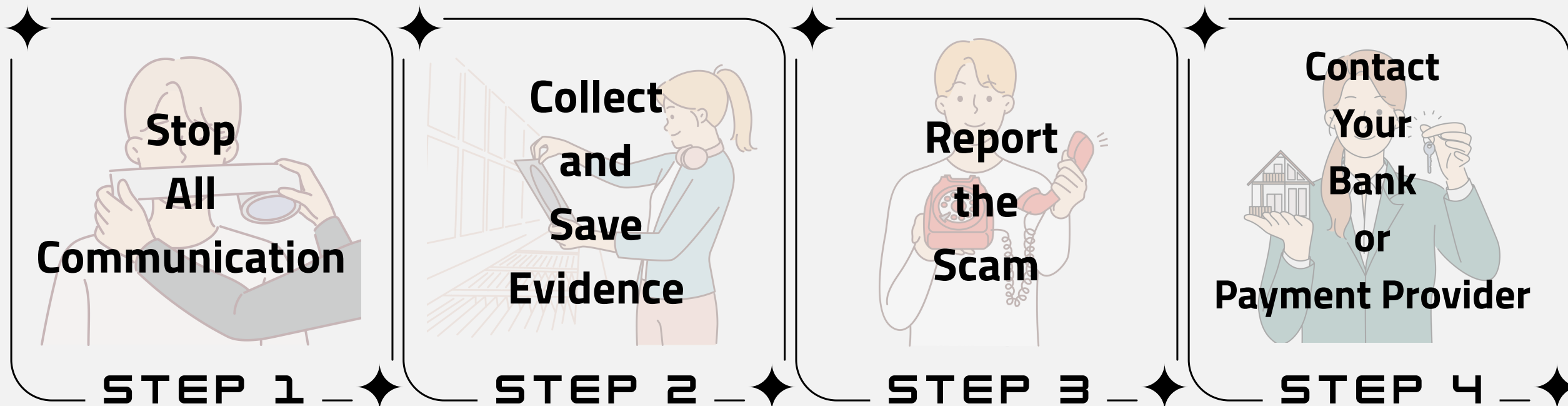
**ENSURE IT'S STAMPED BY THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT.**



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE SCAMMED

If you suspect that you've fallen victim to a rental scam, act quickly. The sooner you respond, the better your chances of recovering your money or preventing further harm.

*SMALL  
STEPS*



CLICK HERE

Anti-Deception  
Coordination  
Centre (ADCC)  
Tel: 18222

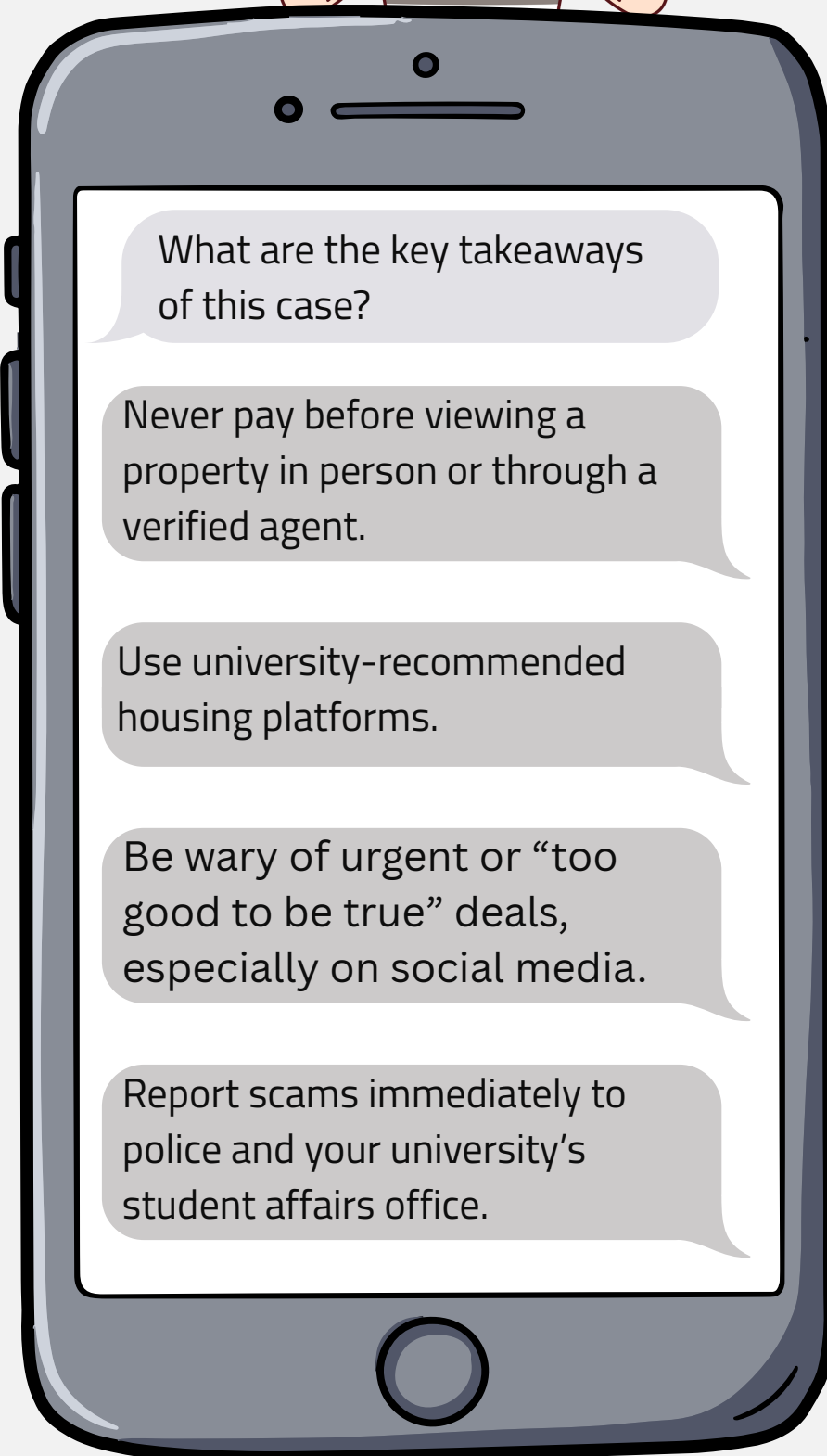
*reach out*



**Keep  
Calm**

*making  
place*

## QUICK TIPS



What are the key takeaways of this case?

Never pay before viewing a property in person or through a verified agent.

Use university-recommended housing platforms.

Be wary of urgent or “too good to be true” deals, especially on social media.

Report scams immediately to police and your university’s student affairs office.

# RENTAL SCAM TARGETING MAINLAND CHINESE STUDENTS (2023) [CLICK HERE](#)

## OVERVIEW

In 2023, a smaller but impactful scam emerged targeting mainland Chinese students newly arriving in Hong Kong for university. The scam involved fake landlords advertising attractive rental deals near major campuses.

## VICTIMS

1. Estimated 30–40 victims, mostly first-year students at universities. !!!
2. Victims were unfamiliar with Hong Kong’s rental laws and often lacked local contacts.

## LOSSES

1. Individual losses ranged from HK\$10,000 to HK\$50,000. ⚡
2. Total estimated losses: HK\$1.2 million.

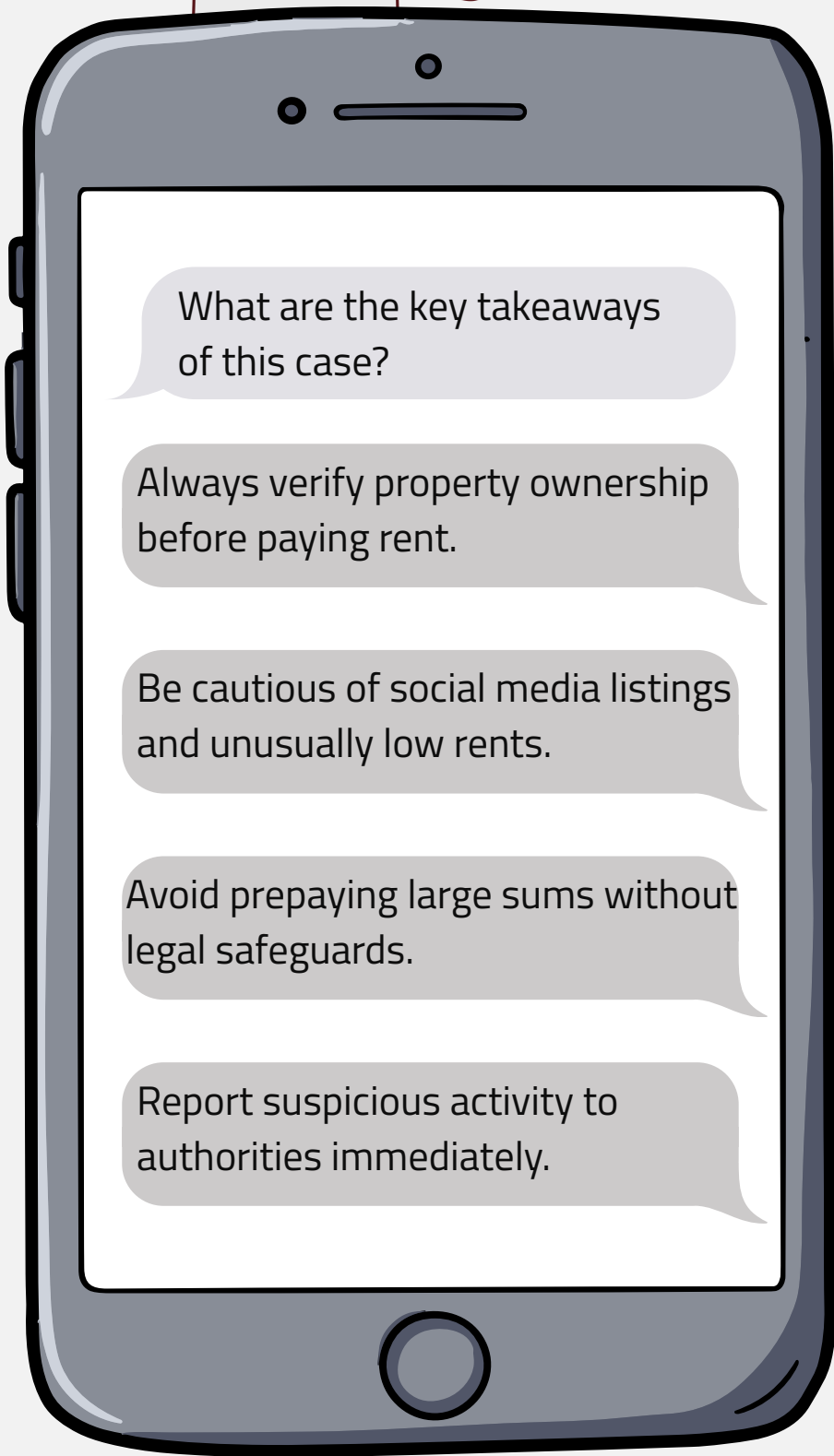
## SCAM METHOD

1. Scammers posed as landlords or agents and posted listings for non-existent or already-occupied flats. ★
2. Victims were asked to pay deposits and first month’s rent via bank transfer or mobile payment apps before viewing.
3. In some cases, scammers disappeared after receiving payment, or the address provided led to a real flat with no connection to the scammer.

## PLATFORM USED

1. WhatsApp, Facebook Marketplace, and Xiaohongshu.
2. Listings often included staged photos or images stolen from legitimate property sites.

# RENTAL SCAM TARGETING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN HONG KONG (2025)



## OVERVIEW

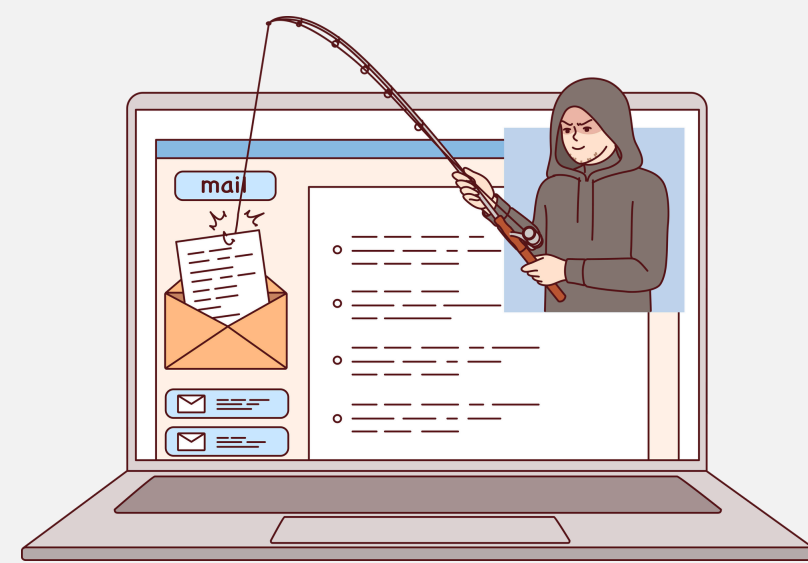
In early 2025, Hong Kong police dismantled a criminal syndicate that had operated for approximately nine months, defrauding over 150 victims—primarily international students and Top Talent Pass Scheme holders newly arrived in the city. The group posed as landlords, illegally sublet properties, and advertised non-existent flats, resulting in total losses exceeding HK\$13 million.

## VICTIMS

- 1. Over 150 victims, with 60% being mainland Chinese university students.
- 2. Victims were unfamiliar with Hong Kong's rental system.

## LOSSES

Total losses: HK\$13 million.  
 Individual losses: HK\$100,000–HK\$300,000.

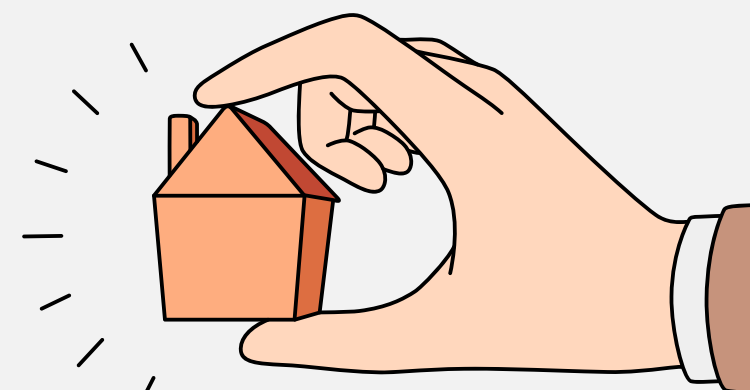


## SCAM METHOD

- 1. Syndicate members rented flats using borrowed identities.
- 2. They posed as landlords and sublet units without owner consent.
- 3. Some listings were completely fake.
- 4. Victims were asked to prepay up to a year's rent at discounted rates.
- 5. Student agents were recruited to promote listings and conduct viewings.

## PLATFORM USED

- 1. Instagram and Xiaohongshu were used to: Advertise listings. Showcase luxury lifestyles to lure agents and victims. Promote fake commission schemes.



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