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Atlanta Apartment Association Provides Tips On Staying Alert in Apartment Communities

ATLANTA, May 20 -- The National Apartment Association met with the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force on Friday, May 17th, and was briefed on the is situation. A memo summarizing that meeting is currently posted on the National Apartment Association web site at www.naahq.org, and we encourage you to check the site for anticipated updates.

The Atlanta Apartment Association is in contact with the NAA and will continue to receive updates as warranted. Meanwhile, we encourage apartment residents, managers and on-site staff to share information with one another. **As always, the best thing to do is to stay alert. Suspicious activity on premises should be reported to the FBI or to your local law enforcement agency. In the Atlanta area, you can contact the FBI at 404-679-9000. The FBI web site contains additional information at www.fbi.gov .**

The FBI also has recommended some additional steps that apartment managers should take:

- ❑ Have on-site staff be aware of things out of the ordinary. For example: gunpowder, PVC or metal piping, nails, dismantled kitchen timers -- items that can used for pipe bombs.
- ❑ Verify the identification prospects use for leasing the apartment. Keep in mind that once a lease is signed, the resident can use it as identification and proof of residency.
- ❑ If you ask for references during the application process to lease an apartment, call the references and verify the information that the prospective tenant provided.
- ❑ Be aware of residents who are in the United States on a student visa, but who never appear to leave their apartment for classes.
- ❑ And remember that law enforcement officers need a warrant to gain access to search an apartment unit. To obtain copies of records or files, only a subpoena is necessary. If your apartment company has a policy on requiring a warrant and/or subpoena, you can require an officer to present it to you.

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The Atlanta Apartment Association works closely with its member companies to encourage thorough screenings and reviews of prospective residents. For example, when prospective residents preview an apartment home, the Association recommends that apartment managers closely observe actions that are out of the ordinary. If someone wants to move in quickly with little regard for cost or amenities, it could signal an unusual or illegal use of the apartment. Additionally, the Association recommends that apartment managers do the following:

- ❑ Match the photo ID of the apartment applicant to the information provided by the applicant.
- ❑ Conduct a credit check, which provide a good start in reviewing an applicant's creditworthiness as well as important background information.
- ❑ Identify previous Owner/Managers whom they have rented from, who can help to verify important information. Have a prepared list of questions to ask, such as "If given the opportunity, would you rent to this person again?"
- ❑ Get a co-signer of the lease if necessary, and screen the co-signer as you have the applicant.
- ❑ Verify income sources by calling employers, bank contacts or vendors. If the applicant is self-employed, get copies of bank statements and tax returns.

The **Atlanta Apartment Association** is the multi-family housing trade association for the metro Atlanta area dedicated to supporting its members through legislative and industry representation, educational programs, information, networking and community relations activities.

Founded in 1975, the Association represents 1,500 members consisting of 415 companies who own or manage more than 300,000 apartment homes and 1,085 businesses that provide products and services to the industry. It is the third largest apartment association in the country and is an affiliate of the Georgia and National Apartment Associations. All members are encouraged to subscribe to the Association's Code of Ethics and are dedicated to the professional advancement of the apartment industry.

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