

Vacation Rental Inspections

In the past, vacation rental homes owned and operated by individuals used to be on the sidelines of the global hospitality industry. But today, they are challenging the dominance of major hotel chains and have become a huge part of the international travel industry. More people prefer vacation homes over hotels.



But as the owner of a vacation rental, you should know that this acceptance also means that your customers expect the same level of service from you that they get from established hotel chains. This has become even truer with COVID-19. The pandemic has made travelers more demanding than they used to be.

Guests want to see that you have taken utmost care to meet the industry's sanitary standards. They expect the features of your vacation rental to be as good as those found in 5-star hotels. [AIM Real Estate Management](#) warns that any deviation from

what guests want can earn you reviews that will hurt the future prospects of your business.

That is why inspecting your vacation home before you open for business and periodically, after you have bought it, is vital. This might seem like just an unnecessary bit of work considering all the trouble you have to go through to buy the property and set up the rental business.

But inspecting your vacation rental before you start receiving guests is vital for the smooth operation and eventual success of your rental business. Why is a vacation rental inspection so important and what are the steps for conducting a vacation rental inspection? This post will answer the questions.



Why vacation rental inspections are important

Even if the property is a long distance from where you live, inspecting the vacation rental is essential for the following reasons.

Protect your investment

Most bad reviews by vacation rental guests are over things the owner could have prevented easily. These issues may be trivial but when people pay you for a service, trivial things become important. The bad reviews caused by those small issues can damage your business.

Protect your guests

A thorough inspection of the rental before you start advertising will help ensure the safety and well-being of your guests. You can impose more effective standards when you know the actual condition and needs of your property.

Consistency in service delivery

When you habitually provide service that meets and exceeds customers' expectations, you establish a track record that will create more success for your business.

Conducting a Vacation Rental Inspection

A checklist provides a complete list of tasks to be done during the inspection, ensuring that no part of the home is overlooked. A checklist also helps impose discipline on the inspection process by providing a step-by-step guideline for inspecting the entire property.

Make it routine

While it is important to conduct a vacation rental inspection before you start a business, you should also have on-going inspections. This is because the systems and structures of the home are subject to constant wear and tear from normal use and aging.

Involve your guests

To keep your vacation rental in the best shape, create a system to help you catch problems as they happen. Having your guests serve as your eyes and ears by providing useful information about issues in the home which were present when they arrived or which occurred during their stay will be invaluable.

Schedule periodic inspections

How often should you inspect your vacation rental? You definitely should have a thorough home inspection upon purchase of your vacation rental and then again after any renovations are complete. Once you're open for business, vintage homes and homes found in extreme weather zones should be inspected more frequently and perhaps monthly. For other homes, a thorough inspection done at the end of every season should be enough to help keep the property in tip-top shape.

Your Vacation Rental Inspection Checklist

Check every switch, outlet and faucet

- Go through the property room by room to inspect and test every light switch, electrical outlet, ceiling fan and faucet.
- Swap-out old features for new ones to improve the home's aesthetics and also improve energy efficiency. Especially in an older home, you may want to add electrical outlets such as in bedrooms, kitchen or family room to ensure there are plenty of charging stations for today's electronics.
- Have a home inspector let you know if the electrical outlets are properly GFCI and AFCI protected and are located in the right places for the safety of your guests, especially in older homes.

Check all appliances

- Inspect and test all kitchen appliances, water heater, vacuum cleaner, clothes dryer and washing machine. It is not enough to simply switch them on and off; you should use them in the same way guests would use them.
- Make sure the hot water is hot enough (about 110 degrees is just about right), but not too hot that it will scald your guests (anything over 120 degrees is too hot).
- Make sure dryer lint is removed to prevent build-up, a fire hazard.
- Have the HVAC system serviced before the start of summer and then again before winter to ensure the home has good cooling and heating capability.

Check the electronics

- Entertainment is a big part of what makes your rental memorable. Make sure the internet connectivity is good. Check the status of your cable subscription and that the TV is properly connected. Make sure its easy to figure out how to change the channels, especially when there are multiple remotes! Check the operation of music and game systems.

Check safety and security systems

- These include fire extinguishers and smoke, fire, or CO2 detectors, plus every other safety device in the home.
- The batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be changed every 6 months; new units installed every 10 years. Homes with a garage and/or gas appliances such as kitchen stove tops, gas water heater, gas furnace and fireplace (wood or gas) should have a carbon monoxide detector(s).
- If the home has a CCTV system, make sure it works as it should.

Check entryways

- Try accessing the home using the same ways that a guest would. Whether you use a lockbox, handoff, or lockbox, this will help you avoid the embarrassment of guests not being able to enter the home.
- Ask your guests if they feel safe and secure based on the home's security features.
- Make sure windows open, close and lock as they should to ensure your guests can exit the home in case of fire.