



Best Practices for Responsible Hosting of Your Short-Term Rental

Protecting Your Community,
Guests, and Property for
Optimal Success



Drive the Message Home...Because its Your Home

Renters and Unsupervised Guests (a person or persons using an owner's home without the owner being present) are welcome in our community, but are expected to be considerate of their neighbors, and to abide by the rules that apply to all of our residents.

Please remember WE ARE A RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY, not a resort or hotel.

Responsible hosting is imperative. The majority of guests and hosts of short-term rentals (STRs) are good people, who behave as any good neighbor would. That being said, when a guest or a host acts in a way that is disrespectful or disruptive to the property, the neighbors, or the overall community it can cast a shadow over all guests, hosts, and the entire STR industry.

As responsible hosts, we seek to model the practices and behaviors of exemplary hosts who make a sincere effort to attract good guests and to **be good neighbors**. Responsible hosts make a diligent effort to draw clear distinctions between themselves – and the homes they host – from those that could be considered “problems in the neighborhood” or rogue rentals.

We welcome visitors to our areas; we are hospitable; but we don't welcome problem behavior from guests. We want our neighbors to understand this about us, and understand that we have a shared vested interest in our communities.

Tools for Optimal Success

Vet
Your
Guests

Limit
Occupancy

Communicate

Manage
Noise

Be
Reachable

Vet Your Guests



Thoroughly screening a potential guest is vital to maintaining your property safe and viable, and goes a long way to ensure that your relationship with your neighbors remains amicable.

While it's tempting to put your bottom line first, accepting all booking requests without review can be incredibly costly in the long run. Damage to your property, fines from your community administration and/or the Township, and visits from the local authorities can be avoided by taking the time to vet your guests.

Who Will Be In Your Home, and Why?

Be sure your guests are 100% verified by the online platforms. AirBNB for instance, let's you adjust your settings so that potential guests can't instant book without submitting Government issued ID's and/or Host recommendations.

Check their reviews. Even if you have a guest that has so many reviews it would seem cumbersome to go through them all, you can filter down the results by searching for keywords such as "noise", "loud", "damage", etc. Review your reservation and follow up to determine the purpose of their stay. Ensure that they understand your expectations around noise and events.

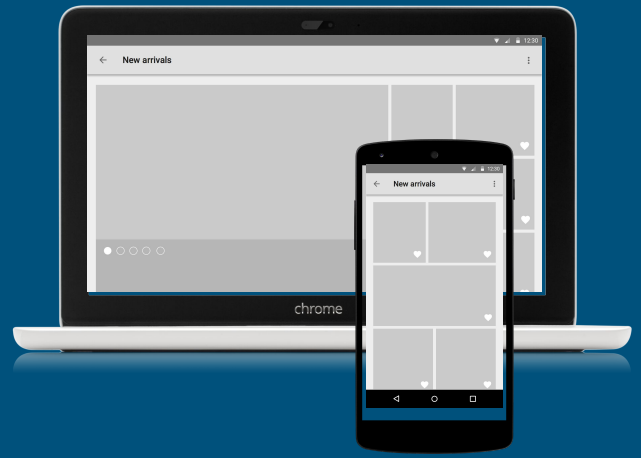
Red Flags

- Anything less than a 4-star is a valid enough reason to be concerned and sway you toward not accepting the reservation request.
- Last-minute bookings should be reviewed to an even higher degree. Day-of bookings can be an area of concern. These renters may have the intention to have a party and either had their previous booking canceled, or are hard pressed for a location because they have no other option.
- If they asking for an extra mattress, that is a hard-no.

There are also companies that offer vetting services for a fee, such as Autohost, SUPERHOG, and Safely.

TIP: Pay attention to how you describe your properties - VRBO agrees that creating your listing involves "avoiding describing your properties as *'great for bachelor or bachelorette parties'* or similar events." It can be a great deterrent and inspire the party renters to look elsewhere.

Communicate: Guest Outreach



Before handing over your key(code), properly and frequently communicating with guests will not only allow you to outline procedures but will allow you to culminate a positive relationship with them. When guests feel they've connected with you, they are more inclined to respect your rules, policies and your property, resulting in higher quality guest stays, better reviews and positive relationships with your neighbors.

Listing Page

Your first opportunity to be clear about your expectations and the rules you've incorporated is to include them in your listing page(s), and reference the fact that **your home is located in a residential community**. Community rules are essentially a part of your House Rules, so presenting those up front will help set the tone for an enjoyable vacation.

Starting Things Off Right

Once you've received a booking, there is a great opportunity to remind your guests that your neighbors include families which have to report to work any given morning, may have children, or a member with special needs that deserve quiet enjoyment of their homes and property. Your HOA regulations may impose a fine for violating noise ordinances. Properly conveying this information will help you avoid incurring fines, some of which escalate depending on your community, or possible revocation of your permission to rent.

Create a Welcome Guide that also promotes that same notion.

They've Checked In...Now You Check In

It's beneficial to alert your guests to the fact that neighbors, or yourself, can and will alert the authorities for unruly disturbances. Consider including in your listings, communications, and guides:

"I want to reiterate our no parties rules. Our HOA and neighbors feel strongly about maintaining a quiet, serene community and will enforce this rule, as necessary. Please respect the policies in place for an enjoyable stay, and the opportunity to return to create more great memories."

Signage

Conspicuously post a Rules & Regulations sheet in your home outlining items of importance such as: **Speed Limits, Trash Disposal, No Fireworks, Quiet Hours, etc.**

Communicate: Municipal + Community Outreach

The first step to opening your home up for hosting is ensuring you look up any permitting, zoning, safety and health regulations that may apply. The governing authorities that regulate the use and development of property in your area may have some useful information on such regulations, such as the local Board of Supervisors. Your private community or HOA may also require permitting prior to being able to list your home on the online platforms.

Township

Your township may have an ordinance in place outlining the rules and regulations, and the process for obtaining your permit to rent.

HOA/POA

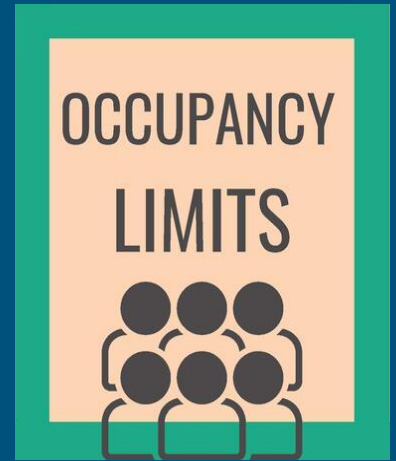
Check with your HOA/POA and familiarize yourself with their permitting process and regulations. There may be restrictions that would affect how you operate.

Now that you've determined that you're able to host, lay the foundation for maintaining a neighborly relationship with your surrounding homeowners.

Your Neighbors

Consider notifying your neighbors about your plans to host, along with your plan for how to make sure your guests are not disruptive. This should not be a one-time effort. Checking in with your neighbors to ensure your renters are not disturbing their quality of life regularly allows for the ability to correct before relations get strained.

Occupancy Limits



Whether instituted by your Township, the HOA, AirBNB*/VRBO, or your own comfort levels, occupancy limits are there for a reason. Overcrowding creates unnecessary fire safety hazards, and your septic was initially stilled to safely accommodate a predetermined number of people tied to the amount of bedrooms the home was built with. Septic issues are among the most awful and expensive to have to deal with.

If a guest is asking to bring more than the stated number of guests that can be accommodated, this is a red flag for potential rule-skirting and additional requests that are not in your best interests. Try this response:

Hi {Name},

As much as we would love to host additional guests, we cannot exceed {X number of people} because of regulated occupancy limits {or zoning or building codes, insurance requirements, septic limitations, etc}.



Vehicle Limits

The number of available/allowed parking spaces should also be considered when determining your guest count. Many private communities do not allow on-street parking, so you must be sure your driveway can safely accommodate a reasonable amount of vehicles.

*AirBNB: Guests who are reported for throwing a disruptive party or violating their rules on gatherings of more than 16 people are subject to suspension or removal.

Managing Noise Levels

Noise monitoring devices can detect excessive noise and sometimes other warning signs of a party without breaking any privacy laws.

Their sensors measure sound levels by calculating the pressure of sound waves in the air.

You can customize the maximum threshold of decibels, and when noise exceeds this level, you'll receive an alert so that you can contact guests and regulate the issue that could be causing a disturbance to your neighbors, some of who.

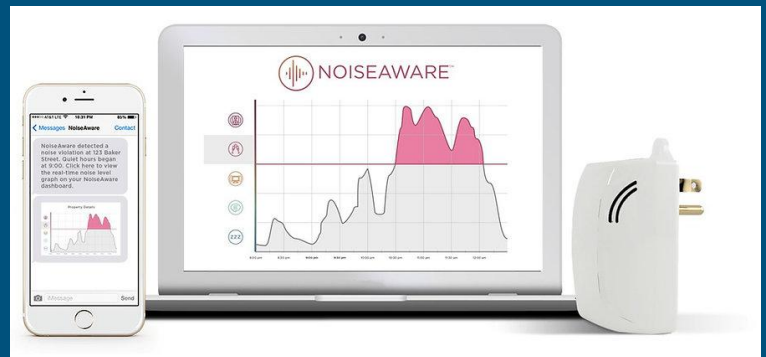
MÎNUT

ALERTIFY

PARTY SQUASHER
by BlueZoo

NOISEAWARE™

roomonitor



Avoid Sound Systems

It's hard to argue that you were clear about being considerate to your neighbor when you have a subwoofer available for use.

Promote Quiet Time

Reiterate quiet time - 10pm to 8am - wherever you can. On your listing, in your Welcome Guide, on a sign inside your home, etc.



Be Reachable

Your guests know how to reach you. Supplied by the online platforms alone, they have your online link, your telephone number, and in some cases your email.

Your accessibility shouldn't end there. If your HOA, the local authorities, or your neighbors need to reach you regarding your guests, it's in your best interest to make yourself available at any time and to make sure you have multiple ways to be contacted.

If your primary residence is far from your vacation home, consider contracting with a management company that can respond on your behalf. This may already be a regulation your Township requires, and even if it doesn't, it can spare you from a long, unplanned commute if you have to come to the area to deal with an issue.



Registration

Your ability to rent your home here in the Pocono Mountains requires adhering to Township and/or private community/HOA guidelines and processes.

You are responsible for doing your research to find out which forms and fees may need to be submitted prior to listing your home for rent. Failure to do so may result in hefty fines.

No Fireworks

In addition to personal safety concerns, fireworks are an extreme fire danger in our heavily wooded communities. We understand the difficulty of getting that message across as your guests potentially drive by several fireworks stores in the area, but please make every effort to drive this point home.

Trash Mitigation

All trash must be secured from bears or other animals. Certain communities offer use of their trash compactor as part of their membership dues. If that is the case where your home is located, please make sure your Welcome Guide is outfitted with the proper instructions and/or passes to have the trash properly disposed of.

If you opt for signing up with a trash pick-up service for a fee, familiarize yourself with the rules applicable to your specific area. For example, your trash bins cannot extend onto any part of the road, must be put out no earlier than the night before your scheduled pick-up, and may only be left out as late as the day following your pick up.

You are surrounded by wildlife, and there is truly no such thing as a bear proof trash container. Any debris toppled over must be picked up and properly disposed of immediately. Ensuring your guests' trash does not end up scattered about in your community is key to maintaining a good relationship with your neighbors.

Noise

Check with your POA/HOA and familiarize yourself with the quiet hours they have in place. Even if you're in a private area outside of an HOA, try to limit the amount of noise your guests are making between the hours of 10pm and 8am.

Parking

Vehicles **MUST** be in the driveway or designated parking areas. Many private communities do not allow road shoulder parking.

Some Fine Points That Must Be Made