



AirBNB / Holiday Rental – help sheet for new owners.

Your cleaning options

You've brought your dream holiday house – relax and let your home pay for itself whilst you spend your time enjoying it.

You've three choices how operate.

1. A full service holiday rental company – this is a great option if money is not your priority and we can happily recommend some good operators to you if this is your preferred option. The advantage here is that you really don't need to do anything – however it will cost you generally 15%+ of your revenue and you won't get as many bookings as you will if you focus on the 'selling' your house yourself.
2. DIY – you do the selling, the managing and the cleaning. This option is obviously a lot more effort – but I've seen it work well when an owner lives close to their rental property and has plenty of time available. I've seen retirees and stay at home Mums be successful operating this way. This option will make you the most money, if that is your priority.

However, I've seen countless families take this route and struggle to the point that they question why they bother. If you don't live close by and don't have lots of spare time what happens is that every visit to your dream holiday home becomes a chore. Cleaning up after previous guests and then cleaning up after yourselves – not much of a holiday, if that was the intention. Additionally the clean is never done properly, as quickly your heart is not in it, this reflects on future guest experiences and reviews.

3. The hybrid option. You do the selling and contract out the cleaning. You'll earn and keep a lot more rental income than option 1 without all of the effort of option 2. (Don't get me wrong, there is still effort in selling, particularly in setting up, but nowhere near the effort of option 2 – which is essentially running a small business!)

So, let's focus on the hybrid, as this where Maid Cleaner can help.

Why use a professional cleaning company for your holiday rental?

- Professionally serviced – ‘hotel clean’.
- Can handle last minute bookings and changes.
- Can work with your calendar.
- Can handle impact of exceptionally dirty guests – it will happen...
- Insured – a massive issue, see ‘tips’
- Can handle linen and supplies (toiletries, washing detergent, tea, coffee, etc.)
- You can pay by credit card (think of the points!)
- Cleaners are police checked and in the case of Maid Cleaner are awesome!

Tips

Cleaning is ‘cost free’. Try to get into the mindset that your guests are paying for your cleaning, not you! The easiest way to do this is to have a separate cleaning fee, rather than factoring cleaning costs into your rates. Having a separate cleaning fee also has additional benefits – it allows you to offer shorter durations and still make money, it allows you to offer longer durations at a more competitive price and you will appear in more searches when guests are searching with a ‘maximum’ price. Remember that you will also be paying a cleaning fee (or your guests will) on top of the commission that a full service holiday rental company quotes you.

Insurance – how vital this is really cannot be overstated, if a guest slips on a wet floor after you or your private cleaner have finished and seriously hurts themselves – their insurance company will be coming after you. Even if you have no intention of using Maid Cleaner – please contact an insurance broker (or your current insurer) and get yourself covered, it will be expensive, but it’s potentially the best insurance you’ll ever buy.

Pricing – price high and offer specials – everyone loves a deal, whether it actually is a deal or not. Offer deals outside of peak season – you’ll show up higher on the OTAs (AirBNB, Booking.com, etc.) by having a higher base rate and a discount – customers would rather pay \$99 per night for a \$199 rental than \$99 per night for a \$99 rental!

Do not undersell peak season – you don’t get a prize for selling first, you get a prize for selling last, when nowhere else is available. Price ‘peak peak’ (just after Christmas, Easter, Australia Day w/e) extremely high – so high that you feel guilty! This is when you pay the mortgage, not in June. One more time – do not under-price peak season!

Bond – always take a bond (generally from \$500 for small properties to \$1000 for larger ones.) You may worry that a bond may put a customer off booking – this is good, you do not want a customer booking that is put off booking by having to paying a bond... Even \$250 is better than nothing. The bond usually comes into play when the guest ‘forgets to clean the barbeque’ or breaks a small item – it is very rare a full bond is taken, but we certainly do see happen often enough.

Use a channel manager – if you are going to manage the selling, make it easy on yourself and get the best result that you can. There are two main benefits in using a channel manager – firstly, your prices and availability are instantly updated across all the major selling channels – AirBNB, Booking.com, Trip Advisor, Stayz (now HomeAway), etc. – this will definitely increase your revenue as not everyone uses AirBNB! Secondly, it is easier for you (and your cleaning company) to track what is going on, avoiding overbookings and miscommunication.

'Kigo' or 'Guesty' are a couple of channel managers that should offer all you need, or if you have a few properties, 'Siteminder' is a great option that I can personally recommend. Channel managers cost money – either upfront or via a commission – but you will get more sales with less hassle. They are far less expensive when compared to the many thousands of dollars you save by not using a full service holiday rental company. They can also save your reputation by reducing the risk of overbooking.

Lockable cupboard – you will need one if you engage the services of Maid Cleaner – we will use it to store linen, supplies and spare cutlery and crockery. Ideally you will also have two lock boxes – one for us, one for your guests.

Spare globes and consumables - leave a couple of globes in the kitchen so a guest can change a globe if required during their stay. A few spare batteries to - for remote controls / clocks/smoke alarms. You'll find that if you give your guests the tools they need - most people are pretty self-sufficient. A torch and/or candles are a good idea for blackouts.

BBQs – guests love them, so BBQs are really a must. I recommend a cheap Bunnings BBQ, as, particularly overseas, visitors do seem to struggle a bit with the whole BBQ concept! Have a spare gas bottle. Put a notice up to ask that if a guest runs out of gas to leave the bottle somewhere noticeable (and to clean the BBQ or lose \$50 from their bond.)

Spare blankets (lots of) – your guests will get cold – the Margaret River region is a lot cooler than Perth and is freezing for Asian visitors coming over in our winter, their summer!

Detailed compendium / guest information folder – this is your best friend, any question that you get, add an answer to the compendium so you don't get the question again. Let your guests know a few of your favourite spots. Maps and magazines from the local visitor centres are also a great help.

TV / DVD instructions – laminate and place next to TV – run off a few spares. This will save you a few late night phone calls!

Put a water jug in the fridge and ice cube trays in the freezer.

Spare spare key... put (another) lock box somewhere discrete – that's three now..! Your guests will inevitably lock themselves out – you need to be able to get them back in without any fuss.

Starter packs – we recommend that some basics are available for your guests on their arrival to help them settle in and to enable them to clean up after themselves. You will need to make it clear that this is a starter pack and it is not your intention to keep them in tea, coffee and soap for the length of their stay!

What to expect from Maid Cleaner

Our house cleaning services includes -

Living/bedrooms

- Vacuuming floors, rugs and couches
- Mopping
- Dusting surfaces and decorations
- Empty bins

Bathroom(s)

- Clean toilets
- Scrub / clean sinks, baths and showers
- Wipe tiling and mirrors
- Wipe surfaces and cabinet doors
- Mop floors

Kitchens

- Wipe stove top and extractor fan
- Clean microwave
- Wipe large kitchen appliances (e.g. fridge, oven)
- Wipe small kitchen items (e.g. kettle, toaster)
- Wipe down cabinets and handles
- Wipe down laundry, washing machine and dryer
- Mop floors

Additional services for a holiday rental

- Change bedding
- Put away dishes (and wash if guests don't)
- Wipe clean inside fridge and oven
- Check / clean inside closets and cutlery drawers
- BBQs (extra cost)
- Manage linen (extra cost)
- Manage supplies (extra cost)

Please note that guests are generally messier than you are! We can also quickly report damage and take photos, so you can charge guests.

Maid Cleaner can also organise periodic deep cleans, window cleaning and carpet cleaning (extra cost).

What not to expect from Maid Cleaner

Maid Cleaner is a referral business used by local cleaners and trades. We do not offer an after-hours call out service for your guests. We have taken a conscious decision not to be a full service rental company.

This guide was prepared by James Peck, service director at Maid Cleaner – previously a resort owner/manager in the Margaret River region, a holiday house owner and commercial manager for Tui Travel, one of the world largest holiday companies. Congratulations on your new home, enjoy!