



WORKBOOK

Fostering Good Neighbor Relations

& PREVENTING NUISANCE COMPLAINTS



POCONO/
VRO



BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR MATTERS.

Guests love short-term rentals (STRs) for their home-like experience and the opportunity to live like a local. But we can't forget that they're temporarily living amongst locals, our neighbors. Being a good neighbor – for both hosts and guests – is simply the right thing to do.

It's also smart business. Complaints from neighbors are red flags for police and city councils, which can often be a fast track to severe STR limits or bans. Instead, proactively protect your business and your property with the strategies and good neighbor practices throughout this guide.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS PROACTIVELY

First things first, informing neighbors of the usage of your home as an STR before you begin welcoming guests is the best (and only) way to respectfully and proactively foster positive relationships with your neighbors. No one likes to be surprised, and, as Murphy's Law states, anything that can go wrong will.

EXTEND YOUR HOSPITALITY TO NEIGHBORS

Your neighbors can be your STR's best allies. Invite them over or offer your home up to them when they need extra space for friends or family. By making this kind gesture, you are proactively extending your hospitality – and we are in the hospitality business! Empowering a neighbor to see an STR as an asset is important as they, too, care about the neighborhood.

CREATE WIN-WINS

A great way to show your commitment to neighbors is to create win-win situations. For example, if they don't have a lawn-cutting service, consider offering to have your landscaping team extend their mowing and lawn care over to their lawn as well. This will demonstrate your interest in keeping positive relations with the community, and as a win for you, your guests will be impressed not just with your lawn but also with the well-kept yard next door.

#1 STRATEGY: PROACTIVELY MANAGE NUISANCE ISSUES

It is no longer acceptable to wait for a call from a neighbor, the city or police to notify you of a disturbance at your rental. Putting nuisance prevention and management plans in place and informing your neighbors of those plans is a great way to give them peace of mind and inspire their trust that **you** will be responsible if an issue arises. Setting this expectation and meeting it is the most important element to fostering great neighbor relations.

The top three issues that cause nuisances for neighbors are noise, trash, and parking. The following sections of this guide cover management plans for each.



NOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Noise accounts for approximately 75% of neighbor nuisance complaints, and one bad experience for your neighbors can ruin your reputation as a conscientious host or manager. Furthermore, it is far more effective and cheaper to prevent nuisance issues from the start with a Noise Management Plan than it is to rectify a problem after it occurs.

If you don't live on-site at your STR, use technology like a noise monitoring system to head off neighbor disruption before it happens. Noise monitoring solutions will alert you or your property manager when noise levels begin to become worrisome, and data shows that responding quickly to a simple noise alert will have guests quieting down within 15 minutes about 80% of the time.

If guests don't respond quickly, it will be time to go to plan B, which usually involves activating a friend, family member, or contracted service provider who can show up on-site to check in on the property. Think of this as the equivalent of the front desk manager heading up to a hotel room to knock on the door when phone outreach doesn't solve a noise issue. Because noise issues can occur at any hour, 24-hour coverage is necessary, as is having a person at the property within 45 minutes.

Additionally, it is critical to ensure guests are familiar with quiet hours and expectations. This can be done with pre-arrival messaging, on-site messaging, and signage, as well as in-person check-ins or welcome phone calls upon arrival.

MY NOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN:

Noise Monitoring Solution:

Local Quiet Hours:

Local Penalty for Noise Violations: -----

Property Quiet Hours:

On-Call Responder:

Phone Number:-----

Quiet hours and expectations are shared with guests through at least two of the following:

- ___ Property description
- ___ House rules
- ___ Rental agreement
- ___ Pre-arrival messaging
- ___ Guestbook
- ___ In-house signage
- ___ In-person check-in or welcome call



PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

The average group of short-term renters is 3+ guests, some of whom have to bring more vehicles than a property has parking spaces for. In some areas, this may not be an issue, but often the spillover of excess cars can irritate neighbors, understandably.

A good Parking Management Plan begins with communication. For groups that may be bringing multiple cars to the STR, ensure that the home can handle all of the expected cars in the driveway or garage. Cars should not block sidewalks or take up an inordinate amount of street parking. While it may not be illegal to use street parking, it can be a nuisance to neighbors, especially if guest cars crowd their driveways or block commonly accessed things like mailboxes, alleys, or trash cans.

An effective Parking Management Plan should include alternate locations where guests can park excess cars during their stay. Providing information about the parking limitations on-site and the location, contact info, and rates for nearby overnight parking lots is a great way to provide thoughtful information to your guests – and it may keep them out of trouble as most municipalities in the Poconos enforce parking regulations strictly.

Lastly, leveraging technology like doorbell cameras or street-facing security cameras is a smart backup for making sure guests follow expectations. While no one wants to prevent guests from having a five-star experience, neighbors will appreciate that your guests bring only as many cars as can be accommodated, which helps enable you to continue renting your home long into the future.

MY PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN:

On-Site Parking Space Quantity: _____

Location:

Nearby Parking Alternatives & Costs:

City Parking Ticket/Fine:

Doorbell/Exterior Camera Solution:

Parking options and rules are shared with guests through at least two of the following:

- ___ Property description
- ___ House rules
- ___ Rental agreement
- ___ Pre-arrival messaging
- ___ Guest book
- ___ In-house signage
- ___ In-person check-in or welcome call



TRASH MANAGEMENT PLAN

Trash is not often the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of nuisance issues, but it's critical to have a plan in place for managing the storage and disposal of waste. It's also safe to assume that some guests will not properly follow instructions for how to deal with trash on check-out day. For guests, the last day of a stay is usually filled with people departing at different times and performing different parts of checkout procedures, which can result in simple mistakes or worse, unsightly piles or invitations for wild animals. To prevent this, put in place these key elements of a Trash Management Plan:

- ✓ **Communicate the Rules:** In pre-arrival information, in-house manuals, and especially in your check-out communications, make sure to let guests know the detailed information about how to properly deal with trash and recycling.
- ✓ **Communicate the Penalties:** Most municipalities in the Poconos Region has fines and fees associated with improper trash disposal. Find out these rules and penalties and make sure guests know the consequences as well. Some permits with three-strike rules can be revoked for simple trash violations.
- ✓ **On-Site Signage is a Must:** Guests may come from all over the world and have very different recycling and trash processes at home. Use signage so they don't have to guess when it comes to properly managing trash.
- ✓ **Private Trash Collection:** For homes with a high capacity, it's likely guests' trash will at some point exceed what your local municipality's trash collection allows. Have a solution in place to dispose of trash through a local contact or an on-call third-party vendor.

MY TRASH MANAGEMENT PLAN:

Trash & Recycling Bin(s) Location:

Pickup Day, Time, and Location:

Other Trash/Recycling Rules to Know:

Improper Disposal Penalties:

Trash procedures and rules are shared with guests through at least two of the following:

- ___ House rules
- ___ Rental agreement
- ___ Pre-departure messaging
- ___ Guest book
- ___ In-house signage
- ___ In-person check-in or welcome call

Private Trash Collection:



HOSTING NEIGHBORLY GUESTS

Good, responsible renting practices mean nothing if guests are unaware of them. As we've outlined in the preceding nuisance management plans, educating guests across multiple touchpoints is an essential step in preventing disruptions to your neighbors.

The following page is a customizable and printable **Good Neighbor Guidelines** sheet that combines all of the key info from the noise, parking, and trash management plans you just created into an easy-to-digest format.

HOW TO USE

Fill in the applicable information for your property, then print this page to display in your home and/or copy and paste it into your guidebook, house rules, or other communication areas. You can even use this simply as inspiration to create your own Good Neighbor Guidelines document.



WELCOME!

We're happy you're here. As a part of living like a local in the Poconos, we ask all guests to read and follow our Good Neighbor Guidelines.

PARKING: All vehicles must park in the designated parking spaces provided.

Parking Location: _____ Maximum Vehicles Allowed: _____

Alternative Parking Options:

Please note the city may issue tickets for parking violations.

OCCUPANCY: This home has a maximum capacity of ___ guests.

NOISE: Please respect our neighbors' right to quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their homes by observing quiet hours from _____ to _____.

Please note the city can issue a fine of _____ for noise ordinance violations.

GARBAGE & RECYCLING:

Receptacle(s) Location:

Pickup Day, Time and Location:

PETS: Please clean up after pets, prevent excessive barking, and follow the leash law.

24-HOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions or assistance, please call your host at _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In case of an emergency requiring 911 dispatch, this home's address is

A FIRST AID KIT IS LOCATED IN _____

Thank you for keeping the Pocono Mountains such a wonderful place to visit, live, work, and play!





RENT

RESPONSIBLY

THIS GUIDE WAS BUILT WITH SUPPORT FROM RENT RESPONSIBLY

Rent Responsibly is the home of responsible short-term rentals. Our community-building platform makes it easy for hosts and managers to connect with each other, local businesses, and all others throughout cities and towns. Members get access to free resources, peer-to-peer learning, and a national network of like-minded STR enthusiasts. We help maximize the positive impacts of short-term renting to ensure STRs are an exemplary contributor to sustainable tourism in every destination.

Find more resources and a community of support on **RentResponsibly.org**.

