

Vacation Rental Re-opening Plan for Seminole County



Vacation Rental Re-Opening Plan

Updated: May 21, 2020

Purpose and Scope

The restriction on vacation rentals in Seminole County has had a potentially negative impact on the local economy. Although the threat of the coronavirus still persists; it has diminished substantially. Throughout the last few months, we have learned a lot about this virus, and how we can protect ourselves and others from it. To continue to protect our citizens and visitors as well as re-build our economy, Seminole County has developed this plan to accommodate the resumption of vacation rentals within our community.

The purpose of this Vacation Rental Reopening Plan is to provide a safe framework for resuming the operations of vacation rentals within unincorporated and incorporated Seminole County.

Background

On March 27th 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis signed Executive Order 20-87 banning the rental of any house, condominium, cooperative, or dwelling unit that is also a transient public lodging establishment, as defined under Section 509.013(4)(a), Florida Statutes with limiting factors. On May 18, 2020, Florida Executive Order 20-123 "Full Phase 1: Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step. Plan for Florida's Recovery" went into effect. Section 4 of this order entitled "Vacation Rentals" permits counties to seek approval to operate vacation rentals provided a safety plan for the reopening of vacation rental operations is prepared and submitted to the DBPR Secretary. As tourism plays a large role in Seminole County's economy, it is important that vacation rentals are able to operate as soon as it is safe and feasible.

Situation and Assumptions

COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. The virus that causes COVID-19 is has proven to spread very easily and sustainably between people. Information from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic suggests that this virus is spreading more efficiently than influenza, but not as efficiently as measles, which is highly contagious. Older adults and people with severe underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, lung conditions, or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing the more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. It is thought to be transmitted mainly from person to person, through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). It may be possible that a person can acquire COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching his or her own mouth, nose, or eyes. This is not considered to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about this virus on a daily basis.

This virus has taken a significant toll on not only the health and well-being of those in our community, but also on our local economy.

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Reopening Operations & Procedures

As the threat of COVID-19 remains within the community, Seminole County recommends and encourages the following precautions to ensure the public's health and safety:



Reservations

- Permit reservations and stays from U.S. states with a COVID-19 Case Rate of less than 700 cases per 100k residents as of May 26, 2020.
- Do not accept reservations from international travelers until two weeks after the start of Phase III of the Governor's *Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step. Plan for Florida's Recovery*.
- Establish restrictions for guests traveling from "hot-spot" areas as identified in the Governors Executive Orders. A 14-day quarantine procedure is recommended for guests coming from "hot spot" infected areas when travel origins are identified.



Safety Measures for Guests

- Maintain adequate time between the conclusion of a guest stay and the check-in of the next guest stay to allow for appropriate cleaning and sanitation. The adequate set cleaning time should be determined by the operating company or owner in order to accommodate execution of the recommended cleaning protocols.
- Cleaning Protocols:
 1. Clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the property between each guest stay.
 - Normal routine cleaning with soap and water will decrease the presence of the virus on surfaces and objects, reducing the risk of exposure.
 - Disinfection using [EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19](#) can also help reduce the risk.
 - When EPA- approved disinfectants are not available, alternative disinfectants can be used (for example, 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions). Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together as this can cause

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dangerous fumes. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours. Keep all disinfectants out of the reach of children.

- Key items that need to be cleaned/sanitized:

tables	doorknobs	light switches	countertops
handles	desks	phones	keyboards
toilets	faucets and sinks	touch screens	elevators

Note: Some surfaces only need to be cleaned with soap and water. For example, surfaces and objects that are not frequently touched should be cleaned but do not require additional disinfection. Additionally, certain disinfectants should typically not be applied on items used by children, especially any items that children might put in their mouths. Many disinfectants are toxic when swallowed. In a household setting, cleaning toys and other items used by children with soap and water is usually sufficient.

2. Wash all linens, dishware, and other service items available for use by guests between each guest rental.
 3. Provide sufficient soap and surface sanitation supplies for guests to utilize in the vacation rental property during the guest's rental period.
- Ensure adequate safety protocols, consistent with the CDC guidance, regarding shared or multi-residence amenities such as pools, gyms, and other communal spaces are in place and are publicly and conspicuously displayed within the vacation rental.



Other Best Practices

- Use mobile platforms for customer service and communication with guests, including the acceptance of payments by mobile or electronic methods.
- Minimize direct guest contact with property owners or managers through remote check-in and check-out procedures.
- Post signage or other notices regarding the cleaning practices that are completed prior to each stay. Each vacation rental operator should create and supply guests with a "check-in safe stay notice" to provide a comfort level of cleaning and compliance to the proper procedures. Many vacation rental operators are already providing such guest notices as a seal of compliance and safety.

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- Display signage or notices to guests throughout the vacation rental property to frequently remind guests to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including the “**Safe Behavioral Practices**” noted below.
- Supply guests with [CDC guidance for guests traveling with pets and service/assistance animals](#).
- Provide CDC sanitation guidance and resources to guests. These resources are available in multiple languages on the CDC website.
- Supply any and all employees or contractors [with CDC related safety guidance](#) while operating in the vacation rental units to alleviate the transmission of the virus and provide further protection for employees and guests.
- Provide guidance on any local COVID-19 related restrictions that are in place during the guest stay including closures, curfews, and other related local information. Seminole County posts all current information related to such restrictions online at [prepareseminole.org](#) so that it can be easily accessible to vacation rental operators and guests 24/7.
- Monitor and restrict the use of homes for large gatherings. Limit vacation rental uses to the guests who are registered occupants.



Safe Behavioral Practices

- Post the following safety guidelines/practices within the vacation rental advising guests to:
 - Social distance (specifically, staying 6 feet away from others within a shared space).
 - Frequently wash hands or use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
 - Wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when social distancing may be difficult.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Stay confined to the premises when sick.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.