



Safety In Vacation Rentals

It Should Be An
Expectation,
Not An Option

Sean Miller, President
PointCentral

 **PointCentral**[®]
Enterprise Property Automation

powered by



ALARM.COM

Vacation Rental Safety

When it comes to vacation options, private rentals lag behind hotels in one important area: safety.

Based on our recent research, over two-thirds of private accommodations still use traditional keys in order to grant access to a property, while hotels moved to disposable key cards decades ago — and many even allow guests to unlock their rooms with a smartphone app. In addition, hotels commonly use exterior cameras, which help guests feel more comfortable when entering the property and leaving their cars overnight.

“That property I recently stayed at used an old lockbox with the same code for everyone...”

The lack of such safety features in private rentals is not lost on travelers. According to new [research](#) from Morgan Stanley, 13 percent of people who do not use Airbnb cite safety as their primary reason for avoidance. One private accommodation traveler, Teresa, whom I talked to for this piece, put it this way:

“That property I recently stayed at used an old lockbox with the same code for everyone to get the key out of. Mortified by how many people had access to — and could have potentially copied — that same key, I asked her if she ever thought of switching to a smart lock. She almost bit my head off because apparently sharing a lockbox code to a key that can be copied is much

safer than a ‘smart lock that can be hacked.’ I truly was mortified to hear that.”

Until the recent gains in awareness of rentable private accommodations, driven primarily by Airbnb and online travel agencies, this niche industry didn’t consider itself to be in direct competition with hotels. That

mindset is changing. Travelers today view private accommodations in the same search sessions as chain hotels, and they expect certain features — like safety — to be standard between them. While standing out from hotels, private accommodations need to offer a comparable level of security.

If you think online travel agencies and rental platforms will cover any safety-related claims, you may be in for a shock. Properties are independent of the platforms, and thus the latter can [avoid liability claims](#) from safety breaches.

How to Modernize Vacation Property Security

Thus far, many property owners and managers have swept safety concerns under the rug, calling them unavoidable or too costly to correct. But with

the growth in safety awareness among guests, that attitude is changing. Fortunately, property managers and owners can put consumers' minds at ease without introducing new problems (e.g., hacking).



To create more secure properties, start with the easiest step: installing keyless locks. The right locks should only allow the right person to enter the right property at the right time, and they also give the property manager the ability to revoke or grant access at a moment's notice.

Deadbolts carry a slight advantage over lever locks, given [lever locks' greater vulnerability to forced break-ins](#).

Proper keyless locks should enable control of the lock in a secure, encrypted manner, which provides a far more secure experience than a lockbox and a mechanical key. Customers are assured that no one with a copied key will break in while they occupy the property, while property managers are spared the hefty cost (around \$150 per instance) of rekeying the lock every time the property turns.

More Visibility, More Safety

Exterior cameras, such as driveway and doorbell cameras, are another feature that can add extra security to your property. These devices notify



you when someone arrives at a property that should be unoccupied, thereby helping to deter theft. In addition, visible cameras — outside only, of course — provide a sense of comfort for more cautious guests.

You can also use plug-in modules and light switches to simulate occupancy in an unoccupied residence by having lights turn on and off automatically. Door and window sensors can make sure entryways aren't left open when guests leave.

Smart home devices like these are rapidly becoming more common, so guests will continue to grow more comfortable with their presence. [Coldwell Banker reports](#) that the implementation of smart home tech increased by 33 percent in 2017, and more growth is on the way. If the vacation rental industry intends to survive in a more competitive vacationer market, property owners must adopt more secure technology to assure travelers that their hosts take safety seriously.

PointCentral, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, and a subsidiary of Alarm.com, designs, manufactures and markets enterprise-grade Smart Home solutions for the vacation rental, residential, and multi-family property management markets. PointCentral solutions provide customers in these markets with the ability to monitor and control smart home technology across all properties in their inventory over a best-in-class secure and reliable network – reducing risk, improving security, controlling assets, reducing energy costs and improving guest/tenant satisfaction.



PointCentral.com
888-532-3032