



Online Short-Term Rental Platforms

Position Paper for AIHP Members - May 2017

The Association of Independent Hospitality Professionals (AIHP), the leading voice for innkeepers and allied partners that support the U.S. innkeeping industry, published a position paper last year addressing short-term rental properties listed on online platforms such as Airbnb and HomeAway. At that time, AIHP shared the view that hosts who list properties on these platforms, but who may not be properly regulated or pay appropriate taxes, should be held to the same standards and regulations as professionally-run B&Bs and inns. AIHP also encouraged its members to list their properties on these platforms to take advantage of the expansive marketing effort these companies have undertaken to appeal to a new and unique class of leisure travelers. While AIHP's position has not changed, we are offering this update to share with you some steps we have initiated over the past year that will benefit our professional innkeeping members.

One major effort we have undertaken is to work with online rental platforms to have professionally-run B&Bs and inns more prominently marketed on their sites. Airbnb is in the process of expanding its traditional professional host categories with ongoing AIHP guidance. This will result in guests being better able to find and book properties like independent inns and bed & breakfasts on Airbnb's platform. These changes are slated to be added to their website in 2018.

While these online rental platforms offer another strategic marketing tool for our members, the proliferation of unregulated home-sharing hosts has created a competitive challenge for a cross-section of our members. Some professional properties that AIHP represents are disadvantaged when home-sharing hosts in their markets don't obtain a business license, pay lodging taxes, adhere to zoning laws, undergo fire or health inspections, or obtain liability insurance for their guests.

As part of a multipronged approach to address the challenges that our members face from illegal or unregulated short-term rental properties, here are some other actions that AIHP is undertaking to support our members and the innkeeping industry:

- Working directly with Airbnb at the executive and field levels and with bedandbreakfast.com (owned by HomeAway) to ensure that our concerns and those of the innkeeping industry are being heard and addressed. AIHP is advocating for online rental platforms to provide local and state regulating bodies with address and contact information as a requirement when hosts list their properties. We are encouraged that this requirement was part of the recent agreement between Airbnb and the City of San Francisco.
- Working with our members and legislators at the state and local levels, including Virginia, Texas, New Mexico, Indiana, St. Paul, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Florida. In many of these states and local communities, we have written letters supporting our members to state and local legislators and government officials. We have attended workgroup and legislative hearings to support our member's efforts at the local and state level. We have hosted numerous conference calls throughout the country to discuss these critical issues and to lend support to our members. The industry has seen some recent success with legislation to combat the proliferation of unregistered short-term rental properties in places like Virginia and Texas, and AIHP will continue to track this legislation and support state and local associations in their efforts to support laws that benefit our members.
- Compiling a tool kit for our members to educate themselves about how to get involved and make regulatory and code enforcement changes at the local level. It will build on the work done by the Pennsylvania Bed and Breakfast Association (PABBI), with the addition of information gathered by AIHP and other states and municipalities.

If you have any questions about AIHP or our position about short-term rentals, please contact Rob Fulton, CEO of AIHP at rob@independent-innkeeping.org or call 844-317-9632.