



## ISLANDS & HIGHLANDS COTTAGES

# HOUSEKEEPING

Good housekeeping is the key to making any holiday guest feel welcome and happy with their booking – it's a crucial part of customer care and the role of the housekeeper cannot be underestimated.

A well presented holiday cottage makes a positive first impression. Making sure everything is clean, neat and tidy is hugely important. A positive changeover plan not only reduces wear and tear, it also impresses your guests and helps to prevent any complaints that your cottage is looking unloved and unclean.

### Arrival and Departure Times

Unless otherwise instructed by owners, *Islands and Highlands Cottages* will ensure that all guests are aware that they should arrive **after 4pm** and **depart before 10am**.

- If you can only do changeovers on certain days please let us know and we can set up our booking system to match these requirements.
- If the owner offers short breaks and you have agreed with them that you need a day inbetween to do changeovers - please email the dates you require and we will amend our bookings calendar to reflect this.

**Never be tempted to cut corners with your changeovers.** You never know when you will get that one guest who will leave a bad review because they found dust on a picture frame or crumbs lurking under the toaster! Remember that making the cottage ready for guests means that you are creating a welcoming and home from home atmosphere. Visitors are often from another country and a long way from home. They will have been travelling for quite a while and all they may want to do is get into their accommodation, find the bedroom and put the kettle on... but trust us – they **will** notice if things are not clean, not working or missing!

Our confirmation email sent to all guests includes a section '**What is Expected on Departure from your cottage**' and includes respectfully asking guests to ensure that they leave the cottage clean and tidy, that they leave no perishable food; that they check to see they have left nothing behind; that they empty the bins and make sure that the key is left in the key safe (or in the place it was when they arrived).

### Safety checks

It is important to ensure that the property not only looks perfect but is also safe for guests. Islands and Highlands Cottages can advise the owner of their legal obligations such as regular testing of smoke detectors, heat detectors and carbon monoxide alarms, and making sure that the fire blanket is intact and the fire extinguisher pressure is OK. Owners are also responsible for arranging for annual PAT testing of electric appliances.

However, your help is often invaluable as some owners are not able to be on hand and you will be in the cottage a lot more often. When you are housekeeping please do keep an eye on things – trip hazards, any signs of wear and tear/damage to electrical appliances etc. Any damage/faults to appliances or electric sockets should be immediately reported.



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### A METHODOICAL APPROACH IS BEST

Especially during the season (when time is of the essence) holiday cottage changeovers need to run like clockwork! Housekeeping will include a huge amount of tasks to make sure that the holiday cottage is ready for the next guests - *a diligent clean, checking for damage, restocking supplies, rounding up discarded items from the last guests...*

Preparation helps, and a **changeover checklist** will ensure that none of those important little touches are neglected. A structured methodical changeover checklist will help you tackle the cleaning with military precision. Plus, if you are away and need to pass your duties to a temporary replacement cleaner, they will have all the information they need to ensure the property is spotless for incoming guests.



### DO A VISUAL CHECK FIRST

Get into the habit of doing an initial visual check of the property before you start the changeover duties. If there is any damage; stains; breakages or missing items (or if the home was left excessively dirty/untidy) make notes and take photos as evidence.

Email these to the owner and to Islands and Highlands Cottages [officesales@ihcottages.com](mailto:officesales@ihcottages.com) This will be of great help in setting things right and organising replacements.

### AIRBNB GUESTS

After an Airbnb guest checks out, we will email you for your comments on how the changeover went. This enables us to complete the brief Airbnb Guest Review and is much appreciated. Unless there have been significant problems or the guests have been outstanding in some way, a few words from you is all we need!

### IF THERE IS MORE THAN ONE OF YOU :- ALLOCATE TASKS

Usually changeovers are done by one person but if you have the luxury of an extra pair of hands – *put this help to good use!*

Allocate tasks beforehand to ensure there is no delay making decisions on who does what. *If you only have one of everything, then dividing tasks up by rooms won't work, as you'll both need mops, brooms, etc. Try grouping similar tasks together to save time.*

- One person could handle the maintenance checks, looking for damage, fixing simple things, perhaps tackling the deeper clean tasks (like the oven) and replenishing of products.
- your other team member can then to get on with the main tasks at hand – beds, bathrooms, floors, etc.



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### CHANGEOVER CHECK LIST

If you only have a 3-4 hour changeover window (or less) it's essential that you prioritise and tackle the biggest and most important tasks first.

And don't forget that changeovers are great opportunities for a quick check to make sure that the Heating/hot water is working OK, that no Light bulbs need replaced and that the Wi-Fi /TV /DVD are all working!

### KITCHEN TASKS

- Wipe down worktops, sink, units, chairs, tables and any baby equipment.
- Clean all kitchen appliances (*oven, fridge, freezer, microwave, dishwasher, toaster, coffee machine*) and check they are working. Hard to clean items such as the oven and barbeque should be tackled early on during the changeover, as you may need to apply a cleaning fluid and leave it to soak while you get on with other tasks.
- Organise/tidy cupboards. Check for food items left behind by previous guests and dispose as appropriate.
- Wipe out drawers/cupboards
- Restock washing up liquid, dishwasher tablets, bin bags, dishcloths and replenish hand soap.
- Put out at least 2 clean tea towels.
- Empty bins and disinfect. Pop in new bin liners.
- Wipe place mats and coasters.
- Check cutlery, pots, pans, crockery, glassware and utensils for grime, breakages or chips.
- Vacuum/sweep and mop the floor



### UTILITY/LAUNDRY AREA

- Check that previous guests have not left washing in the machine or dryer (*its been known!*)
- Check dryer fluff trap and washing machine filter - clean if required
- Check there are enough pegs etc.
- Check any airer and ironing board are undamaged and working properly
- Restock washing machine detergent.



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### LIVING ROOM TASKS

- Check the wi-fi/internet connection and TV/DVD is all working
- Dust and wipe over all surfaces – *furniture, blinds, picture frames, shelves, window sills, skirting boards, ornaments, tables, lamps.*
- Vacuum furniture, including under cushions.
- Remove any cobwebs.
- Clean windows and any internal glass doors.
- Empty wastepaper basket (s).
- Check remotes and batteries and check TV/DVD is working.
- Clean out the log stove. Replenish starter logs supply and check guests have kindling/firelighters/matches.
- Throw out any surplus magazines/newspapers and put for recycling.
- Vacuum floors and rugs – including under sofa and chairs – move furniture away from walls

### BATHROOM/ENSUITE TASKS

- check for leaks or potential plumbing issues
- Remove and dispose of leftover toiletries.
- Empty bin – put in fresh bin liner
- Wipe down units and areas around sink/bath.
- Clean shower, bath, sink (use grout cleaner if needed).
- Remove any plughole debris.
- Check silicone for mould/pink stains.
- Clean mirror(s).
- Shine taps.
- Clean toilet.
- Hoover or wipe bath mat.
- Restock supply of toilet paper and replenish (if you supply) liquid hand soap/ toiletries
- Put out supply of clean towels.
- clean floor



### BEDROOM TASKS

- Stripping and making the beds should be one of the main tasks, especially if you have to wash the linen while you get on with other jobs. It is a good plan to have at least three sets of sheets and towels.
- Check for wear and tear or stains on linen, mattress covers, throws and pillows.
- Check under the bed and in drawers for personal belongings left by guests.
- Dust furniture, clean mirrors and windows.
- Vacuum the floor and under beds.
- check for and remove any cobwebs





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### **OUTSIDE TASKS** - *some of these will be seasonal/weather dependent*

- Wipe down any outdoor furniture
- Make sure paths are clear and not slippery.
- If you are a pet friendly cottage – check for (and remove) any dog poo from exterior areas!  
*Guests that bring dogs are asked to do this but its worth checking so that your next guests don't get an unwelcome surprise!*
- If there is a barbeque (depending on the season) this may need cleaning too!

### **BEFORE YOU LEAVE**

- Check that the guest Welcome/Information folder is visible and nothing needs replacing in it .
- If the owner supplies a Welcome Pack or Hamper, make sure that you have access to the components and that they are quick and easy to put together.
- If there are any ongoing issues that you are aware of (*such as something which is under going routine maintenance or perhaps something is broken but about to be fixed*) leave a note for the incoming guests with an wee apology and indication of what is being done to fix/address the issue
- Before leaving the property check external doors and windows are locked.
- Check the key safe works and that they key is left inside.
- Depending on the season – check that lighting and heating are on to welcome imminent guests

**REMEMBER** - You never get a second chance to make a first impression and your job is massively important in making sure that every guest is happy with their stay!

*From the team at Islands and Highlands Cottages – thank you!*

