

Stay Inn the Heartland

STAY Inspected Guidelines

Stay INN the Heartland is an organization that wants high quality, exclusive, and safe properties for guests. This inspection will assure that you meet our exclusive guidelines. After the inspection process, you will benefit from the membership of this organization. Our inspectors are contracted independently and have extensive experience owning and operating award-winning properties.

Inspection Process

Welcome to the inspection process. The inspection is designed to help the inn, the guests, and Stay INN the Heartland enhance the inn's success and its operations. The STAY Inspected sponsored inspections of new or member inns, even utilizing Stay INN the Heartland's established guidelines, still contain an element of subjectivity. Stay INN the Heartland relies upon the knowledge, experience, judgment, common sense and overall impressions of the inspector. It is left to the judgment of the inspector to decide the rating of items they are inspecting. With that, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into these items, at the discretion of the inspector.

Some items being inspected are identified as **Critical**. It is mandatory that a property pass these items.

Possible ratings are OK, Minor, Major and Critical. A single critical deficiency or three major deficiencies will cause an inn to fail. Three minor deficiencies in an area is the equivalent of a major deficiency. More than ten minor deficiencies overall constitute a critical deficiency. Any deficiencies (minor, major or critical) will be reviewed with you by the inspector at the end of the inspection. Should the property not pass the inspection, the inspector will work with you to bring the property up to passing in a timely manner. It is at the inspector's discretion as to the documentation (photos, video, etc.) that will be required to address the deficiency. In rare cases, should the deficiency be so critical as to require an in-person re-inspection, additional fees may be assessed for the required trip by the inspector.

You will be contacted by the Quality Control Chair to introduce you to your assigned inspector. At this point, the assigned inspector will reach out to coordinate the inspection. As new member, you will be required to host the inspector for one overnight stay. As an existing member, you are required to be reinspected every 2 years. Your re-inspection does not require an overnight stay.

Stay INN the Heartland inspects the following 3 Categories:

- The Guest Experience
- The Business of the Business
- Health & Safety

Part A: The Guest Experience

1. Technology & Social Media Presence:

Truth in advertising is the guidance here. If the property states directly or indirectly imply in their literature or website that they have something that they do not have, that is critical. i.e., if they say they have a full breakfast and all they provide is a continental, that is not truth in advertising. That would be a critical deficiency and cause for failure of the inspection. Other examples would be shared instead of private baths, number of rooms, etc.

OK Minor Major Critical

- True and Accurate Website (CRITICAL)
- True Advertisements and Search Engine Descriptions
- Social Media Reputation (verify 2 accounts)
 - FaceBook
 - Instagram
 - X (formerly Twitter)
 - Other
 - Check for activity and interaction with audience.

OK Minor Major Critical

- Guest Reviews (verify 2 accounts)
 - Google
 - Trip Advisor
 - Yelp
 - Other
 - Gather additional context from Innkeeper for 3 star or less reviews that occurred in the last 2 years. Attempt to understand whether it was guest driven or innkeeper performance.

OK Minor Major Critical

2. Hospitality & Availability:

Sufficient staff to cover the needs of guests. Meeting guests' needs is a judgment call. The major item here is the ability to reach someone in the case of a problem. There are a number of ways to do this, but it must be workable and timely.

OK Minor Major Critical

Hosts meet personal hospitality expectations of guests in a professional manner. This applies for both contact and contactless interactions.

OK Minor Major Critical

Provides local activity/restaurant information (menus, schedules, assistance, maps, brochures)

OK Minor Major Critical

Property based entertainment: reading materials, games, tv, Wi-Fi, radio, etc.)

OK Minor Major Critical

3. Guest Information:

- Phones/emails/texts answered professionally.
 - Calls answered properly and quickly with the property name.
 - Voice mail is acceptable.
 - Email answered in a timely manner
 - Special accommodations/dietary restrictions or requirements made at time of reservation.

OK Minor Major Critical

- Directions/map/GPS coordinated provided in a current, understandable, and accurate form.

OK Minor Major Critical

- Confirmations/receipts provided
 - Email, phone, or text is acceptable
 - Information provided must be accurate and timely.

OK Minor Major Critical

4. Special Items:

Properties where the innkeepers have pets or children, or where the innkeeper or a member of the innkeeper's family smokes, the following will be checked.

- Guest and common areas should be free of any odors, and relatively free of any noise associated with any of the three items (smoking, children, and pets)

OK Minor Major Critical

- Electronic and/or printed material should contain information relative to the presence of any of the three.
 - Pets (controlled, no odor, residue, or noise)
 - Smoking (odor, residue). The properties policy regarding smoking should be clearly and specifically described on both electronic and/or printed material and at the time of reservation.
 - Children (controlled, information, noise)

OK Minor Major Critical

5. Food and Dining:

- Breakfast provided: **Circle** - Full Continental Cook-your-own NA
- Food (Quality and Quantity) Food provided is appropriate for breakfast meal, of good quality and sufficient quantity.

OK Minor Major Critical

- Presentation (attractive, clean dishes, table cleared) The dining area is clean, uncluttered, well maintained, and well lit. Dishware is appropriate, entirely clean and free of residue.

OK Minor Major Critical

- Guest services: early coffee, breakfast time flexibility, dietary restrictions honored, snacks available)
OK Minor Major Critical
- Special interest items: pets and unauthorized personnel controlled during breakfast food preparation and eating.
OK Minor Major Critical

Part B: The Business of the Business

1. Licenses & Insurance: (lack of any of these are critical)

- State lodging license (5+ rooms)
OK Minor Major Critical
- Proof of **liability insurance**. May be a rider to homeowner's policy or part of business policy \$1,000,000 minimum with recommendation at \$3,000,000.
OK Minor Major Critical
- Local licenses to include county or city business license.
OK Minor Major Critical
- Liquor license (if applicable)
OK Minor Major Critical

2. Property Promotes Stay INN the Heartland (re-inspections only)

- Property displays Stay INN the Heartland brochures on the property.
- Property utilizes Stay INN the Heartland's logo and links to website on its website.
- Property promotes the INNER Circle Program.
- Property accepts Stay INN the Heartland's gift certificates.
OK Minor Major Critical

Part C: Health and Safety:

1. Smoke Alarm (each bedroom, common area, halls)

Absolute requirement to have alarm in each sleeping room and on each floor in hallways. Interconnected hard-wired alarms recommended but not required by Stay INN the Heartland. Inspector will test all accessible alarms. For supervised systems, pre-coordinate test with responding agency. An aerosol smoke will be used to test smoke detectors as, though the alarms may work with a test button, they may no longer be sensitive to smoke.

OK Minor Major Critical

2. Fire Extinguishers (type, reading, each floor)

Must be type ABC in sleeping levels, type BC or ABC in kitchen. Meter should show in green range and manufactured date should be less than 6 years ago, or proof of recent independent test provided. Failure to have proper fire extinguishers is a critical failure.

OK Minor Major Critical

3. Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Required if house contains fuel-burning furnaces, appliances or fireplaces or has an attached garage. This includes gas furnaces, cooktops, fireplace logs. Plug in-type is satisfactory and should be installed fairly low.

OK Minor Major Critical

4. Escape Routes (number, exit signs, lighting)

There must be an exit (primary or emergency) within 50 feet of each room. Exit signs should be provided except where rooms open directly to the outside; lighted signs are preferred. Power-out lights (which may be plug-in) are highly recommended in rooms and along all escape routes.

OK Minor Major Critical

5. Electrical (GFCIs)

Ground Fault Interrupt protection is required for all outlets in bathrooms or near sinks or hot tubs or other places where guests have access to both water and electricity. Protection may be by special GFCI outlets or on circuit breakers. Outlets should be tested to ensure the protection works. Whole property GFCI in the electrical box is acceptable for interior and exterior outlets. Failure to have a working GFCI outlet is a critical failure. A special plug-in device will be used to test GFCI plugs when they would appear to be connected in series and have only one test button GFCI outlet.

OK Minor Major Critical

6. Extension cords – it is NOT recommended to have them in use.

OK Minor Major Critical

7. Pools, tubs, and spas (chlorine test, GFCI, warning, condition – if applicable)

Circuits serving pools, tubs and spas that are not emptied after each use require GFCI protection. Inspector will use test strips to determine if the chlorine or bromine level meets requirements (pH between 7.2 and 7.8). Warnings on length of use for spas and lifeguard warnings for pools should be posted. Pool, spa, etc. should appear clean and well-maintained by visual inspection. Test strips will be used to test the chlorine content of pools, hot tubs and spas to ensure that the pH level is between 7.2 and 7.8 as required.

OK Minor Major Critical

8. First Aid Kit – it is recommended to have a first aid kit readily available should the need arise.

OK Minor Major Critical

9. Hand Sanitizers – It is recommended that hand sanitizer be available for guest use in common areas.

OK Minor Major Critical

10. Exterior

- Exterior appearance – maintenance, repair, paint, grounds, overall impression
- Signage – has sign readily visible or house number where signs are restricted
- Safety lighting – Exterior lighting should be sufficient to safely travel between parking area and entrance to property
- Parking – Adequate parking available

OK Minor Major Critical

11. Interior Common Areas

- Appearance (maintenance, carpentry, and furniture) Well-maintained common areas, without significant paint, carpentry, or wallpaper problems
- Cleanliness (dust, dirt, windows) Essentially free of dust, dirt, spider webs, or insect remains. Windows and sills are clean. Floors and rugs are clean.
- Comfort (lighting, furniture, HVAC, etc.) Chairs should be clean and in good repair. Rooms should be kept at comfortable temperature.

OK Minor Major Critical

12. Sleeping Rooms

- Appearance. Every aspect of each sleeping room must be well maintained; paint in sleeping rooms should not be chipped, bubbled, or peeling; Wallpaper in sleeping rooms should be firmly secured to the wall, not peeling off
- Cleanliness. Sleeping rooms should be free of dust and dirt; windows should be clean and clear; there should be no dust; no items stored under the beds; there should be no insect activity present including bedbugs
- Linens should be clean and of good quality – not threadbare or frayed; blankets should be clean and not appear worn – all guest rooms should have a blanket available; comforters, quilts, spreads, and shams should be clean and of good quality; mattress pads should be clean.
- Comfort Chairs, sofas, bed, and pillows should be comfortable. Pillows should be of various degrees of softness to accommodate the needs of most guests. HVAC should be sufficient to provide comfortable temperature and operate quietly enough to insure sleep.
- Privacy Sleeping rooms should be private when the door is closed, with a lock on the door which can only be unlocked from the inside except by the innkeeper.
- Convenience Items Recommended
 - Closets, wardrobes, chest of drawers, or shelving for the purpose of storing guest's clothes and other belongings.
 - One nightlight with power out capabilities recommended
 - A clock and or clock radio
 - A box of facial tissues
 - At least one wastebasket
 - Either a desk or horizontal surface that may be used for writing
 - A luggage rack which may be folded and stored in a closet
 - Reading lights, preferably greater than 60 watts and on both sides of the bed
 - Adequate outlets or power strips

- Smart phone charging stations

OK Minor Major Critical

13. Guest Bathrooms

- Appearance (well maintained, paint, wallpaper, drips) Well maintained without significant paint, flooring, carpentry or wallpaper problems.
- Cleanliness (floors, fixtures, wall, mirrors) Essentially free of dust, spider webs, insect remains. Windows and sills are clean. Mirrors, fixtures, walls and floors are clean, free of spots, etc.
- Accessories (lights, mirrors, soap, drinking glasses, outlets) Adequate lighting for shaving or makeup, outlets convenient, soap and other basic amenities provided
- Convenience Nightlight, robe hooks, bathmat, personal space, towel rack, tissue, adequate flat surface for guest toiletries recommended.
- Comfortable Water pressure, heat, and exhaust fans are available for guest comfort.
- Special interest (if applicable) If there is a shared bathroom, privacy locks are installed.

OK Minor Major Critical

14. Kitchen – If applicable

- Appearance (maintenance, paint, neatness) Kitchen should appear well-maintained, including paint and/or wall coverings, and should be neat and relatively free of clutter.
- Sanitation (floors, appliances, prep surfaces) Floors, appliances and all food preparation surfaces should be clean and sanitary.

OK Minor Major Critical

15. Food Safety – All critical items

- Approved dishwashing methods requires a dishwasher with heat-boosted rinse or triple sink (or separate basin) for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing; sanitizing uses approved concentration of chlorine bleach solution. (This is not an absolute, but the state requires it for health reasons, we should encourage it).

OK Minor Major Critical

- Refrigerator/Freezer Temperature (under 40 degrees)
 - A REMINDER: Please be certain that you have an accurate thermometer in your bed and breakfast refrigerator that is showing a temperature of less than 40 degrees. The inspectors are not equipped with thermometers and a lack of one available can result in a critical deficiency causing an inspection failure. Factory LED displays on the refrigerator/freezer are acceptable in lieu of a thermometer.

OK Minor Major Critical

- Food handling Innkeepers should be aware of approved food handling methods. Serv Safe Certification recommended.

OK Minor Major Critical