



SUPERIOR SMALL LODGING GUIDELINES

CLASSIFICATION

To qualify for SSL membership, eligible properties **must** be no more than **50 rooms*** (accommodations) for rental. . Properties **must** hold a valid hotel, motel, inn, or bed or breakfast license and where applicable, pay county tax, as well as other state and County sales tax. New properties **must** have a Certificate of Occupancy, in order to be inspected. All properties **must** be inspected annually. Property participation is limited to those establishments that are primarily and apparently vacation or business travel oriented with private customer accommodations. The program **will not accept** semi-residential establishments that do not provide a leisure or business travel environment and services. Every room in a certified property is required to meet all SSL Guidelines. All properties **must** comply with SSL guidelines - no exceptions. Condos may only be accepted into the program if they are in a building that, in its' entirety, has 50 or less units with no yearly residential units maintained in the building. They must also be run by a management company and one cleaning company be used for all condos with appropriate licenses in place and paying state and local bed tax. Owners of multiple properties which are operated from one central office or booking agency and are presented and advertised under one web site must all be members of SSLA in good standing to be admitted into the program and maintain membership.

An independently conducted property review inspection determines membership in the SSL program. This review guarantees that guests will enjoy a **clean, safe and well managed small lodging establishment, offering friendly ambiance and personal service**. SSL participation is an earned privilege and members **must** demonstrate an on-going commitment and adhere to the requirements of the program, including the yearly agreement and payment of any applicable fees and dues. All properties **must** be inspected. Properties in SSL must have email capabilities for organizational communications.

INSPECTIONS

Eligible properties **must** undergo an annual **unannounced** inspection to maintain SSL membership. Program affiliation requires that unannounced inspections could occur periodically and randomly. All properties **must** be available for inspection without advance notice.

On arrival at the property, the inspector will identify him/herself and ask to see your vacancy listings. The inspector will randomly choose accommodations based on availability and not be led to rooms. The priority of the inspector is to choose vacant rooms ready for rent. However, based on room availability and discretion of the inspector, he/she may also ask to see accommodations that have yet to return to inventory: unclean, closed due to maintenance, renovation or presently occupied (with occupants permission only). In the event of high occupancy at a property at the time of the inspector's arrival precludes seeing the requisite number of unoccupied/ made up rooms, then it is necessary for the inspector to see occupied rooms or rooms that are currently listed as "out of order" (OOO). In the case of occupied rooms, the inspector must be accompanied by a representative of the management during the time that the inspector is in the room and have the permission of the guest. It would be prudent of the management to also accompany the inspector in any review of OOO rooms. It is understood that the inspection of unoccupied, made up rooms ready for occupancy is the preferred approach and the inspection of OOO rooms only occurs as an exception not the rule. The inspector may ask to see at least 29% of the accommodations, from standard to deluxe and in different areas and floors of your complex. If the inspector is denied access to any accommodation during the walk-through, the inspection may be terminated. The inspection fee can be forfeited and eligibility denied.

The property owner, manager or representative is encouraged to accompany the inspector during the evaluation. This is an excellent opportunity to gain valuable feedback. The inspector will point out areas (if any) that may need additional attention, repair or enhancement from the guest perspective. It is not required that the owner, manager or representative accompany the inspector on his/her evaluation and the inspector is unable to wait for any off premise personnel to join the tour. The inspection will be conducted during this initial visit and the inspector cannot return during a more convenient time. If for any reason the inspector finds no access to the property on arrival for inspection the inspector will make every effort to return. Given a demanding travel schedule and time restraints while in the destination this however cannot be assured. The **inspection fee could be forfeited**. The inspection can last from 30 minutes to two hours depending on property size and conditions. At the conclusion of the inspection, the inspector will provide the owner, manager or representative a verbal summary of the inspection but **no score will be given**.

The inspectors are industry professionals who travel throughout the country and should be extended every courtesy one would bestow upon a guest.

The **passing grade for the SSL program is 82%**, but properties are encouraged to **continually upgrade and exceed the standards of the program**. A combined **housekeeping score of 85% must be maintained** for the privilege of being in the SSL program.

COMPLAINTS

Guest complaints are to be given serious consideration. After three written complaints received by the National organization, your local SSL Destination Group, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce and/or Better Business Bureau, the property can be re-inspected with the expense of the re-inspection to be paid for by the property. All complaints **must** be dealt with in a business-like manner and **must** be well documented.

SSL's procedures on handling guest complaints safeguard the association's reputation and standards on quality and service. The following are internal procedures and timelines for replying to complaints received by letter or email; it also introduces a system for handling difficult cases.

Scenario 1 - If SSL office is primary recipient of a guest complaint, then SSL Executive Director responds, appropriately, by letter or email to complaining guest. All relevant correspondence is forwarded to inn that is the subject of the complaint. Innkeeper is requested to respond in writing to the guest and copy SSL office 'for the record' within a 30-day period. If a guest's complaint is left unanswered by a property owner/manager after a 30-day period, SSL membership may be terminated forthwith. Extensions may be granted to the innkeeper when replying to guests' complaints, given any extenuating circumstances.

1. The first step is generally the preliminary fact finding stage. The property owner/manager is requested to directly respond in writing to the guest's complaint(s) with a copy to be sent to SSL's administrative office within a 30-day period.

2. To the extent possible, confidentiality concerning the complaint and the information **must** be maintained at all stages. Appropriate carbon copies would include the respective DMO, a representative of the Property Review Program (PRP), the Chair, and the President. Only if determined necessary shall the Destination President be carbon copied on any correspondence.

3. If complaint deals with issues covered under SSL's guidelines, correspondence is forwarded to PRP representative for his/her comments. In the case of a complaint of this nature (guidelines), SSL Executive Director conducts appropriate activity, which could mean an unannounced inspection within 30-60 days. DMO is copied with all relevant correspondence. Correspondence remains in file for three years.

4. If after the preliminary review of any complaint or suggestion the complaint is found to be justified, SSL may request assistance from the DMO, if any. SSL may also request assistance from PRP in determining the need for immediate re-inspection and additional corrective action.

5. The 30-day response time may be shortened for complaints channeled through the DMO.

6. Destination Presidents **must** be made aware of the gravity of a complaint against a member-property at least 30-days prior to membership termination.

Scenario 2 - In the typical case, complaint goes to local DMO/Chamber, etc., and may be forwarded to SSL office. This then starts the process outlined under Scenario #1,

above. SSL would require that all DMOs, as standard procedure, forward complaints on an SSL property to the SSL Executive Director.

The local destination group will handle SSL-member complaints regarding inspections with input from the National, only if necessary. Re-inspections cannot be requested to improve property scores.

A. REGISTRATION/OPERATIONS/PUBLIC SPACES

1. Lobby/Registration-Conditions and Appearance

Facilities **must** be well maintained and provide a pleasant atmosphere. Layout and décor should be inviting, comfortable and consistent with the overall ambiance of the property. Storage of supplies and clutter should be kept out of guests' view. Adequate guest sitting area is recommended but not mandatory.

POINTS: 5

2. Front Desk Operations

Establishments **must** clearly identify an **onsite** registration area, as appropriate, and office hours **must** be posted at entry. Regardless of office hours, provisions should be made for the receipt of emergency guest telephone calls at all times. An emergency management/owner phone number **must** be posted at entry, or either night doorbell or phone provided (if operation is not open and attended 24 hours).

Hospitality and service to guests are of the utmost importance. Management and all personnel **must** operate in an ethical and professional manner at all times and **must** make a conscientious effort to provide courteous, polite and friendly service to guests. **POINTS: 5**

3. Brochures/Rates/Policies and Destination Material

Brochures **must** accurately depict the property and facilities to avoid any confusion and offer full disclosure of all policies and regulations regarding the property. All establishments **must** have printed rate sheets for distribution and available for guests and inquiries. Full disclosure of rates **must** be published. Reservation policies **must** be reasonable and meet industry standards and be adhered to consistently. All policies for reservations, cancellations and refunds **must** be fully disclosed to guests in writing prior to arrival. Confirmed reservations with deposit **must** be honored as required by law. Rates are to be posted in each room/unit.

Area destination material is an important component to any property. Brochure racks, area guides, maps or in-room directories are recommended. SSL directories to help your guests continue their trip should be available in the office or lobby. **POINTS: 5**

4. Maid Service

To avoid any confusion regarding individual property services, full disclosure (in writing) of housekeeping policy **must** be made on property literature (such as policies/rate sheet) internet and during inquiries with future guests, to avoid any surprises prior to guest arrival/stay. Fresh towels and maid service must be available on a daily basis at no additional cost. **POINTS:5**

5. Telephone Console/Communications

A direct dial phone system with 24-hour access to guest rooms is recommended. (Certain styles of operation may be exempt to guest room access as long as convenient phone access is available. **POINTS: 5**

6. Security and Guest Services

Establishments should make all reasonable attempts to protect guests against damage and theft - 24 hours per day. On site owner/management **must** be available 24 hours per day or an in-room telephone with emergency numbers and instructions **must** be posted. Hours available to answer questions and meet guests' needs daily **must** be posted. **POINTS: 10**

TOTAL POINTS:35

B. GUEST ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Housekeeping

Each establishment **must** reflect a high degree of cleanliness. A combined housekeeping score of **85% must be maintained** for the privilege of being in the SSL program.

- a. Housekeeping is not considered a variable factor.
- b. Regardless of the excellence of other facilities, membership in the SSL program will not be granted unless cleanliness is maintained in all aspects.
- c. Excessive staining to carpeting and bed linen, although covered in separate categories, will also negatively affect your housekeeping score.

POINTS: 15

2. Guest Room Security

Guest room security **must** be assured.

- a. Door-Primary Lock: the door for each room/unit **must** be equipped with a primary lock.
- b. Door- Secondary Lock: each room/unit door to a common hall or to the properties exterior **must** have a secondary security device in addition to the primary lock. This secondary lock **must** prevent opening from the

outside by the room key or normal master key when the guest from the inside locks the door. A one-inch through-the-door deadbolt lock **is required** as a secondary security device. (Certain historical properties may be exempt on interior room entries.)

c. Master Key Systems **must** be limited to one emergency master key, privacy lock system, reserved for use only by management. **Under no circumstances** should service personnel or housekeepers have access to the emergency master key.

d. Connecting Room Doors – doors that connect rooms **must** have locks that prevent opening from the opposite side. A one-inch through-the-door deadbolt is **required**.

e. Windows: each room/unit window **must** work freely and be free of defects. Any window designed to open **must** be equipped with screens and be wear free. Security guards for jalousie-styled windows are recommended.

f. Sliding Doors **must** have locks that prevent opening from the outside. A secondary device is **required** on all sliding doors. This should be placed high enough to act as a childproof lock.

g. One-way Door Viewfinder – a one-way peephole or viewing device providing a 180-degree view is **required** for all solid room/unit exterior doors, if an accessible window is more than one foot away from the door jam. (Certain historical properties may be exempt on interior room entries)

POINTS: 5

3. Privacy/Window Coverings

To assure privacy and prevent glare, each guest room/unit should have adequate window coverings. Blackout/total sunblock of window openings is desirable (no points will be deducted). Bathroom windows **must** be sufficiently opaque or have adequate blinds, shades or drapes to provide complete privacy from the outside.

POINTS: 5

4. Décor/Interior Wall Conditions/Sound Proofing

The décor of each room/unit should be attractive and in keeping with current industry standards. Wall trim, doors and ceilings should be clean and well maintained. Each room/unit should be sufficiently soundproofed and private, preventing outside noises and sounds from adjoining rooms and public areas from disturbing guests. **POINTS: 5**

5. Floor Covering Conditions

The carpet, tile, wood or other surfaces should be clean and well maintained and free of traffic wear, stains, tears and burns. Excessive carpet staining will also negatively affect housekeeping score.

POINTS: 5

6. Furnishings/Floor Space

The furnishings of each room/unit **must** meet current industry standards as listed below, be well maintained and of good quality.

- a. Beds – Beds **must** be well constructed, comfortable and in superior condition.
- b. Nightstands – Each room/unit **must** have at least one nightstand located next to each bed. One nightstand between two beds is sufficient.
- c. Bureau/Dresser/Credenza – Each room/unit **must** provide ample facilities for accommodating guest clothing and personal belongings.
- d. Writing Surface – Each room/unit should be equipped with sufficient writing surface as a permanent part of room equipment.
- e. Chairs – Each room/unit **must** be equipped with at least one comfortable chair. Where applicable, chairs should be positioned for convenient television viewing and conversation. Hide-a-bed sofa's, duo-beds, etc. are acceptable as a substitute for chairs.
- f. Mirror/Art Work – Each room/unit **must** be equipped with a mirror and should also be enhanced with artwork.
- g. Luggage Rack – Each room/unit **must** contain a luggage rack, credenza or equivalent bench space.
- h. Free Floor Space – Beds must be ten (10) inches from the wall.

POINT: 5

7. Lamps/Room Lighting - The following areas **require** direct illumination. (Rated at least 75-watt bulbs or it's equivalent as in fluorescent bulbs are **required**.)

- a. above or next to each bed;
- b. next to chair;
- c. above or next to the writing surface.

The same lamp may provide illumination for more than one location. The combination of the fixture, shade design, placement and bulb wattage should be carefully considered in order to provide adequate lighting in each room as well as at each of the above locations. 75-watt bulbs or it's equivalent as in fluorescent bulbs are **mandatory** for all reading areas. Shades **must** be free of stains or soil, and not show excessive wear. Lamp switches **must** easily be accessible and free from any hazard. A functional light switch or lamp is **required** at the entrance door to each guest room and separate room within a suite. **POINT: 5**

8. Telephones

In-room phone systems **must** have incoming and out-going service, touch-tone phones with direct dial. Local phone directories and dialing instructions are also required. Data ports are becoming a standard guest amenity. (Certain style operations may not provide phones in each guest room but **must** provide on-site phone access). Phone rates **must** be posted by phone. **POINT: 5**

9. Televisions/Alarm Clock Radios

Color television set with a cable or satellite TV and remote control are **required**. Convenient TV viewing from chairs should be provided. An alarm clock or equivalent wake-up service is **required**. **POINT: 5**

10. Air Conditioning/Heat

Each room/unit **must** be equipped with air conditioning and heat. Individual controls are desirable. Control panels should be easily accessible. **POINT: 5**

11. Bed Linens/Bedspreads - MUST BE PROVIDED

Each bed **requires:**

1. two sheets – a top sheet and a bottom sheet;
2. one mattress pad;
3. plump pillow(s), pillow case(s) and pillow protector(s);
4. a blanket;
5. appropriate bedspread is a quilted or other quality spread. Avoid mesh backing. All **must be clean** and in good condition. Staining will also negatively affect housekeeping score. **POINTS: 5**

12. Closets/Hangers

Each room/unit **must** be equipped with hanging facilities to accommodate clothing for a minimum of two persons. A minimum of eight hangers per room is **required**. Facilities should permit clothing to hang without touching walls. Hangers should be wood, plastic or metal. Wire hangers are **unacceptable**. **No personal items of hotelier/innkeeper are acceptable. POINTS: 5**
TOTAL POINTS: 70

C. BATHROOMS

Bathrooms need not be elaborately decorated but those that have stained or damaged bath walls, floors or fixtures that look unclean (even though they may be cleaned regularly) are **not acceptable**. Bathrooms **must** be of ample size and the arrangements of the facilities should be such that there is sufficient and comfortable space to bathe, dress and undress without inconvenience. Ideally, all bathroom facilities (with the exception of the sink/vanity) should be in a space separate from the sleeping or living area. (Certain exceptions are made for whirlpools, jacuzzis or spas.) When the bathroom door is closed, general construction of this area should be such that normal sounds, light, odor or moisture cannot enter the sleeping or living areas.

All guest rooms should include private bathrooms. (Certain historical properties are exempt but no more than two rooms (four persons) may share a bathroom.) Properties with shared bathroom facilities **must** state so in brochure literature. Robes **must** be provided in all rooms that share or have, an outside bath.

1. **Housekeeping** – Each establishment **must** reflect a high degree of cleanliness. A combined housekeeping score of 85% must be maintained for the privilege of being in the SSL program.

- a. Housekeeping is not considered a variable factor
- b. Regardless of the excellence of other facilities membership in the SSL program will not be granted unless cleanliness is maintained in all aspects.
- c. Excessive grout or caulking mildew will negatively reflect your housekeeping score.
- d. Bathroom cleanliness is unquestionable. Stained or damaged bath walls, floors or fixtures that look unclean (even though they may be cleaned regularly) are unacceptable.
- e. Bathrooms should contain as many non-porous, easily cleaned surfaces as possible to ensure high sanitary standards.
- f. Older faucets must be in good repair. **POINTS: 10**

2. Tub/Shower Conditions

Should be of standard size and free of excessive surface wear. Updated faucets are recommended. Curtain rod and hooks or enclosure should be superior. Sufficient amounts of hot water **must** be provided at all times. Non-skid surface or bath mat **must** be provided and/or bar. Excessive grout or caulking mildew or discoloration will also negatively impact your housekeeping score. Excessive rust is **unacceptable. POINTS: 5**

3. Water Closet/Seat

Should be of high quality with proper water flow.
Excessive wear to toilet seat is **unacceptable. POINTS: 5**

4. Sink/Vanity Area

Should be of high quality, surfaces must be free of stains and excessive wear.

- a. Updated faucets are recommended.
- b. **must** provide adequate shelf and counter space.
- c. **must** provide a mirror over sink. **POINTS: 5**

5. Floor Covering

Tile, linoleum or other surfaces **must** be clean and well maintained. Carpeting is not permitted in guestroom baths. **POINTS: 5**

6. Electrical Outlets

Should be convenient and **must** meet code. **POINTS: 5**

7. Lighting/Light Fixtures

- a. Direct lighting is **required** at sink/mirror.
- b. Lighting **must** sufficiently illuminate the bathroom.
- c. Lighting fixtures **must** be clean and well maintained. **POINTS: 5**

8. Ventilation/Exhaust

Guestrooms/Baths must be free of objectionable odors due to poor sanitation, mildew or heavy deodorizers. **POINTS: 5**

TOTAL POINTS: 45

D. BATHROOM SUPPLIES

1. Towels:

Rooms are to be made up for double occupancy. A quality cloth bath mat and at least two bath towels, two hand towels and two wash/face clothes are **required**.

a. Size of towels are required:

Bath – 24”X48” minimum

Hand- 24”X18” minimum

Wash/face-12”X12” minimum

b. Towel racks and clothes hooks should be available and convenient to all appropriate fixtures. **POINTS: 5**

2. Facial Tissue/Toilet Paper:

Required item in all bath or guest rooms. Toilet Tissue should be conveniently located on dispenser and a backup roll **must** be provided. **POINTS: 5**

3. Soap:

a. A 1.5-ounce wrapped bath bar is required at the tub/shower.

b. A _ ounce wrapped hand/face bar is required at the sink/vanity. Liquid soap is acceptable at both locations. **POINTS: 5**

4. Drinking Glasses/Wastebasket/Liner:

Must be provided in each bathroom. A wastebasket with a plastic liner **must** be provided in bathroom. **No grocery shopping bags as liners.** **POINTS: 5**

TOTAL POINTS: 20

E. KITCHENS

Only rated when part of the guest accommodation. **The equipment in each room/unit must meet current industry standards as listed below, be well maintained and of good quality.**

1. Housekeeping – Each establishment **must** reflect a high degree of cleanliness.

a. Housekeeping is not considered a variable factor.

b. Regardless of the excellence of other facilities, membership in the SSL program will not be granted unless cleanliness is maintained in all aspects.

c. High sanitary standards **must** be assured. **POINTS: 10**

2. Condition of Equipment:

- a. Appliances **must** be well maintained and in good operating condition.
- b. Cabinets and counters should be attractive throughout.
- c. Sinks and faucets should be clean and well maintained.
- d. Range surfaces **must** be clean and well maintained. **POINTS: 5**

3. Adequacy, Mix, Quality and Presentation of Supplies:

- a. Kitchens **must** be supplied with the following amenities: china, dishware, plates, bowls and coffee cups, glassware, silverware, pots and pans. Coffee pot and toaster.
- b. Supplies **must** be clean and well maintained.
- c. Presentation should be neat and orderly.
- d. Adequate supplies for maximum occupancy. **POINTS: 5**

4. Surface Treatment

Floors, walls, trim, ceiling and windows should all be clean and well maintained.
POINTS: 5

5. Lighting/Light Fixtures:

- a. Cooking surfaces **must** be well lit.
 - b. Light fixtures **must** be clean and well maintained. **POINTS: 5**
- TOTAL POINTS: 30**

F. PROPERTY EXTERIOR

Each property **must** maintain an attractive exterior appearance and the curb appeal **must** be conducive to its surrounding conditions.

1. Conditions/Cleanliness of Exteriors/Repair and Maintenance:

Each establishment **must** maintain an attractive exterior appearance. Program standards require properties to be well maintained at all times. Exterior structures **must** be clean and well maintained. Property maintenance **must** be executed on a high level and to the structure **must** be clean and well maintained. **POINTS: 10**

2. Landscaping/Grounds:

- a. Landscaping and grounds should be attractive and well maintained.
- b. Curb appeal should be inviting. Landscaping and grounds should be attractive, well maintained and contribute to the overall ambiance.
- c. All walkways should be clean and well maintained. **POINTS: 10**

3. Parking Facilities:

- a. Driveways should reasonably accommodate guest automobiles.

- b. **Must** have a minimum of one parking spot for each guest room.
- c. Parking surface conditions **must** be clean and well maintained.
- d. Alternative, off site parking may be provided but **must** be disclosed to guests prior to arrival in writing. **POINTS: 5**

4. Exterior Lights:

- a. All guest room entrances, hallways/corridors, lobby entrance, parking areas, signage and walkways **must** be well lit.
 - b. Sufficient lighting at guest room doorways, stairways/steps and office entry is required.
 - c. Laws of the county or city **must** be adhered to and explained to guests upon arrival. This will not impact your score.
- POINTS: 5**

5. Signage:

- a. Properties that choose to participate in the SSL program **must not** post room rates on street signage, on site reader boards or any other exterior on site area. Posting of rates detracts from the quality image SSL properties represent.
- b. Property **must** have visually attractive signage.
- c. All guest room doors **must** be clearly marked with room numbers or names and office clearly indicated.
- d. All exits should be indicated
- e. Directional signage should be offered as necessary. **POINTS: 5**

6. Conditions of Outdoor Sitting Areas and Public Spaces:

- a. Sitting areas and other guest facilities should be well maintained and provide a pleasant atmosphere.
- b. All tables, chairs, lounges, mats, umbrellas and decks should be clean and well maintained. **POINTS: 5**

7. Swimming Pool/Spa – Rated When Available:

- a. **Must** be maintained at all times in accordance with city, county and state ordinances.
- b. Proper signage and safety equipment **must** be in accordance with city, county and state ordinances.
- c. Pools surface and surrounding decks should be clean and well maintained.

POINTS: 5

8. Disclosure:

- a. Recommendations that are not mandatory will not negatively effect your score.

TOTAL POINTS: 45

TOTAL POINTS ALLOWED: 343

- *Consistent with State By-Laws amendment ratified by the Florida Superior Small Lodging Association, Inc Board of Directors, February 15, 2007. Wherein: “Local boards may vote for a maximum room allowance in their destination, though not to exceed 80, and the state will honor such determinations for membership at the state level”. Amended December 2008. Amended February 2010. Most areas maintaining a number of 50 rooms with the exception of Pinellas County.*

Guidelines have been amended as of March 2010. Pinellas County has now reverted back to 50 unit maximum.