

# Content guidelines

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**We know our traveller community values reviews and content created by other travellers and our partners. That's why it is important to us and to our travellers that content on our site and app is truthful, helpful and safe.**

Any content that you and other users submit or otherwise contribute, including reviews, photos, comments and listings, must comply with these guidelines, so we encourage you to read them carefully. These guidelines are part of our broader policies and terms, including our Terms of Service and Privacy Statement, which set out in more detail the terms on which you grant us a licence to use any submitted content.

These guidelines are updated from time to time and the last date of revisions is stated at the top of this page.

## Reviews

### Overview

We understand the importance of trusted reviews to our travellers. Reviews that you submit to our site should be truthful, contain relevant information reflecting your actual experience and follow these content guidelines.

We moderate all reviews submitted to us and we take reasonable steps to ensure that only those who have booked or provided a travel service, such as a flight, stay, car hire or activity, can post a review of their experience.

We publish and display all reviews (both positive and negative), as long as they comply with these guidelines.

Any reviews not submitted directly to us and verified by us are clearly labelled.

In some cases, you may be able to submit feedback in real time—this means that you will have the option to provide immediate feedback on your hotel, flight, car hire or any activities booked through our site or app.

### Moderation of reviews

We have a range of processes in place (automated tools and/or manual human moderation) that we use to identify content that is not compliant with these guidelines. Any reviews that are found to violate these guidelines will not be published on our site or app or will be removed if already in publication. Where reviews are rejected by our moderation processes, the author is informed by email that the review has been rejected because it does not comply with these content guidelines. In some cases, the author also has an opportunity to re-submit their review for re-moderation.

We do not edit or otherwise modify reviews or responses on a partner or traveller's behalf.

### Eligibility and removal of reviews

#### Eligibility conditions

Any reviews published on our site or app must meet the following eligibility criteria and we can reject or remove any review that doesn't meet these criteria:

- Reviews must be submitted within six months of your stay, car hire or activity. If you submit more than one review for the same property, we'll use the most recent one.
- You may not review a property that you own, manage or are otherwise associated with.
- Your review must relate to your genuine, first-hand experience and must not be generated using AI. If requested, you must provide us with satisfactory evidence of your experience (for example, evidence of your stay in the property you are reviewing; or evidence you were unable to proceed with a stay due to the other party's late action).

#### Fake reviews

Fake reviews are reviews that don't reflect a genuine travel experience and are submitted in an attempt to mislead or manipulate other travellers' perception or behaviour. Examples of fake reviews include:

- Where a property partner solicits or leaves a review of their own property.
- Reviews submitted in exchange for payment, reward or incentive in an attempt to manipulate a property's ratings.

We do not allow the publication of fake reviews on our site. Where we detect fake reviews we will remove them from our site and take appropriate action.

#### Review manipulation

We do not allow travellers or partners to use the review process to attempt to extort money or to manipulate review sentiment. For example:

- Travellers may not threaten to use a review against a partner to obtain refunds or additional compensation.

- Partners may not request a positive review in exchange for refunds or ask a guest to revise a review in order to receive additional compensation.
- Partners must not submit, or ask travellers to submit, negative reviews of competitors in order to lower their review ratings.

Where we become aware of such behaviour we will remove manipulated reviews from our site and take appropriate action.

## Incentives

It's important to us and to our travellers that reviews are impartial and honest. Reviews should come directly from the traveller, reflect their unique experience and be unbiased. Partners must not write reviews on behalf of travellers or offer any incentives to encourage travellers to submit reviews.

From time to time, we may offer our travellers incentives to complete reviews, such as a saving, a coupon or loyalty rewards for use on a future trip. These incentives are made regardless of whether a traveller has submitted a negative or positive review. Where a traveller has received an incentive for submitting their reviews, we will also clearly label the published review as incentivised.

We do not allow the publication of concealed incentivised reviews on our site. Where we detect concealed incentivised reviews, we will remove them from our site and take appropriate action.

## Removal of reviews

A traveller or partner may contact Customer Services to remove their published reviews or responses.

We may reject or remove reviews and partner responses to review in the following circumstances:

- The review or response contains personal data about another person, for example their full name or address.
- The review or response is proven to be fake or was provided fraudulently, or
- The review or response is offensive, unlawful or contains any prohibited content as set out in these guidelines.

We do not remove reviews simply because they contain negative content.

We do not remove reviews of accommodation where a traveller attempted to stay or participate in their activity. For example, where a traveller:

- Was not offered a room or was unable to access the property.
- Left earlier than their scheduled departure day.
- Had their booking cancelled mid-stay/activity.
- Had their booking cancelled by the property partner within 24 hours of check-in.

## Reviews of travel services

### Review of accommodation

If you have booked accommodation on our site, we will send you an email or a push notification inviting you to review your stay. You can review an accommodation if you stayed there or if you arrived at the accommodation but didn't actually stay there. You may also review an accommodation if you had your booking cancelled by the property partner within 24 hours of check-in.

If you only complete some parts of the review, such as sub-scores for cleanliness or service, the partially completed review will be auto submitted to us for publication after 21 days.

### Scoring

Travellers can provide an overall score for the property they are reviewing on a straightforward scale of 1–5. To get the property review score we display, we convert all scores received to a score out of 10 and then add up all the published reviews and divide that by the total number of published review scores.

Travellers can also submit sub-scores for specific aspects and features of a property or stay, such as cleanliness, staff, breakfast or location. The overall scores and these sub-scores are submitted by travellers separately, so they may be different.

To ensure reviews are relevant and helpful to travellers, we remove accommodation reviews after three years (except in cases where a property has only a limited number of reviews).

### Partner responses

Property partners can respond to reviews. This allows property partners to address any issues raised and highlight any remediation or property improvements they made. We do not facilitate direct contact by property partners with reviewers. Partner responses are subject to the same moderation process as traveller reviews.

Where a property, activity or car partner genuinely considers that a review does not meet the criteria and requirements set out in these guidelines, that partner may either submit a review dispute form to us via their partner services tools or contact Customer Service. We may also consider requests by property partners for reviews to be removed in the context of a property ownership change or completion of major renovations.

## **Vrbo**

For holiday rental reviews submitted through our Vrbo sites or app, our moderation process has some specific features. We operate a 'two-way review system', in which:

- Once either the traveller or partner submits a review, the other party has 14 days to submit a review.
- We publish each review (provided they comply with our overall content guidelines) at the same time.
- If, after 14 days of the first review being submitted, the other party has not submitted their own review, we will publish the submitted review (and no additional reviews can be submitted in relation to the stay).

## **Transfer of Vrbo reviews**

Vrbo partners may request the transfer of historical reviews to their Vrbo property listing for the same property if they purchase or acquire the rights to manage the property. The previous property owner/manager's permission is not required for the transfer. Any transfer of reviews will be for all reviews, both positive and negative.

If reviews are transferred following this process, we will clearly label any transferred reviews with a notation that the review relates to a different management or ownership.

## **Reviews of car hire**

If you have booked a hire car, we will send you an email or a push notification inviting you to review your experience after you have picked up your car.

We ask travellers if they had either a positive or negative experience with the pick-up and vehicle. We then create a cumulative score based on positive/negative feedback on both these points.

Travellers can also submit a positive or negative score for specific aspects of their hire, such as pick up location, pick-up time and vehicle condition. The overall scores and these sub-scores are submitted by travellers separately, so they may be different.

We generally display an overall percentage of positive customer ratings for car hire providers, based on hires made with that provider. To ensure reviews are relevant and helpful to travellers, we remove car hire reviews after 12 months.

## **Review of local activities and attractions**

If you have booked an activity, we will send you an email or a push notification after you have completed your activity inviting you to review your experience.

Overall or headline review scores are a simple average of all related final scores of published reviews.

## **Unverified reviews**

From time to time, we may also display reviews and review scores which have not been submitted directly us and have not been verified by us.

## **Vrbo**

Some Vrbo reviews come from a traveller submitting a review directly to one of our property partners outside our site or processes or submitted to Vrbo in accordance with a previous moderation process. These reviews are not verified by the moderation processes outlined in these guidelines. We may still display these reviews; however, to be eligible for publication, those reviews must be either:

- From a property partner, which is required to share with us only verified reviews that meet our overall content guidelines; or
- Submitted to Vrbo in accordance with our previous moderation process, which required a valid reservation code from a booking made with one of our property partners.

Each of these types of Vrbo reviews are clearly marked in our reviews display.

## **Viator and Get Your Guide activity reviews**

In addition to our verified activities reviews, we display some reviews of activities gathered in partnership with the well-known travel websites Viator and Get Your Guide. While we do not verify reviews coming from Viator and Get Your Guide, they must meet our overall content guidelines to be published on our site or app.

These reviews are clearly marked as originating from Viator or Get Your Guide in our reviews display.

## **Review scores from other travel websites**

Some properties don't have any reviews from our travellers who booked on our site or app yet, such as those new to our site. For these properties, we will display an average score using reviews from other well-known third-party travel websites only until the properties receive a review on our site. We don't display any written content of reviews from these other websites.

We can't verify reviews from other sites to confirm if they meet our review criteria, however, these reviews scores are imported from well-known third-party travel websites. If a review score is provided on a scale of 1 to 5, we may double it to align with our review scoring on our sites.

Any review scores imported from a third-party travel site are clearly marked in our reviews display.

## **General content guidelines**

### **Prohibited content**

We do not allow content that is misleading, harmful or offensive on our site or apps. Content you submit for publication cannot include the following:

- Content that is not directly related to its purpose (for example, property listings must only relate to the subject property; property listings should not direct users to third-party websites; and your profile description must relate only to you).
- Content that is fake or is provided fraudulently.
- Advertising to other users (for instance, appeals to book alternative properties).
- Any content which you do not have the legal right to publish.
- Profanity or other objectionable content (such as content that is pornographic, obscene, profane, illegal, offensive, insulting, discriminatory, objectionable, threatening, promotes violence or harm, depicts any nudity or sexual activity or is otherwise 'non-family-friendly').
- Photos or information about children or any third parties without their consent (or a parent or legal guardian's consent in the case of a child under 18 years of age).
- Personal data, such as phone numbers, credit card details, physical addresses, email addresses or information that can be linked to a specific individual.
- Property rates, rate ranges or other pricing information in reviews.
- HTML tags, URLs or #hashtags.
- Quoted material from websites, books, magazines, newspapers or other sources, or
- Content that is unlawful or infringes on any copyright, trademark or other intellectual or other proprietary rights of another person.

Please note we retain the right in our reasonable discretion to decide on the appropriateness of content in all instances. We can choose not to publish or to remove any content that does not comply with the requirements set out in these guidelines (or that we, for any reason, deem as inappropriate).

### **Guidance on creating content**

Below are some useful pointers to keep in mind when creating and submitting content:

- Focus on your experience. Be honest, informative, unique and detailed.
- Use good grammar, spelling and common sense.
- Reviews and comments on reviews, are not the place to ask for help or voice frustration with us or our service. We welcome reviews relating to your travel experience, however if you need to contact us or raise a complaint please reach out to our Customer Support.
- Don't use plagiarised content or the experiences of others. You may not cut and paste from other review sites or travel sources.

### **Photo submission guidance**

There are some technical aspects that you should keep in mind when submitting photos:

- Images must be in BMP, PNG, GIF or JPEG format.
- File size must be 5mb or less.
- Image must be at least 60 pixels tall.
- Image must be at least 60 pixels wide.
- No logos, titles, branding, promotional material or any other content intended for commercial purposes.

## **REPORTING CONTENT**

### **Content on our sites**

It is our partners' responsibility to ensure that the property, car, or activity listing information provided to us for display is complete, accurate and up to date at all times. If we become aware that the information provided to us by a partner is inaccurate, incomplete or out of date, we may ask them to correct the information provided. If the partner fails to do so, we may suspend the provision of our services to them until the information has been corrected.

### **How to report content on our sites**

We work hard to ensure that the content on our sites is authentic and appropriate, and so we really value the feedback that you provide to us.

If you believe content posted on our sites might be illegal or might breach these guidelines, you can report the content by using the 'report this listing' button which you can find at the bottom of listing information pages on our sites or app; or you can report

content by sending us an email at [legal@vrbo.com](mailto:legal@vrbo.com), [eunotifications@expedia.com](mailto:eunotifications@expedia.com), or [eu-notifications@hotels.com](mailto:eu-notifications@hotels.com), depending which of our sites or app you saw the content on.

In your correspondence, please include the following information:

- Your name and email address
- The specific URL(s) of the listing(s) in question to help us identify the content
- A detailed explanation of the reasons why you think the content could be illegal; and
- A statement confirming your belief that the information that you have provided is accurate and complete.

Examples of illegal content may include copyright infringements, fraud, illegal web advertising, illegal property listings, illegal hate speech, unlawful discriminatory content, etc.

## What happens next?

A confirmation of safe receipt of your report will be sent to you. Our team will then review the information that you have provided and get back to you once we have decided how to proceed. The time needed to review your notice may vary on a case-by-case basis, but overall, we will aim to get back to you promptly.

Our decision will be communicated to you in writing by email. To complain about the decision that was taken, simply reply to the email that was sent to you and our team will review your complaint (see more on this under 'How to complain' below).

If we consider that the reported content does not comply with these guidelines and/or applicable laws, the content will be removed from our sites and app, and in most cases the third party responsible for the content will be notified.

## What tools do we use for content moderation?

Our team will review every submission that is flagged to us via the 'report this listing' flag and/or reported to us through the email addresses listed above. For example, we also use automated tools to find key words that help us identify spam, as well as certain categories of illegal content.

## Trusted flaggers

'Trusted flagger' is a status awarded (by a regulatory enforcement body called a Digital Services Coordinator) to specially designated bodies, which have particular expertise and competence in tackling illegal content. We are committed to assisting regional, national and EU authorities, that have been designated as a 'trusted flagger' within the meaning of the Digital Services Act. We will prioritise the review of notices submitted by trusted flaggers.

## Restrictions (including suspension of services)

Anyone who repeatedly infringes our content guidelines and/or applicable law may see actions taken against them, which could include, for example, the suspension of monetary payments, the suspension of services provided to you, and/or the suspension of accounts. We decide on a case-by-case basis what actions should be taken, and we inform the party in question of the action that we decide to take in this regard.

Examples of violations for which suspension may be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

- offline bookings;
- coercing traveller reviews;
- submitting fake reviews;
- poor listing quality;
- failure by a partner to provide accurate or complete information requested under relevant laws (and/or failure to correct inaccurate, incomplete or out of date information, following a request from us)

During a suspension, travellers will not be able to make new bookings or submit reviews, and partners will not be able to accept new bookings, as their listing(s) will either be hidden or shown as otherwise unbookable, based on the situation that led to the suspension.

We will determine on a case-by-case basis whether the partner will be expected to maintain current and upcoming reservations during their suspension. We reserve the right to cancel and relocate upcoming reservations where there is a potential health or safety risk to travellers. A partner's access to their account or listing data will not be limited during or after a suspension unless the suspension was a result of fraud or another serious financial or safety violation.

Suspension length is determined by the time it takes for the account or listing to get back into compliance, provide a reasonable plan to get back into compliance, or successfully appeal. As soon as an improvement plan (or demonstration that the issue has been resolved) has been provided, the party may contact us to share this information and request account or listing reinstatement.

Reinstatement will be considered on a case-by-case basis and communicated in writing.

## Termination

We can terminate an account or listing if it has incurred repeat suspensions under this policy. We may also terminate an account for reasons including, but not limited to:

- content that compromises the safety of travellers and/or employees
- When suspension alone would not sufficiently address the risk posed by the user's conduct
- Breach of contract; or
- Fraud.

## **How to complain**

If the party who submitted the notice, or against whom a restriction was imposed, disagrees with our decision, they can usually submit a complaint. We will review the complaint and decide whether our decision should be reversed. If so, the relevant content will be restored to our sites and app.

A listing or account suspension or termination can also be appealed by contacting us directly and providing evidence that contradicts the finding that led to the decision. In reviewing appeals, we will consider the totality of circumstances, including any additional details the party provides.

If a regulatory authority is investigating content that is the subject matter of a complaint, our review process will be placed on hold until that the authority's investigation has been completed.

## **Out of court dispute settlement**

If you wish to dispute a decision that we have taken regarding illegal content (including following the submission of a complaint), you can select an out-of-court dispute settlement body to help resolve your dispute. Decisions by out-of-court dispute settlement bodies are not binding on you or us.

## **Action against misuse**

We will eventually suspend, for a period of six months, the processing of notices and/or complaints submitted by persons who repeatedly lodge unfounded notices or unfounded complaints.

We will evaluate each instance of misuse on a case-by-case basis, but in doing so we will take into account all the relevant facts and circumstances apparent from the information that we have available. This may include, but is not limited to, the number of unfounded notices and/or complaints submitted within a particular period and the seriousness of the misuse.

If we determine that misuse has taken place, we will send a warning to the person in question, before acting.