



# How to Set Up a Turnover System That Runs Without You

A reliable cleaning and turnover workflow is the backbone of a hands-off STR operation. Learn how to coordinate vendors, set standards, and automate the process.

The difference between a stressful STR business and a scalable one often comes down to one thing: the turnover system. Hosts who build reliable, documented processes can grow their portfolio without being on-site for every checkout. Here's how to build one.

## 01 — Why Your Turnover System Is Your Business

For most STR operators, the turnover — the cleaning and reset between guests — is the most operationally demanding part of the business. It's also the part that most directly affects your reviews, your guest experience, and your ability to scale.

- Cleanliness is the #1 factor in negative STR reviews
- A reliable turnover system is what makes a property truly passive
- Inconsistent turnovers create inconsistent guest experiences
- A documented system protects you when staff changes or vendors cancel

**Mentor Tip:** Your turnover system should be documented well enough that someone new could execute it perfectly on their first day — without calling you.

## 02 — Build a Detailed Cleaning Checklist

The foundation of any turnover system is a room-by-room cleaning checklist. Don't rely on verbal instructions or assumptions about what 'clean' means. Document every task explicitly.

- Create a checklist for every room: bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, living areas, outdoor spaces
- Include specific tasks: strip and replace linens, wipe all surfaces, check under furniture
- Add a restocking list: toiletries, paper products, coffee, kitchen basics
- Include a final walkthrough checklist: lights off, doors locked, thermostat set
- Add photo documentation requirements for key areas
- Note any property-specific quirks or guest-reported issues to check

**Mentor Tip:** Use a shared checklist app like Properly, Breezeway, or even a shared Google Doc so your cleaner can check off tasks in real time.

## 03 — Finding and Vetting Reliable Cleaners

Your cleaning team is the most important vendor relationship in your STR business. A great cleaner who shows up consistently and communicates well is worth more than a cheaper one who cancels last minute.

- Ask for referrals from other local STR hosts
- Interview candidates and walk them through your property and checklist
- Do a paid trial run before committing
- Confirm they can handle same-day turnovers
- Establish clear communication protocols
- Have a backup cleaner identified before you need one

**Mentor Tip:** Pay your cleaners fairly and treat them as partners. High turnover in your cleaning team is one of the fastest ways to destroy your review score.

## 04 — Automate Scheduling and Communication

Manual coordination doesn't scale. As you grow, automation becomes essential. Most STR management platforms offer tools to automate turnover scheduling.

- Connect your booking calendar to your cleaner's schedule automatically
- Use STR management software to trigger automated notifications
- Set up automated supply reorder reminders
- Create automated guest messaging that includes checkout reminders
- Use a shared calendar so all vendors know the schedule in advance

**Mentor Tip:** Even a simple shared Google Calendar connected to your booking platform can eliminate most of the manual coordination for a single property.

## 05 — Handling Same-Day Turnovers

Back-to-back bookings with same-day turnovers are the most operationally demanding scenario. They require tight coordination and a team that can execute reliably under time pressure.

- Set a firm checkout time and enforce it consistently
- Set a check-in time that gives your team enough buffer
- Communicate the turnover window clearly to your cleaning team
- Have a contingency plan if the previous guest checks out late
- Consider blocking same-day turnovers until your system is well-established

**Mentor Tip:** Don't sacrifice turnover quality for an extra booking. A rushed turnover that results in a bad review costs more than the revenue from that booking.

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## The Bottom Line

A great turnover system doesn't happen by accident — it's built intentionally, documented thoroughly, and refined over time. Invest the time upfront to build yours right, and it will pay dividends in reviews, guest satisfaction, and your own peace of mind for years to come.