***Best Practices for Hornby Island Short Term Rentals***

In order to retain its idyllic rural character, Hornby Island has intentionally avoided commercial tourist development and opted instead for the casual sharing of residential homes in local neighbourhoods to accommodate its guests. Vacation Rentals is a way for Hornby Island to bring visitors to the Island and give them way to participate in local neighbourhoods and enjoy island life for the week or two they spend here.

Hornby Island Short Term Rental Association (HISTRA) supports a philosophy of mindful tourism. We are inviting travelers to share our homes, and it is only fair to them to also share how they can be good guests. With this in mind, the Association has established a set of Best Practices, that encourages short-term rental owners and property managers to:

* educate and inform guests about how to be respectful visitors
* work with neighbours to promote harmonious relationships
* be environmental stewards by ensuring the sustainable use of each property, by recognizing the limits of the existing septic system, ground water, road capacity and other community considerations
* share your property responsibly by ensuring guests are aware of Hornby Island rules that apply to their stay. These would include:
* Hornby Island Trust Short-Term Rental Bylaws
* Fire Requirements Bylaws
* Noise Requirements Bylaws
* Respecting the quality, and quantity, of water, as referenced on **hornbywater.org**
* For real time data of Provincial groundwater monitoring on Hornby Island go to:<https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b53cb0bf3f6848e79d66ffd09b74f00d>
* Other relevant Island Rules that apply

By adopting sustainable practices, we will enjoy greater operational efficiency through lowering energy use, conserving water, minimizing waste and enjoying the cost benefits of these actions. We also have the unique ability to increase guest awareness and engagement in their own sustainable practices, leveraging the benefits beyond the shores of our island!

**Best Practices**

1. **Rental Agreement**

Ensure you have an up to date rental agreement that requires your guests to adhere to the rules and bylaws as outlined in the agreement. Ensure you know who will be using your short-term rental and you have checked their references.

1. **Liability Insurance**

If you are renting your property frequently for short term rentals you should report this to your insurance company. In many cases your household insurance will not cover short term rentals and you could find yourself without insurance if something were to go wrong.

1. **Report your income from the short-term rental to Revenue Canada**

It is very important to report your income and expenses from your short-term rental as it is the law in Canada to report this income in the year you earn it.

1. **Register for PST**

All short-term vacation rentals in British Columbia must register to collect and pay PST if they collect in excess of $2500 in rental income annually. This tax is 8% and is collected from your guests. You earn a small commission on the amount of PST you collect and remit. This is not an optional tax, it is the law to charge, collect and remit it to the Provincial Government.

1. **Provide Information Packet**

One strategy for reducing bylaw issues is to provide renters with as much information as possible. That can take the form of an information packet at your short-term rental or sent via email. Even better, provide your guests with an electronic welcome book with the information you would like to share with them and meet them when they get there and go over the important highlights from the package.

1. **Talk to your Neighbours**

If you don’t live on the island full time, make sure that you go talk to your neighbours and ask how things are going with your rental. Ask if there are any concerns or positive feedback they would like to share. Communication with those around you is very important so that everyone feels part of the community and can share concerns if there are any.

1. **Join the Hornby Island Short Term Rental Association (HISTRA)**

The Association is here to help you. We are a group of volunteers who own and/or manage short term rentals on Hornby Island. We can assist you in keeping you in the loop about best practices for short term rentals and provide you with assistance or suggestions to meet the bylaws and legal requirements related to your short-term rental. It is important that our community of Hornby Island is united and that all who live and play on the island adhere and respect the bylaws and other rules that cover all aspects of our island community. The email for the Association is hornbyshortterm@gmail.com.

***What changes can you make to your property to be more sustainable?***

**ENVIRONMENTAL**

**Most Island travelers have a strong connection with nature, and want to contribute to the sustainability of our island and the planet, let’s help them with some local information.**

1. **Energy conservation**

Energy use accounts for approximately [60%](http://hotelnewsnow.com/Articles/25821/How-to-reduce-energy-consumption-in-hotels) of a property’s carbon footprint. Luckily, there are some easy, actionable tips you can put into practice to transform your short-term rental into an [eco-friendly home](https://www.lodgify.com/blog/eco-friendly-homes/).

**Light Blubs**
LED lights are environmentally friendly and are up to 80% more efficient than traditional lighting. Incandescent bulbs or compact fluorescent bulbs contain toxic elements. Making the switch is easy and has major long-term benefits.

**Motion Sensor Switches or Lights**

Installing motion activated lighting sensors that turn on and stay on when they detect a presence and turn off in the absence movement will save a bit on energy bills, and there will be less to worry about guests wasting energy by leaving lights on.

**Natural Lighting**
Up to 10% of energy on your heating bill can be saved when you open the blinds and let in the sun. Opening the blinds allows sunshine to come into your home to heat the surrounding areas.

**Energy Efficient Appliances**

Use of energy efficient appliances minimizes the exploitation of natural resources. These

resources include natural gas, oil, coal, and water. Energy efficiency enhances conservation of these sources as a way to achieve sustainable development.

**Solar Panels**

The decrease in the cost of solar panels serves as a great example of why there should be an increase in the use of solar energy. Traditional electricity relies heavily on fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas. Solar electricity boosts your electricity independence.

**Natural Cleaning Products**
Instead of buying traditional cleaning products, stock your short-term rental with more Natural solutions.  Many products say bio-degradable. This only means they break down to the chemical they were formatted with and are not necessarily environmentally good products.

 Natural cleaning products:

* hydrogen peroxide based products
* 20 mule team borax
* vinegar
* baking soda

**Organic Sheets**
If you supply sheets and linens at your short-term rental (e.g. B&B’s) consider switching to organic sheets and towels. Cotton linens account for 25% of the world’s insecticide use. Plus, when you support organic cotton, you also support organic farming, lower carbon emissions, safer work environments, no use of toxic chemicals, and a product that can be renewed and recycled.

**Maintenance and Cleaning**Cleaning the refrigerator coils can extend the life of the refrigerator while making it more efficient. Cleaning lint out of dryer hoses helps dryer efficiency and reduces the potential for fire. Make sure ceiling fans are going in the right direction.  Cleaning out the screens in water filters, pumps, shower heads, water taps and toilet flush mechanisms assists with the flow of the water but also with the efficiency of the equipment that runs them.

**Septic Systems**

Ensuring that the septic system is properly maintained is very important. Some septic systems were approved at the time the property was originally developed. These systems were usually gravity type systems. They require pumping and/or the field flushed out regularly. New systems on Hornby are usually consisting of various forms of engineered systems that produce little to no effluent into the ground water. However, these systems are required to be maintained annually or bi-annually by someone certified to ensure they operate as intended.

**Smart Thermostats**
Heating and cooling account for nearly half of your home’s energy costs**.** A smart thermostat offers both automation and greater control over your home’s temperature and climate – control that could save you a bundle on your energy bill.

**Outdoor Clothes Line**

Since the invention of the electric clothes dryer, the number of households that rely on clotheslines to dry clothes has steadily decreased over the years. Hanging your clothes up to dry is easier on the environment and your wallet because it saves you money on energy costs. Even if it’s not practical for you to hang the wash on turnover days, providing the line will allow your guests to have fresh-air laundry.

**Get Unplugged**

Electronic appliances, including TVs, computers, and CD/DVD players can consume almost as much energy when in standby mode as they do during the relatively small amount of time they're being used. Ensure when you or your guests are not in the home that all additional appliances are unplugged.

**Changing Your Wood-stove to an Alternative Source of Heat (e.g. Propane/heat pumps)**

The burning of wood has a direct impact on the environment and the neighbours. Consider switching to an alternative source of heat such as propane or a heat pump system. Also ensure that the chimney of the wood stove is cleaned once or twice a year and the wood stove is an energy efficient one that meets current requirements. Ensure that you check your insurance to ensure that your guests can use the woodstove.

**Other Ways**
There are many other green practices to make sure your short-term rental is more sustainable. Some may take more effort or a contractor to install, such as energy-efficient windows and others, such as providing cloth shopping bags, or reusable water bottles and easy and have a positive impact on our environment.

**2. Water conservation**

There is considerable research available on the Hornby Water website ([www.hornbywater.org](http://www.hornbywater.org)) on ways to conserve water and the fragility of the ground water on Hornby Island. Even small changes will help reduce water consumption. Some of the following ideas will definitely have a positive impact on the Hornby Island underground aquifer.

**Residential Water Meter**

You can install a residential water meter on your water line and conduct a water audit to investigate where you’re consuming the most water and repair any leaks or drips. Water meters come in simple clamp on styles for copper or plastic pipe and can be monitored with an app on your cellphone. There are also the more traditional ones that are installed by a plumber in line and have a gauge on them. They range in price from $50 to $400 depending on the style.

**Shower Timer**

To reduce the temptation to have longer showers, you can install a shower timer to restrict the amount of time a person showers. These can be purchased on line from $30 to $400 can be set at various times and are very user friendly.

**Low-flow Water Fixtures**
Low-flow technology is commonly found in toilets and shower-heads. Installing a low-flow toilet can substantially reduce your vacation home’s water consumption as flushing toilets account for 30% of total indoor water use. Installing a low-flow shower-head can save a family of four 160,000 litres of water annually or install a water reducing washer in your existing shower head.

**Laundry Use**

In terms of promoting sustainable tourism to your guests, you can ask them politely to reuse their towels, to only run the dishwasher or washing machine when full and to ensure they switch all faucets off after use. Another way to reduce water use is to ask your guests to bring their own sheets and towels and to limit access to the washing machine during their stay.

**Rainwater Collection**

Installing a rainwater collection system will have a direct, positive impact on the Hornby Island ground water aquifer. Rainwater harvesting is an alternative water supply to wells that does not use the ground water. Using well water directly depletes ground water supply and using a rainwater collection system can be used to replace or augment a drilled or surface well. Rainwater collected from roof gutters can be used for garden irrigation, watering plants/lawns or flushing toilets and if filtered correctly, can be used for all household water uses.

**Landscaping & Xeriscaping**

Choose native and local plant life for gardens and landscaping. Native plants are hardy because they have adapted to the local conditions. Once established, native plants do not need pesticides, fertilizers, or watering. Not only is this good for the environment, it saves time and money. Landscaping with native wildflowers and grasses helps return the area to a healthy ecosystem.

**Temperature of the Hot Water**

Consider reducing the temperature of the hot water tank to 120 degrees Fahrenheit (49 degrees Celsius).

**Change the Hot Water Tank to a Hot Water on Demand System**

They can virtually eliminate standby losses - energy wasted when hot water cools down in long pipe runs or while it's sitting in the storage tank. By providing hot water immediately where it's used, tankless water heaters waste less water.

**3. Waste and recycling**

Providing recycling containers for your short-term accommodation is the first step in the right direction to reducing overall waste. Place clearly marked containers for organic, plastic, paper/cardboard. glass/tin, refundable beverage containers and actual garbage on your property. Educate your guests on how to use them effectively when they arrive. Provide easy directions for how and what to recycle, so that your guests can help you stay eco-friendly.

* Recycling depot – A lot of visitors enjoy a visit to the Recycling Depot, as repeat clients to drop off their donations, and if they’re new to the Island, to have a unique experience. If your guests are taking products to the Depot, ensure they understand the process at the recycling depot and the hours of operation, www.hirra.ca/recycle
* Drop off REFUNDABLE beverage containers to the preschool – refundable beverage containers assist financially and directly impacts the lives of the children on the island. [www.hornbyislanddaycaresociety.org](http://www.hornbyislanddaycaresociety.org)
* Install an organic waste system that does not encourage rats – there are simple, cost effective organic waste systems that have a hard-plastic drum that rotates and is rat and rodent proof. These run around $100 and are available at Canadian Tire. They are minimum work to maintain and make excellent dirt for the garden.

**4. Transport**

Reducing the amount that vehicles are used by your guests will have a direct impact on the carbon footprint on Hornby Island. The following are a few ideas:

**Vehicles** – Limit the number of vehicles in your short-term rental to one per allowable bedroom. Provide adequate parking to ensure all vehicles are parked on your property and not on the road.

**Bikes** – Encourage the use of bikes and consider providing secure bike storage at your short-term rental.

**Blue Bus** – Ensure your guests are aware of the Blue Bus and supply them with the bus schedule. This is a great way to limit the number of vehicles on the road and help the environment. [www.Hornbybus.com](http://www.Hornbybus.com)

**Roads** – Provide information about sharing the road and thinking about what is needed before driving. Many people drive to the co-op two and 3 three times a day. Consider walking or biking there instead.

**Parking** -Parking is at a premium at the on Hornby Island. Ask you guests to park close (3 feet) from another vehicle at in all parking lots, especially at the Co-op and in the Parks, as there are no painted parking stalls.

**Ferries** – the ferries are in high demand during peak seasons, however there are times that are not as busy during the week/day. Consider assisting your guests in learning about those times and switching their arrival and departure times accordingly. This may mean your check in check out days would change. If your guests are in a line up ensure that they are respectful of the neighbours and do not run their vehicles unnecessarily.

**Walking** – Consider providing your guests with all the places they can walk to in the vicinity of your home. Although many guests may come to the island to walk or ride their bike, they may not know of many of the areas available. Ensure road safety information is provided to guests so they understand sharing the road rules on Hornby Island.

**5. Fire Prevention**

Fire is a very important consideration on Hornby Island. It is very important that all guests understand the fragility of the Island to fire. Install a certified fire extinguisher outside near your BBQ area and inside in the kitchen and near the fireplace (if there is one). Also ensure there are outside working hoses, in an easily accessible area, and limit fires to a proper fire pit and check to make sure fires are permitted on the island. Discuss the concerns about beach fires with your guests.

When you decided to do lawn maintenance remember to check to make sure equipment that sets of sparks (lawnmowers, weed-eaters etc.) are permitted to be run on the Island before you start on the lawn or cutting wood.

**6. Parks**

There are many beautiful parks on Hornby Island, and many have different rules depending on the area. In addition, some parks like Tribune Bay Provincial Park have challenges with parking, illegal fires, alcohol consumption and dogs. Ensuring your guests understand the challenges and the rules will benefit everyone.

**ECONOMIC**

**1. Give back to the local community**

Investing profits back into your local community can help preserve and protect the area your guests are visiting. This could be anything from shopping locally, to using local contractors and labourers, to volunteering on one of the many committees, or donating money to a local cause.

**2. Hire local staff**

Besides investing money into the community, your rental can also be a source of income for local people. At some point or another, you’re likely to need [cleaning](https://www.lodgify.com/blog/vacation-rental-cleaning-checklist/) services, a gardener, plumber, general contractor. So, before going to some outside of Hornby Island, search to see if there are any locals who can do the work for you.

**3. Source local supplies**

Sourcing items for your home is another way to support the economic pillar of sustainability. Whether it’s handcrafted furniture, reused items from the free store for your home, or fresh fruit and delicacies for your guest welcome basket – try to source these supplies locally to further reinforce your support of the community. In addition, leave information about where these items come from – so your guests can check them out whilst visiting your area.

**4. Share information**

Be sure to have the annual Hornby/Denman Visitor Guide in the house. There’s a good map, and it helps direct visitors to our many home-based businesses, restaurants, artist studios, recreational options, wineries, etc. Most guests are very appreciative to be told where, and when, music events and “happenings” are going on.

**SOCIAL**

**1. Purchase locally**

*Buying local* helps the *local* economy on Hornby Island. When you *buy local*, it stays *local*. More jobs will be created on the island, the Hornby Island will prosper, and people will be more connected to their own community. Your money helps local businesses and your neighbours.

Supply your short-term rental with items produced and made from residents of Hornby Island and ensure that you have contact information for those businesses available for your guests to purchase from the Island.

**2. Inform guests about local projects on Hornby Island**

If there is a local project of any kind, make it known to your guests as they may be willing to take part, too. If guests know they are doing good for the local community they are living in for a short time, not only can it help enhance their overall stay, it can also influence them to share stories of their sustainable travel experience when they get back home. This could be anything from a beach clean-up to supporting busking musicians.