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State approves Lee County's amended minimum standards for vacation rentals

Fort Myers, FL, May 21, 2020 – The state today approved an amended version of Lee County's minimum standards regarding out-of-state reservations.

Pursuant to Executive Order 20-123 signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis on May 15, and effective immediately, the following amended measures are required as minimum standards for vacation rentals throughout Lee County that are accepting reservations and guests for any length of stay (see the strikethrough language replaced with the underlined language):

- ~~Should open and operate for in-state reservations only (i.e. only Florida residents.)~~
- Vacation rentals reservations and stays will be allowed from all U.S. states with COVID-19 case rates less than 700 cases/100K residents. COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population by state can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html> then hover your cursor over the vacationer's state of residence. A box will open with information including cases per 100,000 population.
- ~~Should~~ Shall prohibit rentals to persons traveling internationally. ~~or from a state or locality with a substantial community spread of COVID-19.~~
- Shall allow adequate time between the conclusion of a guest stay and the check-in of the next guest stay for appropriate cleaning and sanitation.
- Shall clean and disinfect all frequently-touched surfaces in the property between each guest stay.
- Shall wash all linens, dishware, and other service items available for use by guests between each guest rental.
- Shall provide sufficient soap and surface sanitation supplies for guests to utilize in the vacation rental property during the guest's rental period.
- Shall ensure adequate safety protocols are in place and publicly displayed, in line with CDC guidance, regarding shared or multi-residence amenities such as pools, gyms, and other communal spaces.
- Shall follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting their facility, per the CDC site www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

In anticipation of the state's decision, the Lee Board of County Commissioners at their regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday had approved the measures. Secretary Halsey Beshears of the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) notified the county Wednesday of the approval of the county's originally submitted plan for vacation rentals.

When the county sent DBPR its original plan for review, it did so quickly in an effort to allow vacation rental property owners to reopen as soon as possible. The county now has had the opportunity to review Vacation Rental Safety Plans that have been approved for several other counties.

"Some of them use language that does a much better job of capturing the spirit of the statements made by Gov. DeSantis during his press conference on Friday, May 15, regarding out-of-state reservations," County Manager Roger Desjarlais said.

The county received word from Secretary Breshears today, May 21, that Lee County's plan is amended.

Enforcement and regulation falls under DBPR, which has an Emergency Information Page at www.myfloridalicense.com/emergency.

Lee County updates, information and documents can be viewed at www.leegov.com/covid-19.