

## **Backpacker and Hostelling**

### **Definition**

A backpacker and or hostel is an accommodation facility that provides communal facilities, including dormitories yet may offer a range of alternative sleeping arrangements

Only establishments that cater for transient guests (travelling public) will qualify for grading.

### **Minimum requirements for backpacker and hostel classification**

#### **1. General**

##### **1.1 Safety and security**

All reasonable precaution should be taken to secure the personal safety of guests and prevent damage to or theft of their possessions. A high degree of general safety and security should be maintained.

Safe keeping facilities, administered by management, should be available for guests use. Guests should be informed about these safe keeping facilities on arrival.

Information on procedures in the event of an emergency and procedures for summoning assistance should be clearly displayed, including after hours details. This information should be in English and if possible multilingual (depending on the establishment's market).

If possible proprietors or their representatives should be available during guests' arrival and departure and at other reasonable times. An adequate alternative should be made if this is not possible. There should be a responsible person on call 24-hours a day.

Where applicable there should be adequate levels of lighting (electrical or other) for guest safety and comfort in all public areas, including stairwells and car parks.

All single and double guest rooms with entry doors to a common area or the exterior should be equipped with a locking device that can lock the door when leaving the room, as well as lock the door from the inside, when the guest is in the room. Surface mounted slide-bolts may be considered to be appropriate locking devices in certain properties. This does not necessarily apply to dormitories.

Once registered, guests should have access to the establishment at all times unless restrictions are previously notified. It is acceptable for a key or security code to be issued.

### 1.2 **Cleanliness and comfort**

Cleanliness should be maintained throughout the backpacker or hostel.

The backpacker or hostel should be comfortable and fit for the purpose intended.

### 1.3 **Statutory obligations**

All premises are expected to comply with all relevant statutory and local government regulations. The onus is on the proprietor to ensure that the backpacker or hostel complies with all relevant regulations and laws and has the relevant documentation to prove as such. Assessors may request that relevant documentation, certificates, etc be presented at the time of the assessment. This could include:

- Business registration entitling the establishment to operate legally (including tax status.).
- Provincial registration (if applicable).
- Public liability insurance.
- Compliance with local authority regulations including;
- Fire safety certificates.
- Compliance with building regulations – in particular with regard to accessibility.
- Hygiene regulations.

### 1.4 **Access**

There should be no discrimination to accepting guests based on their race, citizenship or nationality, gender, ethnicity, physical or mental condition, etc.

However, notwithstanding the above, management has the right to refuse access in the interest of other users of the hostel or backpackers.

Establishments should be open every day of the year, unless closed for refurbishment or offers only seasonal accommodation.

Appropriate service and facilities should be available on all days that the establishment is open (unless advertised otherwise).

### 1.5 **Courtesy**

Courtesy should be shown to guests at all times. Staff should be clean, appropriately dressed, helpful and attending to guests as their highest priority.

Guest complaints should be dealt with courteously and promptly.

There should be reasonable levels of local tourist information available, particularly with regard to local places of interest and activities available.

### **1.6 Marketing, reservations and pricing**

There should be friendly and efficient service appropriate to the style of the establishment.

All enquiries, requests, reservations, correspondence and complaints should be handled promptly and courteously.

It should be made clear to all visitors what is included in the prices quoted for accommodation, meals and refreshments, including service charge, surcharges, levies, etc.

The property's pricing structure should be available on request. All prices must include VAT.

Guests must be notified if the price agreed at the time of booking has changed.

Full details of the establishment's cancellation policy and any unique in-house policy e.g. no children under 12 should be made clear to guests at the time of booking.

The amenities, facilities and services provided by the establishment should be described fairly to all visitors and prospective visitors, whether by advertisement, brochure, website, verbal communication or other means.

### **1.7 Information for hirers**

Full details of the accommodation including the maximum number of beds in each dormitory, as well as the type of beds available i.e. singles, bunk beds etc should be provided on request.

## **2. Buildings**

### **2.1 Exterior**

All grounds and gardens under the control of the operator should be neat and appropriate.

The exterior of the property must be well maintained in a sound and clean condition.

## 2.2 **Maintenance**

The interior and exterior of the building or buildings including all fittings, fixtures and furnishings must be maintained in a sound and clean condition and must be fit for the purpose intended.

## 3. **Bedrooms**

### 3.1 **Housekeeping**

All bedrooms should be kept clean.

All linen provided to guests, including duvet covers, should be changed for each new guest.

All bed linen, including duvet covers, should be changed at least every 7 days. This period may be extended for environmental purposes and with the guest's consent. Soiled linen should be changed as soon as possible.

### 3.2 **Bedroom or dormitory size**

All bedrooms and dormitories should have sufficient space to allow freedom of movement for guests and access to all furniture in the room.

It should be possible to open all used relevant doors and drawers fully.

### 3.3 **Beds**

All beds are to be of sound condition.

All mattresses are to be comfortable, of sprung interior, foam or similar.

Single beds should comfortably accommodate an average sized adult and double beds 2 average sized adults.

### 3.4 **Bedding**

All bedding should be clean.

At a minimum all occupied beds should be fitted with a bottom sheet, pillow and pillowcase. The fee for this linen should be included in the bed tariff.

### 3.5 **Bedside tables**

There should be at least one bedside table in each single and double room. No bedside tables are necessary in dormitories. A dressing or writing table may double as a bedside table.

### 3.6 **Windows and lighting**

In each guest room, including dormitories, there should be at least one window to allow natural light and adequate ventilation. If the window cannot be opened, a ventilation system must be provided.

All bedrooms should have adequate and appropriate lighting (fit for purpose).

There should be at least one bedside or bedhead light in each single or double room. A double bed may have one shared bedhead or bedside light. Bedside lights are not necessary in dormitories.

All bulbs should have a shade or cover (unless decorative).

Emergency lighting should be provided (i.e. torch, candle, candlestick and matches).

### 3.7 **Curtains**

Curtains, blinds or shutters should be provided on all windows including glass panels and doors where required to afford both privacy and or the exclusion of light.

### 3.8 **Heating and cooling**

Typical climatic conditions experienced in the region of the establishment will be considered when determining the minimum requirements for heating and or cooling.

### 3.9 **Flooring**

Flooring may vary considerably and any fit-for-purpose flooring may be appropriate. Ease of cleaning and hygiene should be considered when evaluating flooring.

**3.1 Miscellaneous**

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Each bedroom and dormitory should have a waste bin.

If not provided in an en-suite bathroom all single and double rooms must have a mirror.

Smoking should not be permitted in dormitories. The smoking policies of the backpacker or hostel should be at minimum governed by the applicable South African laws.

**4. Bath and shower rooms**

**4.1 Shared bathrooms**

There should be at least one bath or shower to every 12 resident guests and 1 toilet with washbasin to every 10 resident guests.

Where appropriate there should be privacy between the sexes for washing, showering and toilet facilities and as far as possible between members of the same sex. All toilet, bath and shower rooms or cubicles should be lockable from the inside.

All toilets, sinks, showers and other plumbing should be in good working order and free from trapping surfaces e.g. cracks, chips, broken toilet seats.

**4.2 Housekeeping**

All bathrooms must be cleaned daily.

If provided all guest bathroom linen should be changed at least every 7 days. This period may be extended for environmental purposes and with the guest's consent. Soiled linen should be changed as soon as possible.

**4.3 Bathroom size**

All bathrooms should have sufficient space to allow freedom of movement for guests

and access to all fittings.

#### 4.4 **Fixtures and fittings**

Each shower or bath unit should provide privacy for the user and should have:

- Bath or shower
- Clean, running water (available at reasonable times)
- At least one clothes hook

Each toilet unit should have:

- Toilet
- Toilet roll holder and toilet paper
- Waste bin (covered)
- Adequate ventilation (e.g. an extractor fan or opening window)

All bathrooms should have mirrors for guest use. These mirrors should preferably be positioned above a washbasin.

#### 4.5 **Lighting and windows**

All bathrooms should be well lit with a light switch near the entrance to the bathroom.

For guest privacy purposes all windows in the bathroom (if present) should either be tinted, opaque or of other glass that ensures guest privacy. Alternatively, covered with an opaque curtain, blind or shutter.

### 5. **Public areas and general**

#### 5.1 **Living or dining room areas**

If self-catering facilities are provided in the backpacker or hostel a guest eating area (dining room) should be available. The size of this area should be adequate, taking into consideration the total number of guests that can be accommodated at the backpacker or hostel.

All backpackers or hostels should provide a lounge and or relaxing area. If an eating or dining area is provided this may suffice as a lounge or relaxing area.

In an appropriate climate the living and or dining area may be substituted with an appropriately furnished outdoor area. If it is the only area available for guest relaxation, then it should be covered to protect guests from rain, sunshine, etc.

## 5.2 Food and beverage – general

If a food and or beverage service is provided, staff should demonstrate adequate levels of product knowledge and provide efficient service.

All food must be hygienically stored, prepared and presented.

## 5.3 Communal kitchen, kitchens

A self-catering communal kitchen may be provided. If no restaurant is available at the backpacker or hostel or within the vicinity of the property, it is recommended that a self-catering communal kitchen be provided.

All guest kitchens must be cleaned daily.

If a communal kitchen or kitchens are provided all fixtures, furniture, furnishings, crockery and cutlery must be in acceptable condition and be adequate to provide for approximately a ¼ of the maximum number of occupants at any one time.

In each communal kitchen:

- There should be adequate storage or shelving space for crockery, cutlery, kitchen and cleaning equipment.
- There should be sufficient hot plates on which to cook meals. An oven or microwave could also be appropriate but not essential (in some circumstances a braai may be an appropriate substitute for an oven). Hot plates and ovens should be clean, in good condition and functioning properly.
- There should be a refrigerator (electric or gas).
- There should be a sink equipped with a draining board and (running) water supply.
- There should be a facility available for boiling water (kettle, geyser, etc).
- There should be at least one hygienic working surface and storage space suitable for food.
- There should be an open window or appropriate ventilation system.
- A covered waste disposal bin should be provided.
- There should be a suitable fire extinguisher readily available.
- Minimum kitchen inventory provided in Annexure A.

## 5.4 Ventilation

All public rooms or areas, passages and staircases must be adequately ventilated.

All living rooms or areas should have at least one window opening directly into the open air. If the window cannot be opened, a ventilation system must be provided.

**5.5 Power supply**

If appropriate electricity should be provided (not necessarily mains supply). Where electricity it is not available, this must be clearly stated. Where electricity is available, sufficient conveniently located power sockets for the safe use of electrical equipment should be provided.

**5.6 Clothes drying and hanging facilities**

Facilities for drying and hanging wet clothing should be provided (this need not be in the dormitories or bedrooms).

**5.7 Telephones**

Guests should have access to a public or private telephone (if applicable).

Where telephones are provided guests should be informed of charges on request.

**6. Additional requirements for 4- and 5-Star backpackers or hostels**

**Ambience**

For 5-star backpackers or hostels a higher level of general ambience, spaciousness and guest comfort will be required in all areas of the facility.

Backpackers and hostels without electricity may achieve a 4- or 5-star grading. Additional requirements (listed below) will be reconsidered in areas where there is no electricity or where a specific ambience is preferred. In addition, assessors may be flexible on these requirements in special circumstances.

All 5-star backpackers and hostels should provide guests with hot water for showering purposes. It is possible that hot water is only available only at certain times of the day.

**Bathrooms**

All communal bathrooms should be equipped with hand soap and hand drying

facilities. Hygiene should be considered when determining appropriate soap and drying facilities.

There should be at least one bath or shower to every 8 resident guests and 1 toilet with washbasin to every 8 resident guests.

All guests occupying private rooms should be provided with individual towel and soap upon arrival at the backpacker or hostel.

### **Bedrooms**

Bunk beds are to be a maximum of 2 sleeping positions high.

Dormitories in 5-star backpackers or hostels should be more spacious and have fewer beds or bunks than a typical 4-star dormitory.

A ladder or equivalent should be provided for guests to climb to the top bunk.

In a 5-star backpacker or hostel a full range of linen should be provided for each bed (including dormitory beds). Including a duvet and duvet cover or good quality blanket and top sheet.

All private rooms in a 4- and 5-star backpacker or hostel should have a full range of linen (bottom sheet, pillow, pillowcase, duvet and duvet cover or blanket and top sheet). Private rooms in 5-star backpackers or hostels are expected to have 2 pillows per sleeping position.

### **Kitchens**

The following additional appliances should be provided in communal kitchens:

- Freezer or large freezer section in fridges
- Toaster
- Microwave oven
- Lockable food storage facilities
- Hand soap
- Range of herbs and spices

An iron and ironing board should be provided in the communal kitchen, the laundry or drying area. Washing machines (these may be coin operated) should be available. Ideally, tumble drying facilities should be available at a 5-star backpacker or hostel. Alternatively guests should have relatively easy access to laundry facilities or service (provided in-house or outsourced).

**Annexure A (Kitchen equipment, cutlery, crockery - minimum requirements)**

**Per ¼ sleeping position:**

- 1 Knife
- 1 Fork
- 1 Tea spoon
- 1 Dessert spoon
- 1 Large plate
- 1 Teacup and saucer (or mug)
- 1 Bowl
- 1 Tumbler/glass

**Per kitchen:**

- Fridge
- Bread/chopping board
- Kettle
- Bread knife
- Carving/sharp knife
- Wooden spoon (stirring spoon)
- Egg lifter
- Tin opener
- Selection of pots and pans
- Dish cloth
- Braai tongs (if braai provided)
- Dishwashing liquid (if un-serviced)
- Dust pan and broom/brush (if un-serviced)