

CheckSafetyFirst

Hotels that care about your health

TEN TOP TIPS TO STAYING SAFE IN PRIVATE HOLIDAY HOMES AND VILLAS

Due to the rise in low cost flights and do-it-yourself holiday websites, staying in private holiday villas has become a popular choice for holidaymakers. However, accidents can happen when you least expect them. To provide holidaymakers with peace of mind, Check Safety First has compiled a list of ten top tips to ensure a safe holiday experience without the worry.

1. **Check it out** – When you arrive at your holiday home, take the time to walk around and evaluate the property. If you have small children or elderly relatives, look for accidents waiting to happen. For example, are there steep or uneven steps? Holes or pits in the garden or immediately surrounding the property? Is there a large panel of clear glass that children could run into?
2. **Fire, what fire?** – Fires are a major threat to properties and claim many lives because they remain undetected until it's too late. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to check that the property has smoke detectors in prominent locations and test that they are working correctly. If they are either not present or not working correctly, be extra vigilant and report the problem at the earliest opportunity.
3. **Which way is out?** – Should a fire occur in your own house it is highly likely that you would know exactly what route to take by instinct. In your holiday home, this will not be the case. In the confusion of a smoke-filled and unfamiliar environment it is possible that valuable time could be wasted taking the wrong route to escape the building. Take a few minutes to evaluate the quickest and safest route out of the building, avoiding areas with a lot of electrical equipment.
4. **Sparks flying** – One of the main causes of fire is faulty or poorly maintained electrical equipment. To avoid this threat, check the condition of all electrical appliances and resist the urge to overload plug sockets and adapters. Do not try to fix faulty equipment yourself as this could lead to electrocution. Instead, report your concerns to the owner or manager of the property.
5. **Cleanliness is close to godliness** – Holiday homes will typically be cleaned before your arrival. However, it is advisable to check that this has been done properly. Areas for food preparation should be given extra priority. Give the kitchen an extra scrub before you use it, as you do not know how long ago it was previously cleaned.

6. **Carbon Monoxide, the silent killer** – Where a property has gas for heating or cooking it is important to be aware of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Ensure that these areas are well ventilated and, if you have any doubts about the standard of maintenance of the equipment, do not use it without confirming its safety with the owner or property management.

Be aware of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, which include: tiredness, drowsiness, headaches, giddiness, nausea, vomiting, pains in the chest, breathlessness, stomach pains, erratic behaviour and visual problems.

7. **Making a splash** – Having a swimming pool is a great way to cool down in the sun. However, in some cases it can pose an unacceptable level of risk to children. Tragically, a number of deaths occur each year when children fall into swimming pools without being noticed. Ideally, all swimming pools should have barriers or alarms to stop children entering unsupervised. If this is not the case and the pool is exposed, ensure that children are supervised at all times in this area.
8. **Admire views safely** – You may be lucky enough to have a balcony at your holiday home to admire the views. However, attention must be given to balconies before young children are allowed onto them. Inspect the balcony for furniture that may be easily climbed on by children allowing them to lean over the balcony edge. Push furniture away from the railings and ensure that children are supervised at all times when on the balcony.
9. **Locking up** – The safety of your belongings is important. When leaving the property check that all windows and doors are locked securely. Any security problems should be identified early on and reported to the property owner to enable them to rectify the problem as soon as possible.
10. **Car trouble** – Holidaymakers staying in rented accommodation are more likely to hire a car than those staying in hotels. When hiring a car, it is essential that you check the oil, water and tyre pressure is all correct in then vehicle before setting off on a journey. If you identify any problems with the vehicle, report it at once to the car rental company.