

Hotel merchant guide to secure online bookings.

Each hotel merchant accepting online bookings faces distinct risks and fraud challenges and we're here to help you keep your online transactions more secure. Here are some tips to help you better detect and deter fraud more effectively.

5 higher fraud risk bookings.

Be sure to screen bookings with the following characteristics.

1. Fraudsters tend to exploit **shortened timeframes** by requesting for same day or short timeframe check-ins that are less than 4 days from the booking date.
2. **Third party bookings** tend to be riskier as the PayPal Account holder or cardholder is not part of the travelling individuals.
3. Identify the **origination countries and IP addresses** where risk exposure is the greatest.
4. **Large-value bookings** may increase your exposure to fraud.
5. Be mindful of bookings from free or suspicious email addresses, or the IP address and billing address don't match.

Fraud prevention tips to consider

Set minimum check-in timeframe

Establish a minimum timeframe from the date of booking to the date of check-in to give yourself enough time to verify bookings; as well as discourage short timeframe bookings.

Gather and retain booking details

Gather booking information and maintain a database that includes the key details of bookings (name, email address, IP address, telephone number, transaction amount and time etc.). You could maintain a 'positive list' (frequent visitors with no fraud history) and a 'blacklist' (previously identified fraudulent transactions and prior fraud-related chargebacks) to facilitate future identification.

Verify bookings

You can verify incoming bookings with your list manually or use an automated system to flag suspicious transactions for further review. Do note that if you are collecting and retaining information about your customers, you will need to ensure you comply with all applicable data protection and privacy laws.

Confirm details with the customers

If a booking appears suspicious, contact the customer by phone or email to verify information. Be cautious if the phone number is disconnected, incorrect, or out of service. If a fraudulent booking has taken place you are more often than not unable to contact the lead customer stated. If you're still unsure about a booking, ask the customer to send a copy of their passport to verify his or her identity. The chances of a fraudster having this information will be slim.

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