

How to find a short-term rental

Thanks for joining the VacationRentalAPI team. We want your work with us to be successful and rewarding. Please review this guide for some pointers on how to find addresses for listings, and how to avoid common sources of error.

What's different about VacationRentalAPI HITs?

Two things you need to know about our HITs: We solve hard problems and our system requires perfect data to succeed. When you find an address, that address is sent a letter informing them of short-term rental regulations in their town and, if they don't already have their permits in order, letting them know how to do so. These letters need to go to the right place.

This means:

- Don't expect that you can solve every HIT.
- If you aren't sure of information, never submit it. No best guesses.
- We are quick to remove qualifications when incorrect information is submitted.
- A typo in the address is just as bad as finding the wrong address.

Think you're up for this? Let's get to the detailed advice...

How accurate are the coordinates I see from the listing?

Airbnb introduces about 100 yards of error to home locations. Homeaway and Flipkey typically but not always provide the exact location.

Can I trust all the information from the listing?

Usually, but not always. Hosts can change any piece of data. The information is usually accurate, but it's always possible that the host is trying to hide their location. Also, if the host's address isn't recognized, it will often give coordinates for the center of town.

What is the best way to find a listing?

For Flipkey or Homeaway, start with the coordinates. These are often right on the property. Can you match this house to photos from the listing?

For Airbnb, you'll need to be more creative. Is there any match between the host name and tax records? When you google the owner's name, street and city, do you get any hints to the owner's full name or address? Can you travel down their street on streetview and see a house which matches photos from the listing?

I have a perfect match between the host's name or phone number and an address. Am I done?

No, don't make this common mistake. If the host is a property manager or relative, they may not live at the property. But, you at least have a solid lead. Go check it out in streetview or see if there are Zillow photos available.

What are the most useful research tools?

- Google Maps aerial and streetview.
- Bing Maps Birds Eye and Streetside
- Zillow for indoor photos of homes that have been sold in the past few years. (The furniture will not be the same, but the kitchen usually is.)
- The county tax assessor website for precise locations of addresses

Nothing I tried worked. Now what?

Time to get creative.

- Read through the reviews of the site as well as the host's description for clues.
- Try a reverse-image search on Google for the host's profile photo. If you're lucky, they used the same photo on Facebook, Twitter or a business website.

I'm pretty sure I have the right place, but I can't be totally sure. What should I do?

Return the hit. Never submit a guess. Even a few incorrect addresses can undermine our credibility with our customers. We are committed to deliver 100% data accuracy, so we are quick to remove qualifications when we find incorrect addresses.

The listing seems to have been taken down. What should I do now?

We've already extracted a lot of information from the listing. Is it enough to solve the HIT? If so, submit it as usual. Otherwise, return the HIT.

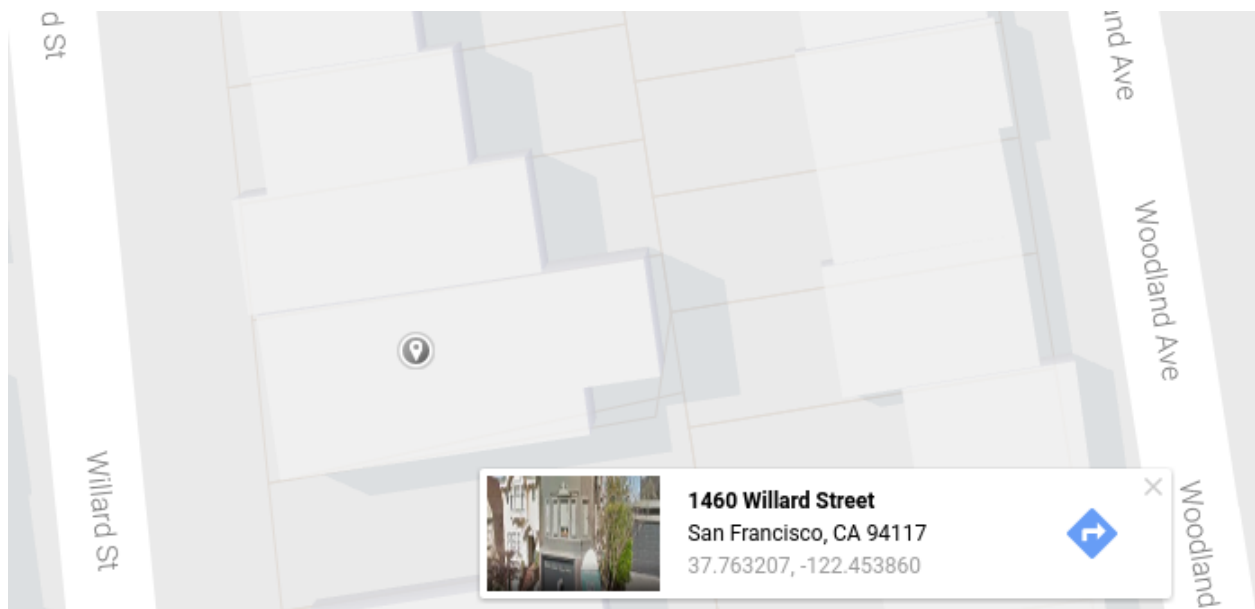
How accurate do the coordinates need to be?

They should be inside the parcel. We plan to compare the coordinates you provide with parcel boundary data. Coordinates should not be in the the street.

What are the most common mistakes?

- Misplaced coordinates.

A good method for finding coordinates is to click inside of Google Maps. A box will pop up showing the coordinates and Google's best guess for the address.



- **Typos.**

Wrong addresses are wrong addresses, but it's terrible to have to remove qualifications for careless errors. We've seen mistakes copy-pasting, accidentally dropping a digit from a house number and submitting the right street address but the wrong city. Be careful and don't rush.

The same goes for coordinates. Be careful not to drop a digit or a minus sign. It may feel like a small error, but it causes big issues for our customers.

- **Finding a clue and not validating.**

Sometimes the host is a property manager. Finding their home address would obviously be a false lead. Other times, the phone number might lead to a business address or some other location. These mistakes can be easily caught by checking streetview, aerial photos or photos from zillow.

Be careful too with unit numbers in apartment buildings. Many units look alike. Don't submit a unit number because they happen to have Zillow photos that look similar.