

FREE
Insider Guide



Top Tips for Finding Good **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT** on the Costa del Sol





Top Tips to Finding Good Property Management

Welcome to our free Guide.

We hope you find it useful when making your decision about which company should care for your property investment.

Introduction

Whatever your reasons for owning a property on the Costa del Sol, it should be a very rewarding and happy experience, but looking after it while you're away, especially if it's for long periods of time, can prove to be stressful. One of the most effective ways to ease the strain of owning in Spain is find yourself a trusted professional Property Management company to do the job for you.

This **Free Guide** is designed to help you make an informed decision when deciding what your next step is regarding your property in Spain, and most of all to save you time, save you money and avoid unnecessary stress and heartache!

1. What is Property Management?

In simple terms, you are contracting a company to look after, maintain and take care of your property.

A signed agreement with a Property Management company should give you peace of mind and enable you to relax and enjoy owning a home in Spain, knowing it's in the hands of dedicated professionals who will care for your property as if it were their own.

The property management company you choose should never settle for second best in terms of service and should always be willing to go that extra mile to make sure you're happy and receiving the service you expect.

2. Why Do I Need Property Management?

Whether you already own a property on the Costa del Sol or you're thinking of buying, there are many reasons why you need property management if you are regularly absent from the property. Just as with your main residence, all properties require regular care and attention to counter the acts of weather and time.

There's no doubt the Costa del Sol is blessed with a mild climate, but your Spanish home will still need maintenance and care to combat the worst the elements can throw at it. Similarly, internal problems such as plumbing leaks, pest infestation or damp can occur without warning to even the newest of properties and the worry is that if your property is left empty for most of the year, such problems might go unnoticed for too long.





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There is also the financial side to consider. In Spain, in order to receive electricity, water and other utility services you'll need a Spanish bank account to pay your bills. But what happens if for any reason your account runs low, an unexpected large bill arrives or bills go unpaid? Who'll be able to contact the utility companies in Spanish and sort it out?

Additionally, unoccupied properties are often singled out as 'soft targets' for burglars who've been known to clean out a holiday home's entire contents in the blink of an eye. And let's face it, the last thing you'll want when you arrive for a relaxing break in your Spanish home is to find an unwelcome and perhaps costly surprise.

If you intend to let friends and family use your property for holidays, you will want them to arrive and find the property clean and well-maintained and have the reassurance that there is someone they can contact for either advice or help, enabling them to have a relaxed, easy time. According to Spanish Law, all paying guests need to be registered with the police which a property management company can do for you.

Of course, friends and neighbours may offer to keep an eye on your property while you're away, or you may find someone locally who's prepared to look after it for a fee. This type of arrangement can work well when all is going well, however, it's Murphy's Law that problems will occur, and they usually do at the most inconvenient time. So the key question you have to ask yourself is; if it comes to the crunch, who would best care for my property and be equipped to handle any emergency, whatever it may be 365 days a year?

Finding a reliable Property Management company with a good reputation is a sensible move, and our advice is only deal with professionals.

3. How to Find a Good Property Management Company?

The easiest way to find companies offering property management services is to go online and search the web. Asking friends or neighbours if they can recommend any good companies is also an excellent approach. You'll soon draw up a shortlist of potential candidates, but any Property Management company worth its salt will offer a range of different services, so which one of them to choose?

4. Key Factors to Consider when Choosing a Property Management Company

One of the most important factors is the issue of cost - beware of false economies. Certainly where Property Management is concerned, value for money does not translate into the cheapest option - check that you will be getting value for your money compared to the level of service you'll be receiving.

Any property management company or individual charging a low fee will not necessarily have the resources or perhaps inclination to sustain even the most basic level of services required to maintain your property to the standard you expect. Likewise, they're probably not able to maximise the rental potential of your property or deal with any real emergency - big or small.

Just as important is the "feel good" factor. Go have a coffee with them in their offices if possible. That will



give you a sense of both the company and the people they employ. If they have long-standing, happy employees, it follows that the company is creating a positive environment, which in turn will filter through to you – the client.

A first-class property management company will fully understand your investment in the property and its contents means a lot to you and will provide a high level of service, competent and caring staff and financial and legal resources to protect you and your investment.

A couple of points to consider when placing your property in the hands of others are:

Legality – to protect your consumer rights, choose a company that is 100% legal within the Spanish Law. It should be properly registered as a Spanish S.L. company and have a C.I.F registration number, which is a license to trade and has the capacity to issue you with official invoices which include I.V.A (Spanish VAT).

All staff employed by the company should have legal employment contracts and the company should have comprehensive public liability insurance, as well as employer's liability insurance to cover their staff while visiting your property. Unofficial outfits and "one man bands" can be instantly shut down by local authorities and you may find yourself without a legal leg to stand on, or worse still, legally liable should any serious problems occur that are related to your property.

Accessibility – check that the company has offices on the Costa del Sol. Only a company with local offices with local staff can respond quickly to any situation that may arise.

All their staff should be fully bi-lingual, and having met them in person, you should come away feeling satisfied that they're absolutely the right people for the job and that you'd be able to rely on them at all times, especially in times of crisis when it really matters.

Key management - check that they have a secure area and system for the management and storage of your keys.

Level of care - personal attention, professionalism and value for money all equal a high standard of care for your property. If you are dissatisfied with their services at any time, it is important to have the facility to meet and talk through the problems.

5. Effective communications

Although the management company you opt for should take a traditionally old-fashioned hands-on approach to physically caring for your home every month, they should also be able to keep you informed in the easiest possible way. So look for a company that provides an interactive web-based property management service - a private, secure password-controlled area for you on their website featuring regular updates on the status of your home, which you can access from any computer, anywhere in the world, at any time of the day or night.

The person within the company directly responsible for the care of your home should also be readily available by phone, fax or email during working hours to handle any queries you may have. An emergency helpline should also be available.



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6. Regular inspection visits

The property management company should send a trained inspector to your home to carry out checks of both the exterior and interior for any wear and tear, preferably twice a month, but at least once a month. The inspector should open all the windows and doors to air your rooms, make sure your electrical appliances, plumbing and sanitary facilities are in good working order and the furniture, fixtures and fittings are exactly as they should be. And of course, before they leave they should make absolutely sure your property remains fully secure until their next visit.

7. Detailed status reports

Each inspection should be followed up with a detailed status report, which should be easily accessible online. The report should tell you literally everything you need to know about the state of your property. Any problems that may have arisen since the last inspection such as damp, water leaks or storm damage should be highlighted with photos if necessary, along with any other issues that need to be dealt with. Recommended action and quotes should be supplied from trusted qualified local tradesmen and, once approved, repair or maintenance work carried out speedily and without fuss.

8. Interactive management

In addition to regular feedback about the state of your home, your property management company should provide you with an interactive online tool via which you can oversee the management of your Spanish property from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. Full account management facilities, for example, via which you can securely receive and make all payments related to the upkeep of your property online are vitally important. A personal booking calendar is also a must, allowing you to fill in the dates you or your guests will be staying in your home so your property management company can automatically arrange for your home to be properly cleaned, the beds made up and the hot water put on, etc, before you arrive.

The bookings calendar should also ensure that if you rent your property out for holiday lets, you'll be able to see 'at a glance' when your property will be occupied. Furthermore, the bookings calendar should automatically tell your management company to arrange cleaning and laundry between rental periods, without you having to worry about it.

9. Maintenance and repairs

If your property management company are keeping your home in prime condition at all times, it means you can relax and enjoy your stay when you or your guests visit. After all, the last thing you want to be doing during your valuable leisure time in Spain is unblocking the pool filter, painting the terrace wall or sorting out a plumbing problem.

Your property management company should have the experience and the resources to make sure your home is always kept in tip-top condition and you should be able to request a range of maintenance and repair services online such as:





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- Special cleaning and laundry services
- Installation and maintenance of broadband Internet, satellite TV and air con
- General interior and exterior painting and decorating
- Plumbing and electrical work
- Interior and exterior tile polishing
- Garden and garden maintenance
- Pool cleaning and maintenance
- Refurbishment work
- Other additional ad hoc services such as satellite TV, Internet and air con installation

10. Housekeeping

Basic housekeeping services are a vital component in the successful management of any property, especially if the property is to be rented out or made available for guests to stay. It's a good idea to ask to see a list of their housekeeping services and so you can satisfy yourself they will be doing things to your liking. The range of housekeeping services should include:

- Automatic cleaning and laundry services for holiday visits
- Spring cleaning for linens, fabrics and furnishings
- Cleaning and refurbishment of curtains, upholstery and rugs
- Daily cleaning upon request
- A housekeep card like the ones found in Hotels, welcoming your guests.

11. Trouble-shooting and key holding

At some stage as a Spanish property owner, the chances are you'll need help and advice over and above the general management of your property. Your property management company's staff should be there to help resolve any issues you may have with local authorities, utility companies, property developers, lawyers, communities and other suppliers - things you may not have the time, language skills nor indeed the inclination to deal with yourself. For instance, your electricity or water may get cut off, or you want to install WiFi or Satellite TV in your home. You will most certainly require a property management company with Spanish-speaking staff who have the experience of handling such issues to resolve them quickly and efficiently.

Another important service to expect from your property management company is that they keep up to date with any new laws or legal and fiscal changes that affect you as a property owner in Spain, and in turn keep you advised and informed.

What's more, they should act as your secure key-holder and, upon your request, accompany tradesmen when they require access to your property. In addition, the company should supply keys to your guests upon arrival and have a 24-hour key safe in case of emergencies. A secure area and system for the management and storage of your keys is a must.

12. Rentals management

Although, there's no such thing as guaranteed rental income, renting your Spanish property can still be a





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great way to cover some of the costs associated with it. And if you're really lucky, it might even provide a welcome extra source of income too.

So if you're seriously thinking of renting your property out, choose a property management company that has an experienced rentals management division with expert bi-lingual staff and the resources to market your property correctly and help you maximise the potential rental income from your property. They should be able to offer sound practical advice, helping you decide your financial objectives and the number of weeks per year you can realistically expect to rent your property out. They should make recommendations about furnishing your home to make it suitable for rental purposes, if necessary.

They should prepare a full inventory of your home and its contents, take quality photographs/videos and write descriptions of the property and the surrounding area and feature them on their website and in advertising campaigns. Their website should be marketed effectively, making it easily accessible to the widest possible online audience and it must incorporate an easy-to-use booking system, so visitors to the site can browse, book and pay for their ideal holiday or long term rental accommodation online.

The company should create a guest manual to be left in your property packed full of useful local information for guests and above all, have the capability to manage the entire business of renting your property out – from finding suitable tenants, checking references, preparing legal contracts, taking bookings, collecting payment and paying your fees directly into your bank account to greeting guests on arrival and being there 24/7 throughout the period your property is occupied.

If you are seriously considering renting out your property in Spain, download our Free ***"Secrets of Successful Rentals"*** guide to benefit from a range of invaluable tips, designed to guide you through the whole rental process and get the best return of investment from your property.

SUMMARY

And so there you have it, your complete guide to finding a reputable property management company on the Costa del Sol. Armed with all the information we've outlined here you can now confidently go forth and choose the property management company that best suits your needs.

But before you do, perhaps you'd like to talk to us first. At ***HomeCarePropertyManagement***, we provide all these services and much, much more.

In fact, we're the No. 1 property management company on the Costa del Sol and have been for a number of years. Our friendly bi-lingual team is able to offer you a comprehensive yet flexible range of property management and maintenance services for villas, townhouses or apartments, plus a rentals management service with all the marketing resources and know-how to help maximise your potential rental income.

And because we offer unrivalled levels of personal care, virtually 100% of our clients renew their management contracts with us year on year, knowing they won't find the same level of professionalism and value for money from any other property management company.

If you'd like more information together with a quotation for managing your property, please call our office in La Cala de Mijas on **+34 952 83 95 95**, email us at ***info@homecarepm.com***, or you are very welcome to drop in and visit us!

