



Prepare for the Season

A complete operational guide to preparing your unit for Chicago's peak tourism market.

Chicago's peak season doesn't ease in — it hits fast.

Festivals, lakefront traffic, weddings, baseball, and weekend travel compress timelines quickly. Once calendars fill, flexibility disappears.

High occupancy magnifies small issues. Worn linens. Supply gaps. Weak batteries. Deferred maintenance. What feels "almost fine" in the off-season becomes operational disruption during stacked summer weekends.

Peak season doesn't create problems — it exposes them.

The goal now is simple: eliminate preventable friction, protect your margin, and position your property for consistent five-star performance.

At AYRC, we believe preparation prevents problems. Here is your **Complete Pre-Peak Season Checklist**.

1. Linen & Bedding Refresh

High occupancy means high linen turnover. Over time, sheets yellow, pillows flatten, towels thin, and mattress protectors' stain. Starting the busy season with worn inventory creates unnecessary stress — and preventable guest complaints.

Take time now to replace pillows, towels, and bedding before premium pricing, shipping delays, and back-to-back turnovers limit your flexibility.

Here are our TOP recommended products. These products are long-lasting, easy to clean, and give you the most bang for your buck:

- [Hotel-quality white or grey sheets](#)
- [Waterproof mattress protectors](#)
- [Plush white or grey bath towels](#) (bulk sets)
- [Replacement bed pillows](#) (FACTS: cheap pillows get bad reviews)

 **Pro Tip:** Keep at least **2–3 full backup linen sets per bed** during peak season.

2. Kitchen Inventory Audit

Peak season in Chicago means longer stays, larger groups, and more meals prepared onsite. The kitchen is one of the most reviewed areas of any short-term rental — and one of the easiest places for small issues to turn into complaints.

Now is the time to open every cabinet and assess condition, quantity, and consistency.

Confirm the following:

- **Matching plates and bowls for maximum occupancy + 2**
- **COMPLETE silverware set for maximum occupancy +2**
- At least 2 wine glasses per adult guest
- Scratch-free nonstick cookware
- Sharp, functional knives
- Clean and odor-free refrigerator
- **Fully functioning coffee maker**

If an item looks "*almost fine*," it likely won't hold up through peak season turnover.

High-impact replacements:

- Matching dinnerware sets
- Durable nonstick cookware
- Reliable Knife Set
- **HIGH-IMPACT RECOMMENDATION:** Replace plastic kitchen utensils with silicone. Plastic warps, stains, and holds bacteria over time. Silicone is heat-resistant, easier to sanitize, and performs better under high guest volume.
- **Backup coffee maker:** Source an inexpensive secondary unit locally (thrift stores are often a cost-effective option).

 **Pro Tip:** Summer guests cook more than winter guests. Assume heavier usage and plan inventory accordingly.

3. Smart Locks, Remotes & Electrical Check

Busy season is not the time for lockouts, dead remotes, or detector alerts. These are small issues that create immediate guest frustration — and urgent phone calls.

Proactive replacement is always better than reactive troubleshooting.

Before peak season begins:

- Replace smart lock batteries (regardless of current percentage)
- Replace all TV and accessory remote batteries
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (Chicago compliance is non-negotiable)
- Replace burnt or mismatched light bulbs (keep color temperature consistent)
- Test exterior lighting for evening arrivals

These items are inexpensive but highly visible when they fail.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Replace smart lock batteries at the start of peak season every year — not when they alert you.

📦 4. Bulk Supply & Toiletry Planning

Chicago's peak season compresses timelines. Weekend access is limited, vendor response slows, and pricing often increases. Bulk purchasing should be completed before volume ramps up.

This section is not about what is staged in the unit — it is about **ownership-level supply control**. Confirm you have adequate bulk inventory stored and organized for high turnover frequency.

Core bulk supplies:

- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Dishwasher pods
- Laundry detergent
- Trash bags (kitchen + bathroom)
- Hand soap refills
- Dish soap refills
- Body wash refills
- Shampoo & conditioner refills

Switching brands mid-season due to stock shortages creates inconsistency in presentation and can increase cost per unit. Select a standard and stay with it.

Busy Chicago weekends — festivals, sporting events, lakefront activity — reduce flexibility for emergency purchasing. Bulk planning now protects both margin and operations.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Purchase bulk supplies before peak season demand increases. Pricing and availability fluctuate significantly once summer volume begins.

💡 **BONUS Pro Tip:** Standardize brands and product types across properties. Consistency protects presentation, simplifies purchasing, and reduces mid-season decision fatigue.

🏠 5. Exterior & Outdoor Readiness

Chicago winters are hard on exterior spaces. Salt, wind, snow, and temperature swings leave visible wear that becomes noticeable once peak season traffic increases.

Before busy season begins, evaluate all outdoor areas as part of your revenue presentation — not just maintenance.

Inspect and address:

- Power wash entryways, patios, balconies, and walkways
- Remove salt residue and winter staining
- Clean and stabilize patio furniture

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- Inspect cushions for mildew or fading
- Service grills and confirm propane levels
- Test exterior lighting for evening arrivals
- Remove cobwebs from door frames, railings, and light fixtures
- Inspect window screens for tears

Outdoor spaces influence booking decisions significantly during Chicago's warmer months. Clean, maintained exteriors signal property quality before guests enter the unit.

 **Pro Tip:** Review your listing photos after exterior prep is complete. Updated summer-ready photos can directly impact booking performance.

6. Preventative Maintenance Reset

Peak season is not the time to discover deferred maintenance.

Chicago's humidity shifts, lake-effect weather, and increased guest usage will magnify small issues quickly. Addressing them now protects both operations and reviews.

Evaluate and complete:

- HVAC filter replacement
- Full air conditioning test run
- Slow drain treatment (kitchen + bathrooms)
- Caulk inspection around tubs, showers, and sinks
- Grout condition check
- Minor drywall repair and paint touch-ups
- Door hardware tightening
- Cabinet hinge tightening
- Window lock functionality

Small maintenance gaps often create the most disruptive mid-season service calls.

 **Pro Tip:** Walk the property as if you were a guest arriving for a weekend stay. Anything that feels loose, noisy, stained, or unfinished should be resolved before peak traffic begins.

7. Pre-Season Deep Clean Timing

Once Chicago's calendar fills, flexibility disappears. Back-to-back turnovers leave little room for intensive services.

If a deep clean is needed, schedule it before peak stacking begins.

Consider completing:

- Carpet shampooing
- Upholstery cleaning

- Exterior window washing (spring)
- Appliance pull-out detailing (behind and underneath)
- Baseboard and trim detailing

These services are difficult to schedule mid-season and often postponed until fall — which means they compound over time.

Pre-season deep cleaning resets the property standard before heavy use begins.

 **Pro Tip:** If your property hasn't had a true deep clean in 6–12 months, peak season will expose it.

Final Ownership Reminder

Chicago's peak season rewards prepared operators.

Once weekends stack and turnover pace increases, flexibility narrows. Vendor response times slow. Emergency purchases cost more. Small oversights become visible quickly.

Peak season does not create pressure — it reveals preparation.

This checklist is not about perfection. It is about protection.

- ✓ Protecting your margin.
- ✓ Protecting your reviews.
- ✓ Protecting your operational stability.

Address what feels “almost fine” now — not in July.

Prepare early. Operate smoothly. Execute confidently.

— AYRC