

Safety Messaging Framework

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Overview

Background

Airbnb's safety stance has evolved, from advising our hosts and guests on how to protect their own safety, to sharing the many tools and resources we've recently created to help.

[Research](#) shows that what we say and how we say it in safety situations can have a lasting impact on how hosts and guests perceive Airbnb.

This document covers how we'll write for critical safety moments across the user experience spectrum.

Defining “safety”

To unify our approach, the Trust & CSP teams created a singular definition to cover prevention and response.

Safety: any physical or psychological harm that can occur to guests or hosts before, during, or after a trip.

Who this is for, and how we'll use it

By defining a shared content strategy to inform Safety writing, we hope to scale resources while creating a consistent narrative for our community.

Safety UX writers

Foundational guidelines to a broad strategy, rather than strategizing at the page or component level.

Leadership & peers

Clarifying positioning with decision-makers, teammates, and cross-functional partners..

Helpful friends

Guideposts for those filling for UX Writing (e.g., unstaffed small projects, contract assistance).

Guidelines

Our principles

1. Provide direction

Anything that should or must be done is understood with little “cognitive load.”

Tip: specify resolutions, ensuring CTAs are prioritized and clear; avoid subtext or fine print.

2. Take a stand

Sharing the company POV can be reassuring and assist understanding of the message.

Tip: use this guide (see Preferred phrases), executive statements, or brand guidelines as sources.

3. Foster belonging

Eliminate jargon and complex vocabulary and look for ways to keep your copy inclusive.

Tip: simplify word choices; check out the [Accessibility & Inclusion Writing Standards](#).

Our principles (cont.)

4. Make a safe space

At Airbnb, we prioritize survivors and we write for good actors. Our community members should never feel unfairly targeted or like we don't believe them.

Tip: eliminate implied judgment by focusing on actions, staying away from “you” when you can.

5. Be human

Express kindness and acknowledgement, and protect your copy from sounding overly-complicated, robotic, transactional, or like a lawyer wrote it.

Tip: ask yourself, are these the words you'd use with a friend?

6. Layer your info

If content doesn't fit in its container or is overwhelming, hone in on the must-haves and use the design system to progressively disclose the rest of the story..

Tip: prioritize what's essential; link to more (using Help articles, toasts, tool tips, etc.)

Voice & Tone

The Airbnb voice & the Safety tone

As you know, the Airbnb brand voice is **empowering, welcoming, thoughtful, and playful**. As we do in real-life conversations, we vary our tone for the situation.

For example, our Marketing colleagues may empower via inspiration, while our Payments team may empower via brevity that drives transaction.

In Safety moments, we maintain our brand voice and lean into our shared humanity in our tone, which is **clear, warm, and empathetic**.

Airbnb Voice “The What”	Safety Tone “The How”
Empowering	Clear Expressing where we stand and what is being asked of this user empowers by eliminating confusion and easing emotional burdens.
Welcoming	Warm We are humans speaking to humans always, but never more so than when a member of our community could be afraid or upset.
Thoughtful	Empathetic By putting ourselves in our user’s shoes, we can use empathy to foster belonging and create a safe space.

Writing for the user journey

In Safety writing, we balance two important truths:

- 1) Safety incidents are extremely rare
- 2) When incidents do occur, they can be traumatic

To use **education as a prevention tool**, content types become increasingly specific and direct as risk factors increase.

Whereas, to **respond to and resolve safety incidents**, we prioritize urgency and reassurance.

<u>User journey</u>	<u>Use case</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Message priorities</u>
Education Awareness (surface examples: Help Center, /trust)	Nothing has gone wrong, but we have general info and/or a POV to share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Findable (Pull) ● General 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Useful to all ● Informative ● Optimistic & measured general info
Education Outreach (e.g., tooltips, dashboard alerts)	Nothing has gone wrong, but there's stuff we think you need to know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Served (Push) ● Segmented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevant to me - or my reservation or listing ● Contextually helpful ● Optimistic & measured guidance
Education Intervention (e.g., message thread alerts, macros)	We foresee or have prevented something from going wrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interrupters (Persistent) ● Targeted to the user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● About me - and my reservation or listing ● Contextually essential ● Alerting guidance
Incident Response (e.g., on-trip support)	The user is telling us something is wrong right now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support flows ● Targeted to the incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● About me and my incident ● Findable, actionable support ● Urgent response
Incident Resolution (e.g., Unsafe Behavior Flow, standards enforcement)	The user is telling us something went wrong in the past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting flows ● Targeted to the incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● About my incident ● Contextual information-gathering and compassion ● Reassuring and supportive response

Guidelines Applied

Safety phrases you can use

These approved, live examples can be used to express our safety stance, and can be particularly useful for beginning or closing a message.

Our expectations	Our brand	Our product
...your safety is our priority...	...creating a world where anyone can truly belong...	...we're always working on ways to increase safety in our community...
...help protect the community...	...help ensure safety and foster belonging...	...Airbnb is designed with safety in mind...
...five standards: safety, security, fairness, authenticity, and reliability...	...Airbnb is founded on trust...	...In the rare event that an issue should arise, our team is available 24/7...

Recommended Reading

Writing for the user journey

[Mediation Framework](#)

[User Impact of Bad Interactions on Airbnb](#)

[Onboarding guest education research](#)

[Why do hosts leave and what can we do about it?](#)

[Guest Perception of Safety in Booking Flow Disclosures](#)

[Vital Voices Appendix B documentation](#)

[Unsafe review flows research](#)

[CS Trauma Informed Care playbook](#)

Thank you.