

Short Term Rentals

WHAT IS A SHORT TERM RENTAL?

Short term rentals are most commonly dwellings occupied by the property owner, in which the owner rents individual guest rooms. The owner must reside at dwelling if renting individual rooms. An owner may also rent the entire dwelling to a family or 6 or fewer friends. If renting the entire dwelling, the owner does not need to be present. Short Term Rentals must limit rental period to less than 30 days. Examples of short term rentals typically include bed and breakfast, AirBNB, and VRBO.



BEFORE YOU RENT

Before you operate a Short Term Rental:

- Obtain a City of Tacoma Business License if renting 3 or more rooms.
- Make sure you have a safety sign in each room that shows location of fire extinguishers, gas shut-off valves, fire exits, and/or pull fire alarm.
- Make sure you have operating smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

RESOURCES

- TMC 13.06.150.C.7 – Short Term Rental in an Accessory Dwelling Unit
- TMC 13.06.575 – Short Term Rentals
- TMC 6B.140 – Transient Accommodations

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Questions? Email us at planning@cityoftacoma.org or call (253) 591-5030.

HOW MANY ROOMS CAN I RENT?

- You may rent **1-2 guest rooms** in *all* Residential Districts, including single-family districts.
- You may rent **3-9 guest rooms**, after receiving an *approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP)*, in the R-3, R-4L, R-4, R-5, RCX, and NRX Districts (generally residential districts that allow duplex, triplex, and multiple family dwellings).
- You may rent **1-9 guest rooms** in all Commercial Districts; Mixed-Use Districts (except RCX and NRX that require a Conditional Use Permit – see above); and Downtown Districts
- You may rent the **entire dwelling** in all Residential, Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Downtown Districts.



Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org (253) 591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice).

TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services. L-106, 11/2016

Short Term Rental Regulations Summary

Primary goal

Balance the economic opportunity created by short term rentals with the need to maintain supply of long-term rental housing stock available at a range of prices.

Secondary goals

A) Ensure a level playing field for individuals and companies in the short term rental market and B) Protect the rights and safety of owners, guests and neighbors of these units.

Definitions

- “Short Term Rental” is a booked stay of 29 consecutive nights or fewer
- “Long Term Rental” is a booked stay of 30 consecutive nights or more (these stays are excluded from an operator’s cumulative Short Term Rental nights total)
- “Operator” is the rental host
- “Platform” is the online company that facilitates the rental (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.)

Basic Regulatory Framework:

	Primary Residence Short term rental operator resides on-site	Not Primary Residence Short term rental operator resides off-site
Rented 90 cumulative nights or fewer for short term rentals in 12 month period	Status Quo (includes having a business license and paying applicable taxes)	Status Quo (includes having a business license and paying applicable taxes)
Rented 91 cumulative nights or more for short term rentals in 12 month period	Requires a new Short Term Rental Operator’s license in addition to business license.	Prohibited

Requirements of a Short Term Rental Operator license

- proof that the unit being rented is your primary residence,
- proof of liability insurance that covers the short term rental use,
- a local contact number for guests,
- a signed declaration that the unit is up to code, and
- basic safety information posted for guests in the unit.

Requirements of a Short Term Rental Platform license

- to provide information about Seattle’s regulations to operators using the platform and
- to share basic data with the City on a quarterly basis, including
- names and addresses of operators, and
- the number of nights each operator has rented on the platform for the last 12 months (excluding stays of 30 consecutive nights or longer).

City of Seattle