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Orange Beach vacation rental checklist

Baldwin County, Alabama | Rules checked November 5, 2026

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Orange Beach requires a $500 vacation rental license for houses and duplexes rented 14 days or less in its single-family zones (RS-1, RS-2, RS-3, MHS, outside the beach overlay), with a floor plan, site and parking plan, two guests per bedroom plus two children, and a 30-minute complaint response. Every short-term rental also needs a city business license (at least $120 a unit), and lodgings tax is 16%.

> News reports in 2018 said existing single-family rentals were grandfathered when the city limited new ones. Ask the city whether it still issues new licenses in the RS districts.

Licensing steps

STATE OF ALABAMA

- [ ] **Register for the lodgings tax**
  Create an account at My Alabama Taxes (MAT) and register for state lodgings tax, plus any local lodgings taxes the state administers for your county and city. Cities that collect their own tax need a separate account with the city.
  My Alabama Taxes: https://myalabamataxes.alabama.gov/
- [ ] **File by the 20th**
  Returns are due by the 20th of the following month. Small filers can ask (before February 20) to file quarterly, twice a year, or yearly. Paying on time earns a small discount (5% of the first $100 of tax, 2% after).
- [ ] **Know what the platform collects**
  Under Act 2024-334, Airbnb, VRBO, and other booking platforms collect the state and local lodgings taxes on their bookings unless your contract says you remit. You still owe tax on direct bookings, and the law adds a yearly report of every unit rented more than 14 days.
- [ ] **Keep filing once you register**
  If every booking goes through a platform that collects all your state and local lodgings taxes, you may not need your own account. But if you take direct bookings, or the platform doesn't collect one of your local taxes (often the ones filed with a city, a county, or Avenu), register and file it yourself. Once registered, file every period, even a $0 return, and report platform-collected sales as a deduction. Some county offices ask owners to keep their own account and file monthly even when the platform pays, so ask yours.
- [ ] **Then your county and city**
  Local business licenses, rental permits, and zoning rules are where Alabama towns differ most. Pick your area.

BALDWIN COUNTY, ALABAMA

- [ ] **Check the lodging tax district**
  If your rental is in Gulf Shores, on the Fort Morgan peninsula, or in an area that opted in, add the 2% county lodging tax (filed with the state through My Alabama Taxes).
- [ ] **Then your city**
  City rules differ a lot. Pick your area.

CITY OF ORANGE BEACH

- [ ] **Register for lodgings tax**
  Total lodgings tax here is 16%. The city's 10% is filed with the city; the state and county shares go through My Alabama Taxes. Airbnb collects the state tax and the local taxes the state administers on its bookings; for taxes filed with a city, county, or Avenu, ask your platform whether it collects them. For direct bookings, file everything yourself by the 20th of each month.
- [ ] **Get a city business license**
  Apply through the city's online licensing portal.
  Orange Beach business licenses: https://orangebeachal.gov/269/Business-Licenses
- [ ] **In single-family zones, get the vacation rental license**
  Submit a floor plan, site and parking plan, a fire, building, and safety affidavit, and a 24/7 contact, and pay $500. Use a written rental agreement and give guests the good-neighbor brochure. The city can inspect on 24 hours' notice.
- [ ] **Respond within 30 minutes**
  The owner or agent must answer complaints within 30 minutes.

House rules for guests

Maximum guests: 2 per bedroom + 2 children 14 and under

Who to contact

Lodging tax: 251-981-6782
Finance Department: 251-981-6096
Baldwin County Sales and Use Tax: 251-943-5061

Orange Beach asks for drawings with your application.
Make the site sketch, floor plans, and evacuation maps to scale from your measurements at FireEscapePlan.com.

Official sources

Alabama Department of Revenue: State lodgings tax. https://www.revenue.alabama.gov/tax-types/lodgings-tax/

Alabama Department of Revenue: Lodgings tax FAQs. https://www.revenue.alabama.gov/faqs/lodgings-tax/

Alabama Department of Revenue: Alabama Tourism Tax Protection Act (Act 2024-334)-
. https://www.revenue.alabama.gov/alabama-tourism-tax-protection/

Avalara MyLodgeTax: Alabama vacation rental tax guide-
. https://www.avalara.com/mylodgetax/en/resources/vacation-rental-tax-guides/alabama.html

Baldwin County: Lodging tax district, Code of Alabama §45-2-243.24-
. https://baldwincountyal.gov/docs/default-source/sales-and-use-tax/lodging-tax-district--section-45-2-243-24.pdf?sfvrsn=b2591d06_1

City of Orange Beach: Taxes. https://orangebeachal.gov/276/Taxes

City of Orange Beach: Business licenses. https://orangebeachal.gov/269/Business-Licenses

City of Orange Beach (Municode): Code section-
. https://library.municode.com/al/orange_beach/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH50LITABURE_ARTXIVAREUN