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Unincorporated Baldwin vacation rental checklist

Baldwin County, Alabama | Rules checked November 5, 2026

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Unincorporated Baldwin County has no short-term rental permit. On the Fort Morgan peninsula (south of the Intracoastal Waterway, west of Gulf Shores), lodgings tax is 6%: 4% state plus the 2% county district tax. North of the waterway it's generally the 4% state tax. A state business license through the county is usually required.

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.

BALDWIN COUNTY (UNINCORPORATED AREAS)

- [ ] **Register for lodgings tax**
  Total lodgings tax here is 6% on Fort Morgan (4% elsewhere unincorporated). Both are filed with the state 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 county business license**
  Ask Baldwin County Sales and Use Tax whether your rental needs a state business license through the county; renewals are due in October and late after November 1.

Who to contact

Baldwin County Sales and Use Tax: 251-943-5061
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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

Baldwin County: Business license FAQ. https://baldwincountyal.gov/services/sales-use-tax/business-license-faq

Baldwin County: Baldwin County zoning ordinance (updated May 20, 2025).
https://baldwincountyal.gov/docs/default-source/planning-and-zoning/ordinances-and-regulations/zoning-ordinance-(updated-5-20-2025).pdf?sfvrsn=91019f69_