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Unincorporated Houston vacation rental checklist

Houston County, Alabama | Rules checked November 5, 2026

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We found no short-term rental permit or rules in Unincorporated Houston's code. You owe 11% (7% county + 4% state) in lodgings tax and likely need a business license; some of the local tax may not be collected by Airbnb.

We found no county short-term rental permit in November 2026. Towns such as Rehobeth (6% town tax), Kinsey (5%), and Cottonwood (4%) add their own lodgings tax on top; ask the town hall about a business license.

Airbnb's Alabama tax article lists the state tax and the local taxes the state administers. It doesn't name the Avenu- or city-administered taxes here, so ask your platform what it collects and file the rest yourself.

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.

HOUSTON COUNTY, ALABAMA

- [ ] **Register for the county lodgings tax**
  Open a local tax account with Avenu Insights for the county tax (7% outside Dothan, 1% inside). Avenu's returns can also be filed through the Local Tax account in My Alabama Taxes.
- [ ] **Then your city**
  Dothan has its own license and zoning rules. Pick your area.

HOUSTON COUNTY (UNINCORPORATED AREAS)

- [ ] **Register for lodgings tax**
  Total lodgings tax here is 11% (7% county + 4% state). The county 7% is filed with Avenu Insights. The state 4% goes through My Alabama Taxes; Airbnb collects it on its bookings. Ask your platform whether it also collects the local taxes, and file anything it doesn't by the 20th of each month.

- [ ] **Ask about a business license and zoning**
  Ask the Houston County (unincorporated areas) whether a short-term rental needs a city business license and whether zoning allows it at your address. Check your HOA rules too.

Who to contact

Avenu Insights (local lodgings tax): 1-800-556-7274

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

Alabama Department of Revenue: Houston County lodgings tax rate notice (February 1, 2025)-
. https://revenue.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Houston-County_20250122.pdf

Alabama Department of Revenue: Local lodgings tax rates report (November 2026)-
. https://www.revenue.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/LLreport.pdf

Airbnb: Occupancy tax collection and remittance by Airbnb in Alabama. https://www.airbnb.com/help/article/2293