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Mobile (city) vacation rental checklist

Mobile County, Alabama | Rules checked November 5, 2026

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The City of Mobile requires a separate business license for each short-term rental location (under 180 days), with the license number in every listing and a local contact answering 24/7. Short-term rentals also need a zoning conditional use permit from the City Council: at most 8 guest rooms, one group at a time, 2 parking spaces plus 1 per guest room, and no ADUs or RVs. Lodgings tax is 16% (10% city, 4% state, 2% county).

> Ask the city which zoning districts allow short-term rentals by right and which need the conditional use permit.

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.

MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

- [ ] **Register for the county lodging tax**
  File the 2% county tax with the Mobile County License Commission (My Alabama Taxes is the preferred way).
- [ ] **Then your city**
  Pick your area.

CITY OF MOBILE

- [ ] **Register for lodgings tax**
  Total lodgings tax here is 16% (city 10%, state 4%, county 2%). The city's 10% is filed with the city. 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 the conditional use permit**
  Apply for short-term rental conditional use approval under the Unified Development Code: no more than 8 guest rooms, one group at a time, no meals or guest-room kitchens, screened trash at least 20 feet from property lines and 100 feet from neighbors' homes, no signs, and no use of accessory buildings, ADUs, or RVs.
- [ ] **Get a business license for the location**
  A separate license for each short-term rental; a manager who isn't the owner needs their own. Post a local contact inside who answers 24/7.
- [ ] **Meet the safety rules**
  Smoke and CO detectors, a 2.5 lb ABC extinguisher on each floor, and a visible 911 address.

House rules for guests

Guests: One group at a time, up to 8 guest rooms

Parking: 2 spaces + 1 per guest room

Who to contact

Revenue: 251-208-7794

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

Mobile County License Commission: Mobile County lodging tax: general information-
. https://www.mobilecountylc.com/information/sales-tax/general-information/

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

City of Mobile (Municode): Code section.
https://library.municode.com/al/mobile/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COMOALVOII_CH64UNDECO_ART5PR_S64-5-6COUSPE

City of Mobile (Municode): Code section.
https://library.municode.com/al/mobile/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CICO_CH34LITA_ARTIIIBULICOSCLI_S34-46LISHBELOSP