LICENSEDRENTAL.COM

Phenix City vacation rental checklist

Russell County, Alabama | Rules checked November 5, 2026

Scan for the latest version

Phenix City requires a short-term rental license and certificate of occupancy for each property, insurance, a contact who answers within an hour, and proof that owners within 500 feet were notified in person or by certified mail. Its residential use table allows short-term rentals by right in R-2 and R-3 but not R-1; lodgings tax is 15%.

> Part of Phenix City is in Lee County, where the county tax is Lee's 2%. Fines are $150, then $500.

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.

RUSSELL COUNTY, ALABAMA

- [ ] **Register for the county lodging tax**
  File the county's 2% with the state tax through My Alabama Taxes.
- [ ] **Then your city**
  Pick your area.

CITY OF PHENIX CITY

- [ ] **Check your zoning**
  In residential districts, short-term rentals are permitted in R-2 and R-3. Ask Planning about other districts.
- [ ] **Apply for the license and certificate of occupancy**
  Apply for each property with a 24/7 emergency contact who answers within an hour and can be on site within 24 hours. Send proof of vacation rental insurance within 30 days. The building official sets bedrooms and parking and may inspect with fire and police.

- [ ] **Notify owners within 500 feet**
  After approval, notify every owner within 500 feet (from the county tax assessor's records) in person or by certified mail, and give the building official proof.
- [ ] **Meet the safety rules**
  Provide a 5-pound ABC fire extinguisher and interconnected smoke alarms in all bedrooms and hallways. Post the license, contact, and house rules.
- [ ] **Register for lodgings tax**
  Total lodgings tax here is 15% (9% city, 4% state, 2% county). The city's 9% 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.

House rules for guests

Occupancy: Lesser of 2 per bedroom + 2, or 4 per parking space

Events: Not allowed

Who to contact

ADOR Sales and Use Tax Division: 334-242-1490

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

City of Phenix City (Municode): Code section-
. https://library.municode.com/al/phenix_city/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_APXAZO_ART4REDI_S4.02GERE

City of Phenix City (Municode): Code section-
. https://library.municode.com/al/phenix_city/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_APXAZO_ART7UECRE_S7.16SHRMRE