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Unincorporated Boulder County vacation rental checklist

Boulder County, Colorado | Rules checked November 8, 2026

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Outside town limits, Boulder County licenses short-term rentals in the owner's primary residence ($350, then $250 to renew), and whole-home vacation rentals only in its Forestry and Mountain Institutional zones, capped at 277 licenses. Applications need a floor plan marking exits and alarms, a property map with parking, $500,000 insurance, and a local manager who can arrive within an hour.

Licensing steps

STATE OF COLORADO

- [ ] **Get a state sales tax license**
  If you rent rooms or a home for stays under 30 days, Colorado requires a sales tax license from the Department of Revenue. Platforms like Airbnb collect the state and state-administered taxes on their bookings; you file for anything booked directly.
  MyBiz Colorado: https://mybiz.colorado.gov/
- [ ] **Check for home-rule city taxes**
  Many cities and mountain towns collect their own sales and lodging taxes. Platforms aren't required by the state to collect these, so you may need a separate city tax license and returns.
- [ ] **Get your county or city rental license**
  Most Colorado mountain counties and towns, and Denver, require a short-term rental license or permit, often with an inspection, an occupancy limit, posted information, and a local responder. Pick your area for the rules.

BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

- [ ] **Then your town or area**
  Cities and towns make their own rental rules inside their limits; the county's rules apply only outside them. Pick your area.

BOULDER COUNTY (UNINCORPORATED AREAS)

- [ ] **Pick the license type**
  A short-term rental license is for your primary residence, where you live more than six months a year; you can rent up to 45 nights a year while away. A vacation rental license covers whole-home rentals and is only available in the Forestry and Mountain Institutional zones, mostly in the western mountains, under a 277-license cap. Neither is allowed on the plains around Boulder, Longmont, and Lyons.
- [ ] **Prepare the floor plan and property map**
  Draw a floor plan labeling the bedrooms you'll rent, egress windows and doors, and where the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and extinguishers are. Add a map of the property showing its boundaries, access, and all parking (an aerial from the Assessor's site works as a base).
- [ ] **Gather the rest and apply**
  Include your Colorado ID and residence affidavit, the deed, proof of $500,000 liability insurance covering rentals, property tax receipts, water and sewer or septic proof, a Building Lot Determination, and your sales tax license (or proof platforms remit). West of US 36 you also need a Wildfire Partners assessment from the past six years.
- [ ] **Taxes on each stay**
  Stays under 30 days owe 2.9% state plus Boulder County, RTD, and district sales taxes. Airbnb and other platforms collect the state and state-administered taxes on their bookings; for direct bookings, file with the Colorado Department of Revenue. Platforms collect these state-administered taxes.

Fees

$350 or $500 to start; $250 or $300 to renew

Short-term rental license (new)	**$350**
Short-term rental license (renewal) If no confirmed violations or unpermitted work in the term.	**$250**
Vacation rental license (new)	**$500**
Vacation rental license (renewal)	**$300**

Inspection checklist

- ☐ **Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, extinguishers, egress.** Marked on the floor plan (Licensing Ordinance 5.2.a).
- ☐ **Wildfire Partners assessment.** Wildfire Zone 1, west of US 36.

House rules for guests

Bookings: One party at a time

Local manager: In person within 1 hour
A second manager if you rent while away.

Who to contact

County STR licensing: strlicensing@bouldercounty.gov
Ask a Planner: 303-441-3930

Unincorporated Boulder County 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

Colorado Department of Revenue: Sales & Use Tax Topics: Rooms & Accommodations-
. https://tax.colorado.gov/sales-use-tax-topics-rooms-accommodations

Colorado Department of Revenue: Sales Tax Guide and Colorado Sales/Use Tax Rates (DR 1002)-
. https://tax.colorado.gov/sites/tax/files/Sales%2011.pdf

Colorado Legislative Council Staff: Short-term Rental Regulation (Issue Brief, January 2026)-
. https://content.leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/r25-881-shortterm-rentals-accessible.pdf

Boulder County Community Planning & Permitting: Short-Term Rental license application checklist (2024)-
. https://assets.bouldercounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/short-term-vacation-rental-3.5-str-checklist.pdf