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Unincorporated Douglas County vacation rental checklist

Douglas County, Colorado | Rules checked November 8, 2026

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Unincorporated Douglas County, including Highlands Ranch, requires a yearly short-term rental license: $630 the first year and $400 after. The application needs a parking plan, a local responsible agent, posted renter information, a life-safety affidavit, and county building and health inspections.

> The ordinance's occupancy, parking, and life-safety standards weren't on the page we read; ask Zoning Compliance for the current application packet.

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.

DOUGLAS 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.

DOUGLAS COUNTY (UNINCORPORATED AREAS)

- [ ] **Get the inspections**
  Have the Douglas County Building Division and the Health Department inspect the home and confirm it's acceptable for short-term rental use. If you're on septic, get a Health Department use permit for the change to rental use.

- [ ] **Prepare the parking plan and renter materials**
  Draw a parking plan that meets the ordinance, make the required interior sign and written instructions for renters, and sign the life-safety affidavit. Name a local responsible agent in a notarized declaration.

- [ ] **Apply and renew yearly**
  Submit everything with the $500 review fee and $130 license fee. Renew each year; the review fee drops to $270, and the county may ask the building and health departments to confirm.
  Douglas County STR license: https://www.douglasco.gov/?p=166321

- [ ] **Taxes on each stay**
  Stays under 30 days owe 2.9% state plus Douglas 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

$630 the first year, $400 a year after

Application review fee (first year)	**$500**
Application review fee (later years)	**$270**
License fee (yearly)	**$130**

Inspection checklist

- [ ] **Building Division inspection.**
- [ ] **Health Department inspection.** Plus a septic use permit if you're on septic.
- [ ] **Owner's life-safety affidavit.**
- [ ] **Posted renter information.**

Who to contact

Douglas County Zoning Compliance: 303-660-7460

Unincorporated Douglas 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

Douglas County Community Development, Planning Services: Short-Term Rental License. https://www.douglasco.gov/?p=166321