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Unincorporated Gulf vacation rental checklist

Gulf County, Florida | Rules checked November 5, 2026

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Unincorporated Gulf County, including Cape San Blas, Indian Pass, and St. Joe Beach, requires a $100 yearly Short-Term Rental Business License (rentals under 30 days). The county building department inspects each unit every year, and the license isn't issued until it passes. Coastal rentals need twice-weekly trash pickup and enough 96-gallon carts.

> The county code sets no occupancy, parking, or responsible-party rules. In late 2025 the county discussed adding a local emergency contact and vehicle decals (news); nothing was adopted as of November 2026.

Licensing steps

STATE OF FLORIDA

- [ ] **Get the DBPR vacation rental license**
  Apply online to the Division of Hotels and Restaurants as a Vacation Rental – Condominium or Vacation Rental – Dwelling, listing every unit address. Approval usually takes one to two business days and the license is emailed. There is no inspection before it's issued, but DBPR can inspect afterward. Post the license (or a copy) in the unit.
  DBPR vacation rental licensing guide: https://www2.myfloridalicense.com/hotels-restaurants/licensing/vrtsp-guide/

- [ ] **Renew every year by your district's date**
  Licenses renew on a set date for each DBPR district. Brevard, Volusia, Indian River, St. Lucie, Orange, Osceola, Lake, and Seminole (District 4) renew April 1, with the half-year rate from October 1. Duval, Nassau, Clay, Flagler, St. Johns, Levy, Alachua, Marion, and the rest of District 5 renew June 1, with the half-year rate from December 1. Bay, Walton, Okaloosa, Escambia, Santa Rosa, Gulf, Franklin, and the rest of District 6 also renew June 1. Martin, Palm Beach, and Broward (District 2) renew December 1, with the half-year rate from June 1. Miami-Dade and Monroe (District 1) renew October 1, with the half-year rate from April 1. Collier, Lee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Manatee, and the rest of District 7 renew December 1, with the half-year rate from June 1. Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk, Hernando, Citrus, and the rest of District 3 renew February 1, with the half-year rate from August 1. If you won't rent until after the next renewal date, waiting to apply can save paying twice.

- [ ] **Register for Florida sales tax if you collect rent yourself**
  Whoever receives the rent collects and pays the tax. Airbnb and VRBO collect Florida's 6% tax and the county surtax on bookings made through them, so if every booking goes through them you don't need your own sales tax account. If you take direct bookings, or a property manager collects rent for you, you or the manager register with the Department of Revenue and file. You stay responsible if a platform or manager doesn't pay it.
  Florida Department of Revenue: https://floridarevenue.com/

- [ ] **Meet the state fire safety rule**
  Florida Administrative Code 69A-43.018 asks rental homes for smoke alarms powered by the house wiring plus one in every bedroom, NFPA 10 extinguishers, one hour of battery emergency lighting to the main exit, a posted floor diagram showing the primary and secondary exits, and fire safety information for guests.
  Florida rental fire safety checklist (FireEscapePlan.com)-
  : https://fireescapeplan.com/guides/florida-vacation-rental-fire-safety-requirements

- [ ] **Balcony inspection for taller buildings**
  Buildings three or more stories tall must file a Certificate of Balcony Inspection with DBPR every three years. Condo units are exempt when the balconies and stairs are common elements and you give DBPR proof.

- [ ] **Keep up the state operating rules**
  Keep the unit clean, safe, and free of pests; change sheets and pillowcases between guests or weekly; use cribs that meet federal safety standards; and sanitize dishes between guests or post DBPR's exception notice.
- [ ] **Then the county and town**
  Most rules that affect day-to-day operation, like registration, inspections, occupancy, and parking, are set by the county and the town. Pick your town for its full checklist.

GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA

- [ ] **Register for the tourist tax**
  Register with the Tax Collector through the GovOS portal and file every period.
- [ ] **Then your area**
  Cape San Blas, Indian Pass, St. Joe Beach, and WindMark need the county license. Pick your area.

GULF COUNTY (UNINCORPORATED AREAS)

- [ ] **Get the state license and county tourist tax account**
  Every Florida vacation rental needs the DBPR license. Gulf County's 5% tourist tax is filed with the Gulf County Tax Collector, and Airbnb and VRBO don't collect it, so register and file every period yourself, platform bookings included.
- [ ] **Apply for the license and pass the inspection**
  Apply through the Tourist Development Council's license portal and schedule the county building inspection. Properties in tax Zones 3 and 5 are exempt.
  Gulf County STR license: https://visitgulf.com/partners/strlicense/
- [ ] **Set up trash service**
  In the Coastal Tourist Corridor, rentals of six months or less need two pickups a week year round and enough 96-gallon carts for the bedroom count. Fines are $100, $250, then $500.
- [ ] **Post the signs**
  Post the Leave No Trace sign in each unit and display the TDC's magnet and rack cards.

House rules for guests

Trash: Two pickups a week (coastal corridor)

Who to contact

STR License Office: 850-229-7800 ext. 7803
Email: STRLicense@visitgulf.com
Tax Collector: 850-227-2318

Official sources

Florida DBPR, Division of Hotels and Restaurants: Vacation rental and timeshare project licensing guide-
. https://www2.myfloridalicense.com/hotels-restaurants/licensing/vrtsp-guide/

Florida Department of Revenue (Florida Administrative Code): Rule 12A-1.061, sales tax on transient rentals (registration in part (9)).
https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=12A-1.061

State Fire Marshal (Florida Administrative Code): Rule 69A-43.018, fire safety for one- and two-family homes licensed as public lodging.
https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=69A-43.018

Florida DBPR: Certificate of Balcony Inspection (DBPR HR 7020)-
. https://www2.myfloridalicense.com/hr/forms/documents/dbpr_hr_7020_certificate_of_balcony_inspection.pdf

Gulf County (GovOS portal): Tourist development tax FAQ. https://gulfcountyfl.munirevs.com/faq/

Gulf County (Municode): Code section.
https://library.municode.com/fl/gulf_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH12BU_ARTIIBULI_S12-36VAREBU

Gulf County Tourist Development Council: Short-term rental business license. https://visitgulf.com/partners/strlicense/

Gulf County (Municode): Sec. 34-3, trash in the Coastal Tourist Corridor. https://library.municode.com/fl/gulf_county/codes/code_of_ordinances