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# Sanibel vacation rental checklist

Lee County, Florida | Rules checked November 4, 2026

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On Sanibel, homes and condos may not be rented for less than four consecutive weeks unless they are in an approved resort housing area. Every rental, long or short, needs a city dwelling rental license, renewed each calendar year, plus a city business tax receipt. Violations can be fined up to $500 a day.

> City Code Sec. 126-1075 to 126-1078. The four-week rule dates from Ordinance 85-26 (1985), before the 2011 state law; the license program is from Ordinance 19-007 (2019). Ask the city for the current license fees.

## 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.

### LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

- [ ] **Register for the tourist tax if you take direct bookings**
  If you find guests, write leases, or collect rent yourself, file the owner application with the Clerk's Tourist Tax office and remit the 5% on those stays. A property manager who handles rentals for you registers as a dealer and remits for you. You stay responsible if a dealer doesn't pay.
  Lee County tourist development tax: https://www.leeclerk.org/departments/inspector-general/tourist-development-tax
- [ ] **Then your city**
  The Tourist Tax office doesn't regulate rentals; check your city's rules and your HOA or condo association. Pick your city for its checklist.

### CITY OF SANIBEL

- [ ] **Get the state license and county tax account**
  Every Florida vacation rental needs the DBPR license. Airbnb and Vrbo collect Lee's 5% tourist tax on their bookings; for direct bookings, register with the Lee Clerk's Tourist Tax office and file it yourself. See the Florida and Lee County pages.
- [ ] **Check whether your unit is resort housing**
  Outside permitted resort housing areas, rent for four consecutive weeks or longer and don't advertise shorter stays. Ask the city whether your condo or home is approved resort housing.
- [ ] **Register for a dwelling rental license**
  Register with Community Services: owner and property manager contacts, address and parcel number, your city business tax receipt, Lee tourist tax account, state sales tax registration, DBPR license (if applicable), and a notarized acknowledgment of the city's rental rules. Renew before December 31 each year.

## 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

Lee County Clerk of Court, Inspector General: Tourist development tax-
. https://www.leeclerk.org/departments/inspector-general/tourist-development-tax

City of Sanibel (Municode): Chapter 126, Article XIV, Division 7, dwelling rental-
. https://library.municode.com/fl/sanibel/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=SPBLADECO_CH126ZO_ARTXIVSUDIRE_DIV7DWRE