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Key West vacation rental checklist

Monroe County, Florida | Rules checked November 4, 2026

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In Key West, renting a home for less than 30 days or one calendar month requires a city transient rental business tax receipt, and the city isn't issuing new ones for homes: only properties that already hold a transient license can rent short term. Everyone else must rent for a month or longer with a non-transient business tax receipt. Licensed transient homes display a city medallion outside.

> City Code Sec. 18-601 to 18-603 (Ord. 02-07, February 20, 2002) and Sec. 122-1371. These rules predate June 1, 2011, so state law leaves them in place. Advertising a home for less than 30 days without a license is itself evidence of a violation.

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.

MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA (THE FLORIDA KEYS)

- [ ] **Get a county business tax receipt**
  The Tax Collector requires a local business tax receipt for every rental property, whatever the length of stay. Your city may require its own as well.
  Monroe County rental property requirements: https://monroetaxcollector.com/services/rental-properties/

- [ ] **Open a tourist development tax account and file monthly**
  Apply for a tourist tax account, then file a return every month, even when you had no rentals. Tax is due the 1st and late after the 20th. The 5% applies to the room rate and mandatory fees such as cleaning, pet, and service fees, but not damage deposits. Filing online through TouristExpress by the 20th earns a 2.5% discount on the first $1,200 of tax (up to $30).
  Monroe County tourist development tax: https://monroetaxcollector.com/services/tdt/

- [ ] **Then your city**
  Each city in the Keys has its own rules, and the unincorporated Keys require a county special vacation rental permit. Pick your city for its checklist.

CITY OF KEY WEST

- [ ] **Check whether the property has a transient license**
  Look the address up on the city's list and map of transient licensed properties, or ask the Licensing Division. If it isn't licensed, rent for 30 days or one calendar month or longer.
  Map and addresses of transient rental properties-
  : https://cityofkeywest-fl.gov/856/Map-Addresses-of-Transient-Rental-Proper

- [ ] **Get the state license and county tax accounts**
  Every Florida vacation rental needs the DBPR license and a state sales tax certificate. In Monroe County you also need a county business tax receipt and a tourist development tax account, and you file the 5% tourist tax yourself every month, because Airbnb and Vrbo don't pay it. See the Florida and Monroe County pages.

- [ ] **Get the right city business tax receipt**
  Every residential rental needs a Key West business tax receipt: transient for licensed short stays, non-transient for everything else. A state or county license alone isn't enough. Transient renewals need a copy of your active DBPR license.

- [ ] **For licensed transient homes: renew every year**
  Each year provide ownership details, a fire marshal inspection report, floor area and parking counts, tax IDs, your DBPR license, and the 24-hour operator. Post the medallion and contact outside, keep a tenant and vehicle register, provide one off-street space per unit outside the historic district, and use a written lease.

Who to contact

Licensing Division: 305-809-3959
Email: licensing@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
Tourist tax collections: 305-295-5058

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

Monroe County Tax Collector: Rental property requirements. https://monroetaxcollector.com/services/rental-properties/

Monroe County Tax Collector: Tourist development tax. https://monroetaxcollector.com/services/tdt/

City of Key West: Map and addresses of transient rental properties. https://cityofkeywest-fl.gov/856/Map-Addresses-of-Transient-Rental-Proper

City of Key West: Licensing FAQs. https://cityofkeywest-fl.gov/m/faq?cat=31

City of Key West (Municode): Sec. 122-1371, transient living accommodations in residential dwellings. https://library.municode.com/fl/key_west/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=SPBLADERE_CH122ZO_ARTVSUDIRE_DIV7TRLIACREDW_S122-1371TRLIA

City of Key West (Municode): Sec. 18-601 to 18-603, transient rentals of residential property-. https://library.municode.com/fl/key_west/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=SPAGEOR_CH18BU_ARTXITRRE