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St. Augustine vacation rental checklist

St. Johns County, Florida | Rules checked November 3, 2026

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St. Augustine requires a yearly registration for every short-term rental, with a site plan, a floor plan, and an annual fire inspection. Nightly rentals are allowed in most districts, but stays must be a week or longer in RS-1 and RS-2 and a month or longer in HP-1.

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, and Indian River (District 4) renew April 1, with the half-year rate from October 1. Flagler, St. Johns, and the rest of District 5 renew June 1, with the half-year rate from December 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.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

- [ ] **Register for the tourist tax**
  Get a Florida sales tax number from the Department of Revenue, a county business tax receipt, and fill out the Tax Collector's tourist development tax application. File a return every month by the 20th, including months with no rentals. Filing correctly and on time earns a 2.5% collection allowance, up to $30.
  Tourist development tax application (PDF): https://sjctax.us/downloads/New-TDT-Application.pdf

- [ ] **Ask whether your platform covers the county tax**
  Airbnb's and Vrbo's own tax pages don't name St. Johns County, and the Tax Collector says every owner or agent collects and remits. Plan to file it yourself unless the Tax Collector tells you a platform remits for you.

- [ ] **Know which rules cover you**
  St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach run their own programs. Outside city limits and east of the Intracoastal Waterway (Ponte Vedra Beach, Vilano Beach, Crescent Beach, Butler Beach), the county's short-term vacation rental registration applies. West of the Intracoastal, including Hastings, there is no county registration.

- [ ] **Then your town**
  Pick your town for its full checklist.

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

- [ ] **Check your zoning and minimum stay**
  In RS-1 and RS-2, rentals must be a week or longer (one stay per week, 1 to 6 nights is fine). In HP-1, a month or longer. In all other districts, nightly rentals are allowed with a registration.
  City zoning maps: https://www.citystaug.com/209/Maps

- [ ] **Check your parking**
  You need at least one on-site space per bedroom, on concrete, asphalt, pavers, or gravel (not grass, mulch, or sand). Off-site parking needs approval from the Planning and Zoning Board.

- [ ] **Prepare a site plan and floor plan**
  Both are required as PDFs with the application. The city posts an example survey site plan and an example floor plan.
  Example floor plan (PDF): https://www.citystaug.com/DocumentCenter/View/4113/Example-Floor-Plan

- [ ] **Get the state license and tax accounts**
  Every rental needs the DBPR license, a county business tax receipt, and a St. Johns County tourist tax account. See the St. Johns County page.

- [ ] **Apply online**
  Create an account on the city permit portal and choose "Short-Term Rental Application." Each separate listing on a booking site needs its own registration. Fees aren't refunded if the application is denied or the final inspection fails.
  City permit portal: https://gis.citystaug.com/COSAPermits/

- [ ] **Pass the fire inspection, then every year**
  The St. Augustine Fire Department inspects when you register and every year after that. Request the inspection through the city's online form.
  Inspection request form:
  https://www.citystaug.com/formcenter/short-term-rentals-20/inspection-request--short-term-rentals-87

- [ ] **Renew by October 1**
  Registrations run October 1 to September 30. A $100 late fee applies after October 1.

City registration fees

A yearly fee based on bedrooms. The city's FAQ still shows the lower fees from before the 2026 increase; the table on the main page is the one we list.

Studio	**$315.51**
One bedroom	**$398.36**
Two bedrooms	**$481.21**
Three bedrooms	**$564.06**
Four bedrooms	**$646.91**
Five or more bedrooms	**$729.76**
Late renewal (after October 1)	**$100**
Re-inspection	**$50**

Inspection checklist

- [ ] **Address numbers.** Visible and legible from the street, at least 4 inches tall.
- [ ] **Smoke alarms.** In each sleeping room, in areas giving access to sleeping rooms, and on each level.
- [ ] **CO alarms.** In sleeping areas if the home has gas appliances or an attached garage.
- [ ] **Fire extinguishers.** A 2A10BC multi-purpose extinguisher mounted on each level, serviced and tagged by a licensed company every year.
- [ ] **Emergency lighting and exit signs.** Battery-backed emergency lighting throughout, and exit signs over exit doors wherever the way out may be unclear.
- [ ] **Second way out of each bedroom.** A second door to the outside or a window that opens from inside. Exit paths clear.
- [ ] **Evacuation plan in each bedroom.** Posted in every bedroom of the rental.
- [ ] **Alarm and sprinkler systems.** Any installed system inspected and tagged by a licensed company every year.
- [ ] **Extension cords.** Not used as permanent wiring.

House rules for guests

Maximum guests: 12
2 per bedroom plus 2 children under 18; studios 2.

Parking: 1 on-site space per bedroom

Who to contact

Short-term rentals: 904-201-8839
Assistant Fire Marshal: 904-808-3369
Complaint hotline: 904-569-7077
Tax Collector: 904-209-2250

St. Augustine 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

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

A plain-language summary of public rules, not legal advice. Confirm with City of St. Augustine before you rent. Latest version: licensedrental.com/fl/st-johns/st-augustine

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

St. Johns County Tax Collector: Tourist development tax. https://sjctax.us/tourist-development-tax/

Airbnb: Occupancy tax collection and remittance by Airbnb in Florida. https://airbnb.com/help/article/2301/

St. Johns County: Land Development Code Article II, § 2.02.04.B.19, short-term vacation rentals-. https://www.sjcfl.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Article-II.pdf

City of St. Augustine: Short-term rentals. https://citystaug.com/830

City of St. Augustine Fire Department: Short-term rental life safety inspections. https://www.citystaug.com/842

City of St. Augustine (Municode): Code Chapter 28, Article III, Division 2, vacation rentals (Ordinances 2019-50, 2019-51, 2019-52). https://library.municode.com/fl/st._augustine/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH28ZO_ARTIIIZODIDIRE_DIV2VARE