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Unincorporated St. Johns vacation rental checklist

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

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East of the Intracoastal Waterway, rentals outside city limits must register with the county every 12 months: 10 guests at most (children 12 and under don't count), off-street parking, and a posted information page. Condos with an association or on-site management are exempt.

> We couldn't find the county's registration fee; it's set by resolution and the online portal was offline in November 2026. Ask Code Enforcement.

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, and St. Lucie (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. 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. 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.

UNINCORPORATED ST. JOHNS COUNTY

- [ ] **Check whether you're exempt**
  County registration doesn't apply west of the Intracoastal Waterway, to a homesteaded home the owner lives in full time (or a duplex where the owner lives in one side), or to units in a multi-family building with a condo, homeowners, or property owners association or on-site management. Most beach condos fall under that last exemption.
- [ ] **Get the state license, tax accounts, and business tax receipt**
  You need the DBPR license, a Florida Department of Revenue certificate, a county tourist tax account, and a county business tax receipt before you register. See the St. Johns County page.
- [ ] **Write a lease with the required terms**
  Maximum occupancy and vehicles; 24-hour phone numbers for the owner, manager, and a backup contact; the guest's agreement to county inspections; and the guest's agreement to the rental rules and the county noise ordinance (give them a copy). Put the trash and recycling schedule in the lease too.
- [ ] **Register with the county**
  Submit the application and affidavit, a sample lease, your business tax receipt, state tax certificate, DBPR license, and the fee. In the affidavit you agree to get a copy of a government photo ID for the person renting. The county's online portal was down for a software change when we checked; call Code Enforcement if it still is.
  County short-term vacation rentals page: https://www.sjcfl.us/short-term-vacation-rentals/
- [ ] **Renew every 12 months**
  Renewals are due by the date your registration expires. Adding square footage, sleeping rooms, or guests needs a new application.

Inspection checklist

- [ ] **Fire extinguishers.** A multi-purpose extinguisher mounted on the wall of each floor, in an open common area or a marked enclosed space, maintained per NFPA 1.
- [ ] **Posted page by the main door.** Owner or manager name and phone; maximum occupancy and vehicles; where the evacuation route map is; nearest hospital; and the county's sea turtle rules.
- [ ] **Trash cans.** One covered can for every four guests. Out no earlier than sunset the day before pickup, back by sunrise the next day.

House rules for guests

Maximum guests: 10
2 per sleeping room or common area; children 12 and under don’t count.

Hurricanes: Leave on a hurricane warning
Guests must evacuate as soon as a hurricane warning is posted.

Parking: Driveway or marked spaces only
Vehicles, boats, RVs, and trailers together can’t exceed your off-street spaces. Only guests’ vehicles overnight.

Violations: 7 days to fix
Fines start at $250. Guests are cited first; after three guest violations in 180 days the county can cite the owner.

Who to contact

Code Enforcement: 904-209-0734
Email: codenf@sjcfl.us
Tax Collector: 904-209-2250

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

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

St. Johns County Code Enforcement: Short-term vacation rentals. https://www.sjcfl.us/short-term-vacation-rentals/

St. Johns County: Resolution 2023-44, civil penalties for short-term vacation rental violations-. https://stjohnsclerk.com/minrec/Resolutions/2023/RES2023-44.pdf