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Savannah vacation rental checklist

Chatham County, Georgia | Rules checked November 6, 2026

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Savannah allows whole-home short-term rentals only in its STVR overlay (the Downtown, Victorian, and Streetcar historic districts), and most Downtown and Victorian wards have hit their 20% cap on non-owner-occupied rentals. You need a city STVR certificate ($400 new, $250 a year to renew) and a business tax certificate. Stays pay 7% sales tax plus Savannah's 8% hotel-motel tax.

> Certificates don't transfer. A new owner of a property with a certificate issued before September 28, 2017 keeps the cap exemption only by applying within six months of the sale.

> Renting a room in your own home is a separate use (a bed and breakfast homestay), not an STVR.

Licensing steps

STATE OF GEORGIA

- [ ] **Know what the platform collects**
  Airbnb collects state and local sales tax, the $5-a-night state hotel-motel fee, and the local hotel-motel tax on its Georgia bookings. Ask any other platform what it collects, and keep records either way.
- [ ] **Register for direct bookings**
  If guests book and pay you directly, register for sales tax with the Georgia Tax Center and file the local hotel-motel tax with your city or county. If your city or county requires a business license or occupation tax for the rental, the DOR treats you as an innkeeper and you also owe the $5 state fee on direct bookings.
  Georgia Tax Center: https://gtc.dor.ga.gov/
- [ ] **Check your city or county**
  Most of the rules are local: short-term rental permits, business licenses (occupation tax), zoning limits, and caps. Some cities ban rentals in residential zones. Pick your area.

CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

- [ ] **Then your city or area**
  Permits, zoning, and the hotel-motel tax are set by each city, and by the county outside city limits. Pick your area.

CITY OF SAVANNAH

- [ ] **Confirm your address qualifies**
  Check that the property is inside the STVR overlay and, in the Downtown and Victorian districts, whether its ward has reached the 20% cap. Owner-occupied parcels are exempt from the cap. If your ward is full, file the waiting list form. In the Streetcar district, TN-2 parcels need two or more units, one owner-occupied.
- [ ] **Apply for the STVR certificate**
  Apply through the city's STVR registration portal with the $400 fee. Include an exemplar rental agreement, proof of insurance that names the short-term rental use, proof you notified the adjacent property owners, and, for condos, the declaration showing short-term leasing is allowed.
  Savannah STVR page: https://www.savannahga.gov/1476
- [ ] **Get your business tax certificate**
  After the application is approved, get a Business Tax Certificate from the Revenue Department and send a copy to Planning and Urban Design. The STVR certificate is issued after that.

☐ **Taxes on each stay**
Stays here owe 7% sales tax, the local hotel-motel tax, and the $5-a-night state fee. Airbnb collects all three on its bookings. For direct bookings, file sales tax (and the $5 fee, if you need a local license) with the Georgia Tax Center. Savannah's hotel-motel tax is 8%. For direct bookings, file it with the city Revenue Department by the 20th of the following month.

House rules for guests

Certificate number: In every ad
Publish the certificate number and exemplar rental agreement in every listing.

Rental agreement: Posted in the unit

Agent change: Tell the city within 5 business days

Who to contact

Planning and Urban Design: 912-651-3108
STVR complaint hotline (24/7): 912-226-0320

Official sources

Airbnb: Occupancy tax collection and remittance by Airbnb in Georgia. https://www.airbnb.com/help/article/2745

Georgia Department of Revenue: Rule 560-13-2-.01 amendment notice (2025)-. https://dor.georgia.gov/document/document/notice-fet-2025-01-rule-560-13-2-01-state-hotel-motel-feepdf/download

City of Savannah: Short-term vacation rental regulations. https://www.savannahga.gov/2327/STVR-Regulation-Updates

City of Savannah: STVR application process. https://www.savannahga.gov/2332/STVR-Application-Process

City of Savannah: Local and state taxes (STVR). https://www.savannahga.gov/2328/Local-State-Taxes

City of Savannah: STVR - Short-Term Vacation Rentals. https://www.savannahga.gov/1476