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Thunderbolt vacation rental checklist

Chatham County, Georgia | Rules checked November 6, 2026

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Thunderbolt caps short-term rentals at 70 registrations (owner-occupied homes don't count) and requires a yearly registration and business license. A new owner doesn't inherit the permit. Stays pay 7% sales tax plus the town's 6% hotel-motel tax.

> Operating without a registration can cost up to $250 a day. A change of ownership, including a change in an LLC's members, ends the permit.

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.

TOWN OF THUNDERBOLT

- [ ] **Register with the town**
  Register each rental at Town Hall or online with the owner and agent contacts, bedrooms, maximum occupancy, and a drawing of on- and off-site parking. Give the owner and agent contacts to adjacent neighbors on the town's form letter.
- [ ] **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. Thunderbolt's hotel-motel tax is 6% (DCA report). For direct bookings, file it with the Town of Thunderbolt.

House rules for guests

Minimum use: 90 rental days a year
Or the permit is presumed abandoned.

Not allowed: Mobile homes, RVs, tiny homes, boats

Who to contact

Town Hall: 912-354-5533

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

Thunderbolt (Municode): Code section. https://library.municode.com/ga/thunderbolt/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH6BURE_ARTIIIREREPR

Georgia Department of Community Affairs: Hotel/motel excise tax rates and revenue report-. https://dca.georgia.gov/document/document/hotel-motel-tax-revenue-report/download