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Unincorporated Chatham County vacation rental checklist

Chatham County, Georgia | Rules checked November 6, 2026

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Outside city limits, Chatham County requires a yearly short-term rental certificate ($350) and an occupation registration. The county paused new rentals for 120 days in July 2026 and amended its ordinance in September 2026. Stays pay 7% sales tax plus the county's 6% hotel-motel tax.

> We could not read the amended ordinance. The fees and rules above come from the county's application packet; confirm them with the county, which takes questions at STVR@chathamcounty.org.

> A property with a homestead or Stephen's Day exemption is flagged in the county's review.

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.

CHATHAM COUNTY (UNINCORPORATED AREAS)

- [ ] **Check the moratorium and your HOA**
  Ask the county whether it is taking new applications before you buy or list. The September 2026 changes let homeowners associations enforce their rules with county code enforcement behind them, and the application needs a notarized HOA affidavit.
- [ ] **Apply to Building Safety & Regulatory Services**
  Send the application, life safety form, regulation sign, HOA affidavit, ID, notarized public-benefit status and E-Verify affidavits (new applications only), proof of ownership, insurance that names the rental use, a paid property tax receipt, proof of trash and fire service, a parking diagram, and proof of your platform listing, with the $350 fee.
  Chatham County Building Safety: https://buildingsafety.chathamcountyga.gov/

☐ **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. The county's hotel-motel tax is 6%. The county asks direct-booking hosts to file it with the County Finance Department by the 20th; it says you don't need to if you rent only through an online platform.

House rules for guests

Local agent: Available 24 hours
Must come to the property within 24 hours of a county notice. Post the agent's contact on site.

Safety: 10-ABC fire extinguisher; pool and hot tub enclosures

Who to contact

Building Safety & Regulatory Services (Occupational Tax): 912-201-4300

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

WTOC: Chatham County commissioners approve short-term rental changes (September 25, 2026)-. https://www.wtoc.com/2026/09/25/chatham-county-commissioners-approve-short-term-rental-changes/

Chatham County Department of Building Safety & Regulatory Services: Requirements for a new short-term rental license (application packet). https://cms.chathamcountyga.gov/api/assets/buildingsafety/74c73013-965d-4845-9c24-b4576da6a742?download=0

WTOC: Chatham County approves 120-day moratorium on new short-term vacation rentals (July 10, 2026)-. https://www.wtoc.com/2026/07/10/chatham-county-approves-120-day-moratorium-new-short-term-vacation-rentals/