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Cairo vacation rental checklist

Grady County, Georgia | Rules checked November 6, 2026

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Cairo requires a city building office approval, renewed each calendar year, and a city certificate of business for every short-term rental. Owners who live away must name a contact within 25 miles and carry at least $500,000 in insurance.

> The rules sit in the R-1AA residential district chapter and say rentals are allowed in “designated” districts, but don’t list them. Ask the building official whether your zone qualifies.

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.

GRADY COUNTY, GEORGIA

- [ ] **Then your city or area**
  Business licenses, zoning, and the local hotel-motel tax are set by each city and the county. Pick your area.

CITY OF CAIRO

- [ ] **Apply to the building office**
  Give your name and contact details and, if you live outside the area, a local contact within 25 miles of Cairo. Include proof of insurance and pay the application fee. Code enforcement sets the number of guests based on bedrooms, beds, and size.
- [ ] **Get a certificate of business**
  Buy a City of Cairo certificate of business and post it, with the city’s rental approval, at the rental.
- [ ] **Taxes on each stay**
  Stays here owe 8% 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. Cairo’s hotel-motel tax is 5%; for direct bookings, file it with the City of Cairo.

Inspection checklist

- [ ] **UL-listed smoke alarms in sleeping areas, along the exit path, and on each story.**
- [ ] **24-hour emergency phone number given to guests and posted.**
- [ ] **City approval posted at the unit.**

☐ **Linens and towels changed and the unit cleaned between guests.**

House rules for guests

Parking: Enough off-street and on-street parking for all guests

Signs: No rental signs

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 Cairo (Municode): Code section. https://library.municode.com/ga/cairo/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH22ZO_ARTIIZODI_DIV2ASIMIREDI_S22-65SHRMREUN

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