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Covington vacation rental checklist

Newton County, Georgia | Rules checked November 6, 2026

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Covington requires a yearly short-term vacation rental certificate ($150 to apply, $100 to renew) and allows rentals only in certain residential and mixed-use zones. Every booking must be at least two nights, and the city adds an 8% hotel-motel tax.

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.

NEWTON 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 COVINGTON

- [ ] **Apply to Planning & Development**
  Bring the application, an occupancy permit, your federal tax ID, your Georgia sales tax number, photo ID, a sworn code compliance form, proof of ownership, proof of insurance covering short-term rental use, and a sample rental agreement. Condo owners need a declaration that allows rentals under 30 days.
  Covington STVR procedures:
  https://cityofcovington.org/ckeditorfiles/files/2025_PZ_Short%20-TermVacationRentalProcedures.pdf
- [ ] **Name an agent who can come within 2 hours**
  The agent (18 or older, or you) must be on site within two hours of a city call. Report a new agent within five business days.
- [ ] **Put the certificate number in every ad**
  Ads and listings must show the certificate number and the rental agreement. Post the certificate inside with the agent's contact, maximum guests, and vehicle limit.
- [ ] **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. Covington's 8% hotel-motel tax applies inside city limits; file it with the city for direct bookings.

Fees

Application Non-refundable.	**$150**
Annual renewal	**$100**
Violations Three in 12 months revoke the certificate for 12 months.	**$500, $750, then $1,000**

House rules for guests

Vehicles 11 p.m. to 9 a.m.: 1 per bedroom, at least 2 allowed

Who to contact

Planning & Development: 770-385-2178

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 Covington Planning & Development: Short-Term Vacation Rental Permit Submittal Procedures (2025)-. https://cityofcovington.org/ckeditorfiles/files/2025_PZ_Short%20-TermVacationRentalProcedures.pdf

City of Covington (Municode): Code section. https://library.municode.com/ga/covington/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT16ZO_CH16.20SUUSPR_16.20.635SHRMVARE

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