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Cleveland vacation rental checklist

White County, Georgia | Rules checked November 6, 2026

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Cleveland requires a city permit ($250 the first year, $100 after), a business license, and a yearly fire department inspection for short-term rentals in its residential zones. Guests are capped at 15, and the city defines a short-term rental as 24 nights or fewer.

Fines start at up to $250; a second violation in 12 months brings up to $500 and a 30- to 90-day suspension.

A rental unused for 12 months loses its permit. Changing your local contact costs $25.

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.

WHITE COUNTY, GEORGIA

- [ ] **Then your city or area**
  Permits, zoning, and the hotel-motel tax depend on whether you're inside a city. Pick your area.

CITY OF CLEVELAND

- [ ] **Apply for the permit, business license, and tax certificate**
  List all owners, a local contact 21 or older who responds 24/7, bedrooms and square footage, maximum guests, and a code compliance form showing bedrooms and egress meet code. Certify insurance for short-term rental use. Apartments can't be permitted.
- [ ] **Screen and sign up your renter**
  Rent to a responsible person 21 or older, copy their ID, and have them sign that they've read the rules. Keep the records 3 years.
- [ ] **Post the notice and permit**
  By the front door, post the owner and contact numbers, nearest hospital, maximum guests, trash day, and quiet hours, plus a copy of the permit and its conditions. Keep the street number visible at the driveway.
- [ ] **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. Cleveland charges an 8% hotel-motel tax; file it with the City of Cleveland.

House rules for guests

Parking: Hard-surfaced areas only, as permitted
Trailers and boats count as vehicles; no street parking.

Ads: Show maximum guests, vehicles, and noise rules

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 Cleveland (Municode): Code section.
https://library.municode.com/ga/cleveland/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH12BURELI_ARTVISHRMREOR

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