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Unincorporated Dare County vacation rental checklist

Dare County, North Carolina | Rules checked November 6, 2026

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Outside the towns, including the Hatteras Island villages and Colington, we found no short-term rental rules in Dare County's zoning ordinance. Stays pay 6.75% sales tax plus the county's 6% occupancy tax.

Licensing steps

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

- [ ] **Know who owes the tax**
  Whoever collects the rent reports the sales and occupancy tax: the platform, your rental agency, or you. Airbnb collects state and county sales tax and all local occupancy taxes on its bookings. If guests pay you directly, register with the Department of Revenue for sales tax and with your county or town for occupancy tax.
  NCDOR business registration: https://www.ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/business-registration

- [ ] **Use a written vacation rental agreement**
  The Vacation Rental Act covers owners and agents renting for vacation stays under 90 days. Have the guest accept a written agreement with the required notices, hold advance payments in a trust account, and keep the home fit and habitable with working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

- [ ] **Check your zoning**
  Towns can't require you to register a rental, but they can limit short-term rentals to certain zoning districts, require a zoning permit, and set parking, trash, and safety standards. Pick your area for the local rules.

DARE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

- [ ] **Then your town or area**
  Zoning rules for short-term rentals are set by each town, and by the county outside town limits. Pick your area.

DARE COUNTY (UNINCORPORATED AREAS)

- [ ] **Taxes on each stay**
  Stays under 90 days owe 6.75% sales tax plus the local occupancy tax. Airbnb collects both on its bookings. If guests pay you directly, file sales tax with the Department of Revenue. Dare County's occupancy tax is 6%. For direct bookings, file it with the Dare County Tax Department by the 20th of the following month.

- [ ] **Ask about zoning and septic**
  Ask Dare County Planning whether zoning allows a rental at your address. Sleeper sofas and daybeds can count as bedroom equivalents when the county sizes your septic system.

Official sources

UNC School of Government: Occupancy taxes and Airbnb. https://www.sog.unc.edu/node/374926

North Carolina General Assembly: Vacation Rental Act (G.S. Chapter 42A)-
. https://ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByChapter/Chapter_42A.html

UNC School of Government: Short-term rental regulations after Schroeder-
. https://www.sog.unc.edu/blogs/coates-canons/short-term-rental-regulations-after-schroeder-0

Dare County Tax Department: Occupancy tax. https://darenc.gov/departments/tax-department/occupancy-tax

Dare County (American Legal): Dare County zoning ordinance §22-2, Definitions-
. https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/darecounty/latest/dareco_nc/0-0-0-29755