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Pigeon Forge vacation rental checklist

Sevier County, Tennessee | Rules checked November 5, 2026

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Pigeon Forge allows tourist residences in R-2 and higher zones with a planning commission site plan. In R-1, only rentals operating and paying tax by August 13, 2018 can continue, with a $300 operating permit ($100 renewal). Big cabins (over 12 guests, 5 bedrooms, 5,000 square feet, or 3 stories) must meet hotel fire rules. Guests pay 12.25% tax, and the owner pays a 1% city gross receipts tax.

R-1 operating permits must appear in every ad and can't be transferred; selling the property voids the permit.

Airbnb's Tennessee tax article says it collects state and local sales tax and all local occupancy taxes. It doesn't mention city gross receipts taxes or business tax, so file those yourself.

Licensing steps

STATE OF TENNESSEE

- [ ] **Register for sales tax**
  Register through the Tennessee Taxpayer Access Point (TNTAP). One registration covers all your rentals in the same city or county. If you take direct bookings, collect 7% plus the local rate and file by the 20th of each month. Once registered, file every month, even a $0 return.
  TNTAP: https://tntap.tn.gov/
- [ ] **Get a business tax license**
  Rentals under 180 days owe business tax. With $3,000 to $100,000 a year in gross receipts in a city or county you need a minimal activity license; at $100,000 or more, a standard license. Booking platforms don't handle this for you.
- [ ] **Know what the platform collects**
  Airbnb, VRBO, and other marketplaces collect and remit sales tax and local occupancy tax on their bookings. Keep records showing they did. For direct bookings, you pay sales tax to the state and occupancy tax to the city or county.
- [ ] **Then your county and city**
  Permits, zoning, and occupancy tax rates are where Tennessee towns differ most. Pick your area.

SEVIER COUNTY, TENNESSEE

- [ ] **Get city and county business licenses**
  Gatlinburg's and Pigeon Forge's new-business sheets list a $15 county business license from the Sevier County Clerk (865-453-5502) on top of the city license. Outside the cities, ask the Clerk which license applies.
- [ ] **Then your city or area**
  Permits, inspections, zoning, and occupancy tax differ in every city. Pick your area.

CITY OF PIGEON FORGE

- [ ] **Check your zoning**
  Tourist residences are allowed in R-2 with a site plan approved by the planning commission, which also sets the parking. They're barred in R-1 except for grandfathered rentals.
- [ ] **Plan for the building and fire review**
  In zones that allow overnight rentals, plans for any building that is or could be used as a short-term rental must carry a Tennessee architect's or engineer's seal. Larger homes must meet hotel sprinkler and exit rules.

- [ ] **Get city and county business licenses**
  Both cost $15: the city license from Finance (865-429-7309) and the county license from the Sevier County Clerk (865-453-5502).
- [ ] **Register for sales and occupancy tax**
  Tax on stays here is 9.75% sales tax plus 2.5% city lodging tax. Airbnb and VRBO collect both on their bookings. For direct bookings, file sales tax with the state through TNTAP by the 20th of each month. File the city lodging tax on direct bookings with the City of Pigeon Forge by the 20th (it's delinquent after the 21st). You also owe the city's 1% gross receipts tax on your rent.

House rules for guests

Maximum guests (R-1 permits): 2 per bedroom + 2, up to 12

Local contact (R-1 permits): Responds in person within 45 minutes

Who to contact

Finance Department: 865-429-7309
Lodging tax questions: 865-453-9061

Official sources

Tennessee Department of Revenue: Taxation of short-term vacation rentals-
. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/revenue/documents/taxpayer_education/misc/taxation-of-short-term-vacation-rentals.pdf

Tennessee Department of Revenue: SUT-48: Short-term rentals, reporting requirements-
. https://revenue.support.tn.gov/hc/en-us/articles/360058190432-SUT-48-Short-Term-Rentals-Reporting-Requirements

City of Gatlinburg: New business: overnight rental-
. https://cms9files1.revize.com/gatlinburg/Finance/New%20Business%20Overnight%20Rental.pdf

City of Pigeon Forge: Zoning Ordinance (updated through October 2026)-
. https://www.cityofpigeonforgetn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/517/Zoning-Ordinance-PDF

City of Pigeon Forge: Building Department: overnight rental design considerations. https://www.cityofpigeonforgetn.gov/226/Building-Department

City of Pigeon Forge: Forms (license, permits, etc.). https://www.cityofpigeonforgetn.gov/169/Forms-License-Permits-Etc

City of Pigeon Forge: Lodging tax form. https://www.cityofpigeonforgetn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/437/Lodging-Tax-Form-PDF

Tennessee Department of Revenue: Local occupancy tax rates (map and report)-
. https://www.tn.gov/revenue/taxes/local-occupancy-tax/due-date-and-tax-rate/local-occupancy-tax-rates.html