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Unincorporated Cameron County vacation rental checklist

Cameron County, Texas | Rules checked November 8, 2026

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Outside city limits there's usually no rental permit, but state law lets Cameron County zone the part of Padre Island in the county. Stays owe the 6% state hotel tax and Cameron County's 2%.

> We didn't find the county's Padre Island regulations online in November 2026. Confirm with Cameron County before you list.

Licensing steps

STATE OF TEXAS

- [ ] **Know who pays the hotel tax**
  Airbnb collects and pays the 6% state hotel tax on its bookings. If guests pay you directly or through a site that doesn't collect, register with the Comptroller and file the state tax yourself.
  Texas hotel occupancy tax: https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/hotel/
- [ ] **Register for local hotel tax**
  Your city (and in some places your county) charges its own hotel tax, filed with that city or county, not the state. Airbnb pays it only in the places on its list; everywhere else you register and file it yourself, even for Airbnb bookings.
- [ ] **Check your city's rules**
  Many Texas cities require a short-term rental permit or registration, and some require an inspection, a local contact, or posted rules. Outside city limits there's usually no permit, but deed restrictions and HOA rules often limit rentals. Pick your area for the local rules.

CAMERON COUNTY, TEXAS

- [ ] **Then pick your city**
  Texas counties can't zone, so rental permits and the local hotel tax are set by each city. Pick your city, or the unincorporated page if you're outside city limits.
- [ ] **File the county hotel tax**
  Register your rental in the Localgov portal (choose Cameron County, Texas) and file the county return by the 20th of each month, even with no rentals. Late returns owe a 5% penalty after 30 days.
  Cameron County hotel tax: https://cameroncountytx.gov/cameron-county-hotel-tax-information-hot

CAMERON COUNTY (UNINCORPORATED AREAS)

- [ ] **Ask about Padre Island zoning**
  If your rental is on Padre Island outside South Padre Island city limits, ask Cameron County whether its Padre Island regulations allow a short-term rental there.
- [ ] **Hotel taxes on each stay**
  Stays of 29 nights or less owe the 6% state hotel tax, which Airbnb collects on its bookings. If guests pay you directly, file it with the Texas Comptroller. File Cameron County's 2% hotel tax monthly through Localgov.

Who to contact

Localgov (county hotel tax filing): 877-842-3037

Official sources

Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts: Hotel Occupancy Tax FAQs: Airbnb. https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/hotel/airbnb-faq.php

Airbnb: Occupancy tax collection and remittance by Airbnb in Texas. https://www.airbnb.com/help/article/2331

Texas Legislature: County zoning authority (Local Government Code ch. 231). https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/LG/htm/LG.231.htm

Cameron County: Cameron County Hotel Tax Information (HOT). https://cameroncountytx.gov/cameron-county-hotel-tax-information-hot

Texas Legislature (via Public.Law): Padre Island zoning (Local Government Code § 231.011)-
. https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._local_gov't_code_section_231.011