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Waco vacation rental checklist

McLennan County, Texas | Rules checked November 8, 2026

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Waco licenses every short-term rental for two years ($500, then $250 to renew), after a life safety inspection. You submit a site plan showing off-street parking and post an evacuation plan in every bedroom. Homes you don't live in can't be rented in most single-family zones. Stays owe 15% hotel tax (6% state, 7% city, 2% county); Airbnb collects only the state share.

> The fee amounts come from the city's 2022 planning fee schedule; confirm current fees when you apply.

> A license doesn't pass to a new owner if the rules have changed since it was issued.

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.

MCLENNAN COUNTY, TEXAS

- [ ] **Then your city**
  Texas counties can't zone, so rental rules come from the city your home is in. Outside city limits there's usually no permit, but deed restrictions and HOA rules may limit rentals. Pick your city.

- [ ] **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. McLennan County reports a 2% county hotel tax (a venue tax). Airbnb doesn't collect it; inside Waco it's filed with the city's tax collector, Avenu.

CITY OF WACO

- [ ] **Find your license type and zone**
  Type I: you or an operator live on site. Type II: a house or duplex you don't live in. Type III: a unit in a building of three or more. Check your zoning; some types need a special permit from the Plan Commission and City Council (60 to 90 days, $500), and Type II rentals are 500 feet apart in single-family and R-2 zones.
  Waco short-term rentals: https://www.waco-texas.com/Departments/Planning-Services/Short-Term-Rentals

- [ ] **Draw your site plan**
  Apply on the city's Citizen Self Service portal with a site plan showing the property, every required parking space with its size, and how cars get in. You need one off-street space per rented bedroom (Type I: two plus one per room); guests can't park on the street.
  Citizen Self Service: https://selfservice.wacotx.gov
- [ ] **Pass the life safety inspection**
  After you pay the invoice, schedule the inspection at 254-750-5612. Post an evacuation plan in every sleeping area; the city has a sample map.
- [ ] **Post the sign and list your number**
  Display the city's sign in a common area with your contact, license number, occupancy, and parking limits. Every listing must show the license number and occupancy limit. If you live outside McLennan County, name a designated operator who lives in the county.
- [ ] **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. Waco's 7% and McLennan County's 2% are both filed with Avenu, which collects for the city and county. Airbnb doesn't collect them, and you need city and county tax records to renew.

Fees

$575 for the first two years, then $250

STR license (two years)	**$500**
License inspection	**$75**
Renewal	**$250**
Special permit, if your zone needs one	**$500**
Non-compliance fee	**$500**

Inspection checklist

- [ ] **Life safety inspection.** Or a certificate of occupancy issued in the last 12 months.
- [ ] **Evacuation plan in each sleeping area.**
- [ ] **City sign in a common area.** Contact, license number, occupancy and parking limits.

House rules for guests

Parking: Off-street only
One space per rented bedroom.

Events: Only in commercial zones

Who to contact

Planning: 254-750-5650
Planning email: planning@wacotx.gov
Development Services (inspections): 254-750-5612
Avenu hotel tax: 877-693-4435

Waco asks for drawings with your application.
Make the site sketch, floor plans, and evacuation maps to scale from your measurements at FireEscapePlan.com.

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
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (data.texas.gov): Local Hotel Occupancy Tax Reporting 2025. https://data.texas.gov/d/er34-v24h
City of Waco Planning Services: Planning: Short Term Rentals. https://www.waco-texas.com/Departments/Planning-Services/Short-Term-Rentals
City of Waco Planning Services: Planning fee schedule (FY 2022-23)-
. https://wacotx.prelive.opencities.com/files/sharedassets/public/v/3/departments/planning-amp-zoning/documents/fee-schedule-planning.pdf