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# Amherst vacation rental checklist

Amherst County, Virginia | Rules checked November 7, 2026

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We found no short-term rental rules for Amherst. Stays owe 5.3% sales tax + 5% town lodging tax; Airbnb collects these on its bookings.

> We checked the town's planning and zoning page and a web search in November 2026 and found no short-term rental rules. Confirm with the Town of Amherst before you list.

## Licensing steps

### COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

- [ ] **Know who pays the tax**
  When a platform like Airbnb books the stay, it collects and pays the state sales tax and the local lodging tax for you. If guests pay you directly, register with Virginia Tax for sales tax and with your county or city for the transient occupancy tax.
  Register a business with Virginia Tax: https://www.tax.virginia.gov/registering-new-business
- [ ] **Register with your locality if it has a registry**
  Many counties and cities require short-term rental hosts to register every year. Registration is a simple filing (your name, each address, and the owner's permission if you lease the home), but listing an unregistered rental can cost up to $500 per violation.
- [ ] **Check your zoning**
  Counties and cities keep their power to decide where short-term rentals are allowed and whether you need a zoning or use permit. HOA and condo rules still apply on top. Pick your area for the local rules.

### AMHERST COUNTY, VIRGINIA

- [ ] **Check whether you need a special exception**
  In A-1, R-1, and V-1, a rental is allowed by right only if the home has a single driveway onto a state-maintained road and is at least 500 feet from the nearest dwelling (and, in R-1 and V-1, the adjoining owners are notified). Otherwise, and in R-2 and R-3, apply for a special exception; the notice is posted on the property before the hearing.
- [ ] **Get a site plan approved**
  Before the county issues the building and zoning permit, submit a site plan with a maintenance schedule for approval by the Planning Commission or the zoning administrator. Mark the property boundaries or guest areas clearly.
- [ ] **Meet the operating rules**
  Keep guests to two adults per bedroom, park all guest cars in the driveway or a parking area (never along the road) and boats and trailers on the lot, and have the septic pumped or inspected every three years.
- [ ] **Taxes on each stay**
  Stays under 90 days owe 5.3% sales tax, and stays under 30 days also owe the local transient occupancy tax. Airbnb collects both on its bookings. If guests pay you directly, file sales tax with Virginia Tax. Amherst County's lodging tax is 5%. For direct bookings, ask the Commissioner of the Revenue how to register and file.

TOWN OF AMHERST

- [ ] **Taxes on each stay**
  Stays under 90 days owe 5.3% sales tax, and stays under 30 days also owe the local transient occupancy tax. Airbnb collects both on its bookings. If guests pay you directly, file sales tax with Virginia Tax. The Town of Amherst reports a 5% transient occupancy tax. For direct bookings, ask the town how to file it and whether the county's 5% also applies inside town limits.
- [ ] **Ask about zoning**
  Ask the Town of Amherst whether zoning allows a short-term rental at your address, and whether you need to register or get a business license. Check your HOA rules too.

## Who to contact

**Town of Amherst:** 434-946-7885

## Official sources


Virginia Tax: Guidelines for sales tax on accommodations (P.D. 21-116)-
. https://tax.virginia.gov/laws-rules-decisions/rulings-tax-commissioner/21-116

Virginia General Assembly: Short-term rental registries (Va. Code § 15.2-983). https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/15.2-983/

Amherst County (Zoneomics): Amherst County Zoning Ordinance, Article VII use requirements by district (as published by Zoneomics).
https://www.zoneomics.com/code/amherst-county-unincorporated-VA/chapter_7

Amherst County (Zoneomics): Amherst County Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 916 Short-term tourist rental of dwellings (as published by Zoneomics).
https://www.zoneomics.com/code/amherst-county-unincorporated-VA/chapter_9

Virginia Tax: Virginia Locality Transient Occupancy Rate Chart (as of July 1, 2025)-
. https://www.tax.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/inline-files/transient-occupancy-tax-rate-chart_18.xlsx

Town of Amherst: Planning and Zoning. https://amherstva.gov/?p=1964