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Unincorporated Bedford County vacation rental checklist

Bedford County, Virginia | Rules checked November 7, 2026

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Bedford County requires a yearly short-term rental zoning permit, with a posted property management plan, a floor plan, a local contact within 50 miles, a fire extinguisher, smoke detectors in each bedroom, and all guest cars, boats, and trailers parked on the lot. On septic, you can't advertise more bedrooms than the health permit allows.

> After more than three violations, the county can bar the home from short-term rental for up to two years.

> The county page doesn't say which districts need a special use permit, or list a regular permit fee. Ask Planning and Zoning. The Town of Bedford has its own zoning and a 5% lodging tax; see its page.

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.

BEDFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA

- [ ] **Then your town or area**
  Each incorporated town sets its own zoning and lodging tax; the county's rules apply outside town limits. Pick your area.

BEDFORD COUNTY (OUTSIDE THE TOWN OF BEDFORD)

- [ ] **Prepare your management plan and floor plan**
  Draw a floor plan of the home showing each bedroom, the fire extinguisher, smoke alarms, tenant parking, and garbage areas. The management plan lists your local contacts, trash pickup, how you'll handle unruly guests, the guest limit, parking, where the safety equipment is, utility contacts, and how you advertise.
- [ ] **Register every year**
  Submit the short-term rental license form with the plans, plus your VDH septic permit if the home is on septic. You can't advertise until you're registered, and each permit lasts one year.
  Bedford County short-term rentals:
  https://www.bedfordcountyva.gov/government/departments-offices-a-d/community-development/planning-zoning/short-term-rentals
- [ ] **Name a local contact**
  Give the county a contact within 50 miles who can respond to complaints right away.

- [ ] **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. Bedford County's lodging tax is filed with the Commissioner of the Revenue by the 20th of each month. Ask the Commissioner for the current rate.

Fees

Renting before you register	**$500 penalty fee**

Inspection checklist

- [ ] **Fire extinguisher.** Working, 2-pound minimum, ABC-rated, in a visible spot such as the kitchen or a hallway.
- [ ] **Smoke detectors.** In every bedroom, plus one on each floor (basement included) outside the bedrooms.
- [ ] **Floor plan.** Bedrooms, extinguishers, smoke alarms, parking, and trash areas.

House rules for guests

Posted plan: In a visible spot
And included in the rental contract.

Signs: One small sign
Unlit; up to 2 sq ft in R-1 and R-2, 16 sq ft in AP, AR, and AV.

Unincorporated Bedford County 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

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/

Bedford County: Short-Term Rental License (registration and management plan), effective November 1, 2023-
. https://bedfordcountyva.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/10793/638470434878570000

Bedford County Planning and Zoning: Short-Term Rentals (excerpted from the Bedford County Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 30-100-18)-
. https://www.bedfordcountyva.gov/government/departments-offices-a-d/community-development/planning-zoning/short-term-rentals

Bedford County Commissioner of the Revenue: Business Taxes and Licenses-
. https://www.bedfordcountyva.gov/business/business-taxes-and-licenses