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Unincorporated Franklin County vacation rental checklist

Franklin County, Virginia | Rules checked November 7, 2026

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Franklin County requires every short-term rental to join its registry ($200 a year), pass an annual inspection, and post an evacuation plan and its approved occupancy. Rentals are allowed by right in unzoned areas and the PCD and RPD districts, need a special use permit in A-1, and are prohibited everywhere else. Stays pay 5.3% sales tax plus the county's 7% lodging tax.

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.

FRANKLIN 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.

FRANKLIN COUNTY (OUTSIDE ROCKY MOUNT AND BOONES MILL)

- [ ] **Check your zoning**
  Short-term rentals (30 days or less) are allowed by right in unzoned parts of the county and in the PCD and RPD districts. In A-1 you need a special use permit, with hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors; if it's denied, you can't rent. All other districts prohibit them.
- [ ] **Join the registry and book the inspection**
  Apply to the Short Term Rental Registry, pay the $200 annual fee, and give written consent to inspection. After you apply, schedule the compliance inspection; you or your representative must be on site. Bring proof of septic approval if the home is on septic.
  Franklin County short-term rentals: https://library.franklincountyva.gov/729/Short-Term-Rentals
- [ ] **Post the evacuation plan and occupancy**
  Post an evacuation plan where guests can clearly see it, and a notice showing the home's approved occupancy.
- [ ] **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. Franklin County's 7% lodging tax is filed monthly with the Commissioner of the Revenue by the 20th, even in months with no rentals.

Fees

Short-term rental registry	**$200 a year**

Inspection checklist

- [ ] **Fire extinguishers.** Type 2A-10BC, wall-mounted in a common area or the kitchen on each floor.
- [ ] **Smoke detectors.** In every living area and bedroom.
- [ ] **Bedroom egress.** Each bedroom must meet building code egress rules.
- [ ] **Evacuation plan.** In the home, clearly visible to guests.
- [ ] **Septic approval.** Proof of approval for homes on septic.

House rules for guests

Posted occupancy: Notice in the home

Parking: Driveways and built parking areas
Boats on the lot; reserved spaces for each multifamily unit.

Who to contact

Planning and Community Development: 540-483-3027
Code Enforcement (complaints): 540-352-9912

Unincorporated Franklin 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/

Franklin County Planning and Community Development: Short-Term Rentals. https://library.franklincountyva.gov/729/Short-Term-Rentals

Franklin County Commissioner of the Revenue: Transient Occupancy Tax. https://www.franklincountyva.gov/739/Transient-Occupancy-Tax