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Sandbridge vacation rental checklist

Virginia Beach, Virginia | Rules checked November 7, 2026

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Sandbridge is the one part of Virginia Beach where state law requires the city to allow short-term rentals as a principal use, so you don't need City Council approval. You still need the city's annual $500 zoning permit, inspections, a parking plan, and a sign. Stays owe 16.5% tax plus $2 a night.

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.

CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

- [ ] **Check whether your address qualifies**
  Since 2021, new whole-home rentals (under 30 nights) are allowed only in the Sandbridge Special Service District and in the Oceanfront Resort short-term rental overlay, where you first need a conditional use permit from City Council. Elsewhere, only grandfathered rentals may operate: those registered with the Commissioner of the Revenue before July 1, 2018 with taxes paid, or with a rental use permit from before September 7, 2021. Use the city's map or ask the STR Team.
  Virginia Beach short-term rentals: https://planning.virginiabeach.gov/permits/short-term-rental

- [ ] **In the Oceanfront overlay, get a conditional use permit**
  Apply to Planning with the $360 fee, a parking plan drawn on a current survey (lot dimensions, parking spaces, and how you meet the parking rule), proof of at least $1 million in liability insurance that names the rental address, and a sworn statement. Free policies from booking platforms often don't qualify.

- [ ] **Register with the Commissioner of the Revenue**
  Register every year before you apply for the zoning permit; you'll attach the proof of registration. Grandfathered owners also show proof of taxes paid.

- [ ] **Get inspections and the annual zoning permit**
  Apply in the city's Accela portal with a sworn statement, parking plan, life-safety inspection report, structural-safety report, insurance policy, and proof of registration. Name an emergency contact who can respond within 30 minutes. The permit is $500 and is renewed every year.
  Zoning permit application (PDF):
  https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/virginia-beach-departments-docs/planning/Permits/Short-term-Rentals/STR-Zoning-Permit-Appli

- [ ] **Taxes on each stay**
  Stays under 90 days owe 6% 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. For direct bookings, register with the Commissioner of the Revenue and file and pay by the 20th of each month, even in months with no rentals (online at pay.vbepay.com). The city tax is 9% plus $2 a night (10.5% plus $2 in Sandbridge), figured on the full rental including cleaning and guest fees.

SANDBRIDGE SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT, VIRGINIA BEACH

- [ ] **Register, then get the zoning permit**
  Register with the Commissioner of the Revenue, then apply for the annual zoning permit with the life-safety and structural reports, a parking plan, insurance, and a sworn statement. See the Virginia Beach page for the full checklist.
  Virginia Beach short-term rentals: https://planning.virginiabeach.gov/permits/short-term-rental

- [ ] **Follow the overlay rules**
  No more than two guests per bedroom overnight (children under 16 don't count, up to three times the bedrooms), no events larger than the overnight limit, and no more than one rental contract in any seven days.

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Sandbridge 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/

AirROI: Virginia Beach Airbnb rules (2026). https://www.airroi.com/airbnb-data/united-states/virginia/virginia-beach/regulations

City of Virginia Beach Planning and Community Development: Short-Term Rental Conditional Use Permit Instructions, Checklist & Application (rev. Aug. 2025).
https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/virginia-beach-departments-docs/planning/Boards-Commissions/Planning-Commission/Applications/STR-Conditional-Use

City of Virginia Beach Commissioner of the Revenue: Short Term Rentals (Commissioner of the Revenue)-
. https://cor.virginiabeach.gov/businesses/short-term-rentals

City of Virginia Beach Zoning Administration: Short-Term Rental Zoning Permit Application (rev. July 2025).
https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/virginia-beach-departments-docs/planning/Permits/Short-term-Rentals/STR-Zoning-Permit-Application.pdf

City of Virginia Beach Commissioner of the Revenue: Transient Occupancy Taxes-
. https://cor.virginiabeach.gov/businesses/transient-occupancy-taxes

City of Virginia Beach (Zoneomics copy): City Zoning Ordinance Article 23, Short-Term Rental Overlay Districts (Ord. 3668, 7-13-21).
https://www.zoneomics.com/code/virginia-beach-VA/chapter_23