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Colonial Beach vacation rental checklist

Westmoreland County, Virginia | Rules checked November 7, 2026

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Colonial Beach requires a yearly short-term rental zoning permit ($50 per unit) and a town business license, both renewed by May 1. The application needs a plat or plot plan of your parking, and a local designee must be able to reach the home within an hour.

> Three or more violations (noise, parking, trash) in six months, or unpaid taxes or fees, can get the permit suspended or cancelled.

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.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY, VIRGINIA

- [ ] **Then your town or area**
  Towns set their own zoning and lodging tax, and the county sets them outside town limits. Pick your area.

TOWN OF COLONIAL BEACH

- [ ] **Apply for the STR zoning permit**
  File one application per rental unit with the Zoning Administrator, with a plat or plot plan showing where guests park and, if the home is on septic, the Health Department's septic capacity. Name a designee who answers 24/7 and can get to the home within an hour.
  Colonial Beach STR application: https://colonialbeachva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1676/STR-Application-3624-Fillable
- [ ] **Get a town business license**
  The permit is valid only with a current town business license. Both expire April 30 and must be renewed by May 1.
  Business license online: https://go.citygrows.com/town-of-colonial-beach/businesslicense
- [ ] **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. Colonial Beach levies a town lodging tax. For direct bookings, ask the town Finance Department (804-224-7181) for the rate and filing schedule.

Fees

$50 a year per unit plus the business license

STR zoning permit (yearly, per unit)	**$50**

Inspection checklist

- [ ] **Meets the state building code for rentals.** The town may inspect with 48 hours' notice.

House rules for guests

Guests: 2 per bedroom plus 2
Or the septic permit's limit if lower. Children 3 and under don't count.

Lead guest: At least 21

Parking: On site, in marked spaces

Address: Visible from the street

Records: Keep rental records 1 year

Who to contact

Town of Colonial Beach: 804-224-7181

Colonial Beach 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/

Town of Colonial Beach: Short-Term Rental Zoning Permit Application-
. https://colonialbeachva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1676/STR-Application-3624-Fillable

Town of Colonial Beach: Zoning Ordinance Article 18, §18-6 Short-Term Rental Permitting and Regulations-
. https://colonialbeachva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1512/Article-18---Miscellaneous-Updated-101823-STR

Town of Colonial Beach: Finance Department. https://www.colonialbeachva.gov/1571/Finance