Short-Term Rentals (STR)

Short-term Rentals (STR) in Essex County

STR standards effective November 10, 2022

STR Renewals begin the second Monday of December. Home-owner’s residences engaged in STR’s in the County must get a STR zoning permit for their rental unit(s) and have a related business license(s). STR Permits/Renewals and business license(s) must be renewed annually by December 31.

- The Town of Tappahannock has their own STR zoning permit.

Short-Term Rental Registration Form - You may complete and submit the registration form online or print the form and submit it to the Planning & Zoning Office using the contact information located in the right sidebar of this page.

Business License Form - Annually by December 31st, you will need an Essex County Business License related to Short-Term Rentals to process the STR Registration Form.

State Transient Occupancy Tax Return Form -

Per the County code, the following limitations are put on Short-term rentals

- The property owner (Host) of the short-term rental is responsible for compliance with and pursuant to Article VI, Division 8, Section 36.422, as amended, of the Essex County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance entitled Short-Term Rentals.
- Per the aforementioned Ordinance, a 24/7 contact person (host designee) is required unless Host is the 24/7 contact.
- Must have the appropriate levels of insurance to cover the short-term rental unit(s), the host(s), and guests for the STR site/units listed
- Dwelling(s)/unit(s) is/are in compliance with all applicable building codes.
- A logbook shall be maintained for all rentals and be made available for review by the County upon request. A logbook shall be kept for each STR unit. For each rental period, the logbook will contain the following information: Renter(s) Name, Number of Occupants, Duration of Stay, Number of Parked Vehicles, and the Dollar Amount Collected for Each Rental Period.
- The maximum number of persons allowed per bedroom is 2. Dwelling/Units listed on Airbnb, Vrbo, Flipkey or any other rental platform or media must list their accommodations at 2 persons per bedroom.
- The principal guest of a short-term rental unit shall be at least 21 years of age.
- Creation of an event venue or gatherings fitting the definition of ‘Assembly, place of’ shall comply with the permit requirements of such use, as outlined in the Zoning Ordinance.
- The physical and aesthetic impact of required off-street parking shall not be detrimental to the existing character of the house and lot or to the surrounding neighborhood. Parking is limited to one (1) overnight vehicle per bedroom. Ample on-site parking shall be provided to discourage parking within/along private and public roads.

Web Links
• Short-Term Rental Registration Form
• Transient Occupancy Tax Ordinance 23-03