



Short Term Rentals

Can you or can you not?

Beginning January 1, 2019, the City of Seattle will begin regulating short term rentals. These new regulations apply to short term rental units in the City of Seattle only.

Definitions:

- “Short term rental” means a lodging use, other than a hotel or motel, offered for rent for fewer than 30 consecutive nights. A dwelling used for more than 30 consecutive nights is not a short term rental.
 - Short-term rentals are not live/work units, dwellings in commercial or industrial buildings, floating residences or waterfront homes. Where prohibited by shoreline code, RV’s, tents, garages, boats, or other spaces that are not considered a “dwelling unit.”
- “Owner” means any individual, firm, corporation, or partnership and their agents alone or with other people who have an interest in any building and unit therein, with or without actual possession of the building or unit.
- “Short term rental operator” means any person who is the owner, or a lawful tenant, of a unit provided as a short term rental.

License Requirements: All operators of short term rentals must have a short term rental operator license. The annual cost for this license is \$75. The license must be in the name of the owner. The license must be renewed annually.

- This license is in addition to a [City of Seattle Business license](#).
- The Washington State Department of Health may also require a [“Transient Accommodation License.”](#)

Limitations and Exceptions on the Number of Short Term Rental Units:

Generally, operators may manage a maximum of two short term rentals within Seattle city limits. The following exceptions exist for operators of short term rentals:

- In the Downtown Urban Center, if short term rentals were operating prior to September 30, 2017, all units may continue to be rented provided they comply with the requirements of the law.
- In the First Hill/Capitol Hill Urban Center, short term rentals in multifamily buildings with five units or less and constructed after 2012 and operating prior to September 30, 2017 may operate up to two additional units if one of the additional units is the owner’s primary residence.
- After one year of operations, the operator may operate a maximum of three units, if the third unit is the operator’s primary residence.



Figure 1: Downtown Urban Center

To qualify a unit in the above described exception areas, the owner must provide:

- A business license tax certificate in effect on or prior to September 30, 2017
- Records reflecting remittance of federal, state, and local taxes within the 12-month period prior to September 30, 2017
- A registry of dates the unit was used as a short-term rental within the 12-month period prior to September 30, 2017

The following rules exist for all operators of short term rentals:

- Every listing of an available short term rental must include the department-issued operator license number
- Must comply with the Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance, if the short term rental unit is not the primary residence of the owner
- Must maintain minimum health and safety standards and minimum building code requires for the unit
- Must ensure all units have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in every bedroom and on all habitable floors
- Must comply with parking, noise, and other code requirements of the specific type of property rented as a short-term rental
- Must provide a properly maintained and charged fire extinguisher
- Must post the following information in a conspicuous place:
 - Emergency contact information for emergency services (911)
 - The address of the short term rental unit
 - A floor plan indicating fire exits and escapes
 - Contact information for the city Customer Service Bureau
 - Maintain maximum occupancy limits (max 8 people in any unit)
 - Provide a local (in King County, WA) contact for all guests available to respond to guests during their stay
- Must maintain at least \$1,000,000 in liability insurance or conduct business through a platform that provides equal or greater coverage
- Must pay federal, state and local taxes as they are due

