

# Short-Term Rentals

## WHAT ARE SHORT-TERM RENTALS?

Short-term rentals are residential units, or in some cases individual rooms within units, in which the owner rents to guests for less than 30 days at a time. Some property owners may desire to use their home to provide such lodging as an alternative to the typical hotel or motel accommodations customarily available to Tacoma visitors. Short-term rentals are allowed in many areas of the City, but there are some limitations and requirements that are designed to help ensure they are operated in a safe manner and do not significantly affect the residential character of the neighborhood.



## TYPES OF SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Examples of short-term rentals include bed and breakfast and room and home rentals through services such as AirBNB and VRBO. There are three common types:

- Rental of an entire home for short-term stays
- Rental of an entire separate unit for short-term stays, such as an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) or “mother-in-law unit”
- Rental of individual rooms within a home for short-term stays

## DO I NEED TO LIVE THERE?

The owner must reside in the home if renting individual rooms or a separate unit, such as an ADU. If renting the entire home, then the owner is not required to reside there.

## HOW MANY ROOMS CAN I RENT?

- You may rent the **entire dwelling** to one family or a group of up to 6 people in *all* Residential, Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Downtown Districts.
- You may rent **an ADU** to up to 4 people in *all* Residential, Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Downtown Districts.
- You may rent **1-2 guest rooms** within an owner-occupied dwelling in *all* Residential Districts, including single-family districts.
- You may rent **3-9 guest rooms**, after receiving an *approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP)*, in R-3, R-4L, R-4, R-5, RCX, and NRX Districts (these are generally residential districts that allow duplex, triplex, and multifamily dwellings).
- You may rent **1-9 guest rooms** in all Commercial, Mixed-Use and Downtown Districts (*except RCX and NRX – see above*).

## BEFORE YOU OPERATE A RENTAL:

- Obtain a City of Tacoma Business License from the [City's Tax and License Office](#). A Transient Accommodation License is also required if renting 3 or more individual rooms.
- Make sure you have a safety sign in each room/unit that shows the location of fire extinguishers, gas shut-off valves, fire exits, and/or fire alarm.
- Make sure you have operating smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Check with the [State Department of Revenue](#) regarding their standards and tax requirements.

## RESOURCES (Tacoma Municipal Code, TMC)

- TMC 13.06.080.A – Short Term Rental in ADUs
- TMC 13.06.080.M – Short Term Rentals
- TMC 6B.20 – Annual Business License
- TMC 6B.140 – Transient Accommodations

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

E-mail: [zoning@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:zoning@cityoftacoma.org)  
Phone: (253) 591-5030

*Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.*

*The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.*

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | [www.tacomapermits.org](http://www.tacomapermits.org) (253) 591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice).

TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

