



Short Term Rentals



STR Regulations as Certified by the California Coastal Commission

5.41 SHORT TERM RENTAL LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

5.41.010 Purpose of Chapter.

This Chapter establishes standards that regulate short term rentals. This Chapter is enacted to reduce the negative impacts of short term rental activity, assure the health and safety of residents and visitors, preserve existing housing and communities while balancing the protection of private property rights, provide economic opportunities for Marin County residents, and provide visitor serving accommodations for coastal tourists.

This Chapter is administered by the Marin County Community Development Agency.

5.41.020 Definitions

Terms used in this Chapter are defined below, or when undefined below are subject to the definitions in Marin County Code Titles 20 and 22.

Change of ownership: A transfer of an interest in real property that meets the definition of a change in ownership of the property under California Revenue and Taxation Code section 60 et seq., or its successor. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an interest in a real property that is actively licensed for short term rental use may be transferred from a natural person to their spouse or child/ren, no more than once per real property, without that transfer being considered a change in ownership under this Chapter.

Guest or Guests: The individual(s) occupying the short term rental for the purpose of overnight lodging, including any individual(s) invited to a short term rental by those occupying the unit for the purposed of overnight lodging.

Host: A host is a person identified by a short term rental property owner to reside at the property at which a short term rental is located.

Hosted Short Term Rental: A short term rental that is the primary residence of a short term rental property owner or host.

Local Contact Person: The person or business designated by the short term rental property owner to receive and respond to communications regarding a short term rental.

Long Term Tenant: A property lessee who occupies a unit as a primary residence for a period for 30 days or more.

Multi-Family Dwelling: A development where three or more dwelling units are located on a single property. For the purpose of this Chapter a condominium unit is also considered a multi-family dwelling.

Natural Person: A human being; the term natural person does not include a legal entity of any kind.

Primary Residence: The dwelling in which a person lives for at least six months each year.

Property: A single legal lot of record.

Property owner: The owner(s) of record of a property, and to the extent any such owner is a legal entity, any and all natural persons with an interest in such legal entity.

Short Term Rental (STR): A rental of a residential unit, or a portion of a residential unit, for a time period less than 30 days. Short term rentals are a residential use of property. Rental of commercial lodging including a hotel, motel, agricultural homestay, bed and breakfast inn, or campground, is not considered a short term rental.

Townships: Geographic areas in Marin County's unincorporated jurisdiction shown on that certain map entitled "Townships of the County of Marin" kept on file by the Marin County Community Development Agency.

Unhosted Short Term Rental: Short-term rental occupancy of a residential unit on a property that does not provide a primary residence for the property owner or a long term tenant.

5.41.030 Applicability.

This Chapter shall apply to short term rentals in unincorporated Marin County, except as exempt per Section 5.41.040.

5.41.040 Exemptions.

- A. This Chapter does not apply to any commercial lodging use including a hotel, motel, agricultural homestay, bed and breakfast inn, or campground.
- B. This Chapter does not apply to a short term rental unit located on an agriculturally zoned property that is at least 10 acres in size and where the primary use of the property is commercial agriculture.

5.41.050 Short Term Rental Licenses.

- A. License Required.** Advertising or operating a short term rental without a valid and current short term rental license issued pursuant to the requirements of this Chapter are prohibited. Once a license expires or is revoked or suspended, the short term rental operation must immediately cease.
- B. License For Property Owner.** A short term rental licensee must own the property where the short term rental is located. Only one license shall be issued per short term rental property owner. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any property owner

legally operating more than one short term rental as of January 1, 2024 is eligible for a license for each of those short term rentals for an initial period of two years, provided the other requirements of this Chapter are met, and further provided that at the conclusion of the initial two-year licensing period, such property owner will only be eligible to renew a single short term rental license, and any other short term rental licenses issued to the property owner shall automatically terminate.

C. License Term. The initial short term rental license for a property expires two years after the date of issuance unless the license is renewed by the property owner for an additional two-year term. The term of the license expires immediately and automatically upon any change of ownership of the property.

D. Administrative Procedures. Administrative procedures for short term rental licenses shall be made publicly available by the Community Development Agency. Applications for short term rental licenses shall not be accepted until these procedures have been made publicly available. These administrative procedures shall set forth the process to apply for, obtain, maintain, monitor, and renew short term rental licenses. The administrative procedures shall set forth a ministerial licensing process based on objective criteria and shall be updated periodically by the Community Development Agency. The administrative procedures shall be consistent with the license framework set forth in the sections below.

1. Application Process. An application for a short term rental license shall be submitted by the property owner or their agent (written property owner authorization and contact information is required for an agent to file the application) to the Community Development Agency.

No license application shall be accepted until the Community Development Agency has made publicly available the administrative procedures.

Only license applications for legal short term rentals in existence on January 1, 2024 will be accepted before July 1, 2025. Applications for properties where there is no legal short term rental in existence on January 1, 2024, will be placed on a wait list until all existing short term rental property owners have had the opportunity to apply for a license.

2. License Suspensions and Revocations. Short term rental licenses may be temporarily suspended or permanently revoked if the short term rental property owner violates the standards set forth in this Chapter or the requirements of the license, as determined through the code enforcement process. All the provisions for legal due process and appeal rights provided for in Marin County Code Chapters 1.05 (Nuisance Abatement), 1.06 (Recordation of Notice of Violation), and 1.07 (Imposition of Administrative Fines for Ordinance Violations) shall apply.

3. License Wait Lists. The Community Development Agency will maintain short term rental license wait lists for townships where the number of short term rental license applicants exceed the number of available licenses for that township, and county wide when the total number of license applicants exceed the number of available licenses county wide. Licenses for qualifying properties on the wait list shall be issued in the order applications were received, except

that a lottery shall be used to determine the rank order of the list of all applications submitted within the first 30 days from the date that the County allows the first round of license applications to be accepted.

- 4. Application Materials.** No short term rental license or renewal shall be issued unless the application has first been deemed complete. The administrative procedures shall specify all the information necessary for a complete application, including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - i. The name(s) and contact information for all property owners. If the property owner(s) applying for the license own/s less than a 100% fee interest in the property, then such property owner(s) must provide proof that all persons and/or entities with an interest in the property consent to such application and license. All adults for whom the property provides a permanent residence shall be listed.
 - ii. The name of the local contact person or host for short term rentals, if different from the property owner, and an email and telephone number at which that party may be reached.
 - iii. Address and Assessor's parcel number for the property where the short term rental is located.
 - iv. Rental unit type (i.e., hosted or unhosted short term rental).
 - v. Number of bedrooms and bathrooms.
 - vi. A schematic site plan showing property lines, all buildings on the site, the driveway, and the location and dimensions of on-site parking spaces.
 - vii. If the rental property is served by a private water supply (well or spring), provide proof of a water supply permit with the County's Environmental Health Services Division or appropriate regulatory agency and proof of water potability with a current bacteriological test.
 - viii. If the rental property is served by a private sewage disposal system, provide proof that the system is documented with the County of Marin Environmental Health Services Division or appropriate regulatory agency and provide an inspection report demonstrating proper operation of the system by an approved licensed professional.
 - ix. Bills from a hauler as proof of a minimum level of service with an authorized waste collector that is sufficient to handle the volume of garbage, recyclable materials and organic materials generated or accumulated.
 - x. Documentation attesting to the existence of a working landline phone, Voice Over Internet Protocol, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) radio.
 - xi. All short term rental applicants shall provide a self-certified building safety inspection upon license or license renewal application.

- xii. All short term rental applicants shall provide a self-certified fire-life safety inspection upon license or license renewal application.
 - xiii. All short term rental applicants shall provide a self-certified defensible space inspection, conducted within the preceding twelve months, upon license or license renewal application.
 - xiv. All short term rental applicants with properties served by a local water provider must provide water use bills or some other documentation from the water provider if volume based bills are not available. If the water use documentation demonstrates short term rental water use exceeding an average of 250 gallons per day, or a lower limit established by the local water provider, the short term rental license or license renewal application shall include strategies to reduce water use to below an average of 250 gallons per day during the next year. If water use is not reduced as required, the license shall not be subsequently renewed.
- 5. Public Notification.** Within five days after issuance of a short term rental license, the Community Development Agency will provide written notification to all properties within a radius of three hundred feet of the property with the short term rental.

The notice shall indicate that the subject property will be the location of a short term rental and provide the name of the local contact person or host, the phone number and email address for the local contact person or host, and the street address of the short term rental.

- 6. Tenant notification of County Rules.** The host or local contact person of the short term rental shall post a County-prepared information sheet inside the unit and provide the tenants with a "good neighbor" brochure, developed by the County, at the time of their arrival. The schematic site plan showing the location of parking spaces shall also be provided to the guests. The purpose of the brochure is to apprise guests of County regulations and relevant safety information.
- 7. Exterior Signage.** Each short term rental shall be identified with a single exterior sign that includes the name of the local contact person or host, the phone number and email address for the local contact person or host, and the street address of the short term rental. At a minimum, the sign shall be posted while the unit is being used as a short term rental. The sign shall be made of durable materials and securely placed in the front of the property or unit (where there are multiple units on the property), at a height of three to five feet as measured from the top of the sign to grade, in such a way that it is readily visible to the public upon inspection.
- 8. Requirements for Advertisements.** All short term rentals shall include the following information in any online or printed advertisement:
- i. Valid Marin County short term rental license number.
 - ii. The number of parking spaces available for the short term rental.

- iii. Further information where applicable as specified in the license requirements, such as water use restrictions.

E. License Issuance

A Short Term Rental license will be issued on a ministerial basis by the Community Development Agency based on a review of whether the short term rental would satisfy all the applicable requirements. Licenses can be issued with conditions ensuring compliance with the applicable requirements.

F. License Term and Renewal.

- i. An initial short term rental license issued under this Chapter shall expire immediately and automatically two years from the date of license issuance, unless revoked earlier. A short term rental license renewal shall last for a term of two years, unless revoked earlier. The license authorizes the property owner to conduct only such services as are described in this Chapter and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the license.
- ii. A complete short term rental license renewal application for an existing short term rental license must be submitted at least sixty days prior to the expiration date of the license. Upon timely submittal of a renewal application, the license will remain effective until such time as the license renewal application is approved or denied.
- iii. Failure to submit a timely application for a renewal of an existing short term rental license shall result in that license not being renewed. An unrenewed license will not be reinstated to the property owner unless there are available licenses within the cap. A property owner who fails to renew a license may join the wait list for the next available license under the cap.
- iv. Once a license expires, a new license is required to operate the short term rental. Renewals can only be issued for an existing license, and in compliance with this section. The administrative procedures issued by the Community Development Agency pursuant to this chapter may describe modifications to short term rental operations that are eligible for consideration within a license renewal.
- v. A short term rental license renewal application shall be denied if there have been more than three verified substantial violations of this Chapter or of the license requirements related to the short term rental during the previous license term. Substantial violations are violations for which a complaint has been received and a code enforcement case opened with an investigation verifying the existence of the violation. Code Enforcement determinations are subject to the appeals and legal due process requirements provided in Marin County Code Chapters 1.05 (Nuisance Abatement), 1.06 (Recordation of Notice of Violation), and 1.07 (Imposition of Administrative Fines for Ordinance Violations).

G. Multi-Family Dwelling or Condominium Unit License Term and Renewal

1. An initial short term rental license for a short term rental in a multi-family dwelling or condominium unit issued under this Chapter shall expire immediately and automatically two years from the date of license issuance, unless revoked earlier.
2. A short term rental license for a short term rental in a multi-family dwelling or condominium unit cannot be renewed for an additional two-year term and shall instead cease operation after two years from the date of the license issuance, unless revoked earlier.
3. No applications for short term rental licenses for rentals in a multi-family dwelling or condominium unit shall be accepted or approved for a short term rental unit that is not legally operating as of January 1, 2024.

H. License Fee.

- i. Each short term rental license or renewal application shall be accompanied by the applicable short term rental license fee.
- ii. The fee schedule shall be established by resolution of the Board of Supervisors following a public hearing. Said fee schedule may be adjusted by resolution of the Board following a public hearing. Permits and fees required are non-refundable and are in addition to any license, permit, certificate or fee required by any other chapter of the Marin County Code or other applicable law.

5.41.060 Short Term Rental Property Standards

1. **Undeveloped Properties.** A property where there is no existing legal residential unit is not eligible for a short term rental license.
2. **Restricted Structures.** A short term rental is not allowed in any of the following:
 - i. A structure subject to a recorded governmental restriction, including covenants or agreements for an affordable housing unit, agricultural employee unit, or farmworker housing.
 - ii. Category 1 – Statewide Exemption accessory dwelling units that were created or legalized after January 1, 2020.
 - iii. Accessory dwelling units other than Category 1 – Statewide Exemption accessory dwelling units that were created or legalized after February 24, 2021.
 - iv. A multi-family dwelling or condominium unit. This standard does not apply to short term rentals being legally operated as of January 1, 2024, subject to Section 5.41.050.G of this Chapter.
 - v. Non-residential areas within buildings, such as storage areas, and living/sleeping quarters added in garages.

- vi. Recreation vehicles (RVs), including non-motorized travel trailers.
 - vii. Other structures without permanent foundations, including but not limited to tipis/teepees, yurts, tents, and treehouses.
- 3. One Short Term Rental Per Property.** Only one short term rental is allowed per property. Notwithstanding the foregoing, more than one short term rental can be allowed for a limited period of time pursuant to Section 5.41.050(B).
- 4. Short Term Rental Parking Requirements.** Parking spaces must be provided for properties with short term rentals as follows:
- i. The number of required parking spaces for short term rentals shall comply with Marin County Code Section 24.04.340 (Minimum Required Parking Spaces), as verified by the Department of Public Works. This standard does not apply to short term rentals being legally operated as of January 1, 2024.
 - ii. Parking for short term rentals shall comply with Marin County Code Section 24.04.380 (Dimensional Standards), as verified by the Department of Public Works.
- 5. Noise.** The short term rental property owner is responsible for ensuring that any and all guests of a short term rental comply with the noise standards of Section 6.70.030 (Loud and Unnecessary Noises).
- 6. Solid Waste.**
- i. With the exception of waste properly deposited in and fully contained within collection containers with secure lids, accumulation of solid waste outside of the short term rental at any time is prohibited. No collection container other than those consistent with Chapter 7.00 (Solid Waste, Collection, Diversion and Disposal) shall be placed or kept in or on any public street, sidewalk, footpath, or any public place whatsoever, but shall be maintained on the property, except as may be provided for removing and emptying by the authorized collector on the day and in the location designated for collection.

The short term rental property owner is responsible for ensuring that short term renters comply with Chapter 7.00 (Solid Waste Collection, Diversion, and Disposal).
 - ii. A minimum service level must be maintained that is sufficient for the short term rental. If the Community Development Agency determines the minimum service level is insufficient to accommodate all waste (including garbage, recyclable materials, and organic materials) generated by the short term rental, the property owner shall arrange for a higher level of service which will accommodate all waste generated by the short term rental.

7. **Municipal Services.** The short term rental property shall have adequate water and sewer connections and shall be served by local utility agencies for water and sewer service wherever such utilities are provided.

- i. In the event that the short term rental is served by a private water supply (well or spring), the property owner will need to possess a domestic water supply permit from the Marin Community Development Agency Environmental Health Services Division or other appropriate public agency and prove potability with a current bacteriological test.
- ii. In the event that the short term rental is served by a private sewage disposal system, then that system must be documented with the Community Development Agency Environmental Health Services Division or other appropriate public agency, shall be inspected for proper operation by an approved licensed professional, and shall be sized appropriately for the short term rental and any other combined use.

8. **Emergency Preparedness.**

- i. **Visible Address.** Each short term rental shall have an address identification. The address identification must be maintained and shall be legible, measuring no less than four inches in height with a 3/8 inch stroke, and placed in a position that is visible from the street or road fronting the property. Whenever the address on the short term rental will not be clearly visible from the street or access road fronting the property, the address shall also be placed at the public street or access road in a manner which is clearly visible from both directions of travel on the frontage road or street.
- ii. **Smoke Alarms.** Smoke alarms, in good working order, shall be installed in accordance with the California Building Code and at a minimum shall be installed in each bedroom, and at least one alarm on every level of the short term rental, including basements and habitable attics.
- iii. **Carbon Monoxide Alarms.** Carbon monoxide alarms, in good working order, shall be installed in accordance with the California Building Code and at a minimum shall be installed outside each bedroom, on every level of the rental unit, including basements and habitable attics, and bedrooms or attached bathrooms with a fuel-burning appliance, and shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- iv. **Fire Extinguisher.** Each short term rental shall be equipped with one five-pound fire extinguisher, type 3-A:40-B:C, installed at a readily available location near the kitchen. If the short term rental has more than one level, an extinguisher must be mounted within each level.
- v. **Emergency Communications.** Each short term rental shall contain at least one working landline phone, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), or a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) radio as a means of receiving emergency communications. Locations with a working landline and/or VOIP should have the direct phone number and address

listed near the device. If NOAA radios are employed, a set of directions for use of the radio shall be accessible.

- vi. **Evacuation Routes.** The short term rental property owner must provide vehicular evacuation route maps, provided by Fire Safe Marin or the County of Marin, for the rental area. Evacuation routes must be posted near the front door, with a QR code or link to the County’s online evacuation map, of the short term rental. Further, a vehicular evacuation routes map must be provided as a handout so guests can take the map with them in the case of an emergency.
- 9. **Construction Requiring a Building Permit.** Short term rentals shall not be rented while the building they are in is undergoing any form of construction that requires a building permit.
- 10. **Code Enforcement Cases.** Short term rentals shall not be rented while a verified code enforcement violation is open on the property.
- 11. **Commercial Special Events.** Commercial special events including weddings, corporate events, commercial functions, and any other similar events shall not be held on a property with a short term rental license.
- 12. **Local Contact Person Responsibilities.** A short term rental property owner must identify a local contact person for every unhosted short term rental. The local contact person shall respond to any complaint received regarding the conduct of the short term rental guests or the condition or operation of the short term rental and take any necessary remedial action to resolve violations of Marin County Code requirements in a timely manner. The short term rental property owner is responsible for the local contact person’s compliance with all provisions of this Chapter.
- 13. **Host Responsibilities.** A short term rental property owner must identify a host for every hosted short term rental if the host is different from the property owner. This host shall respond to any complaint received regarding the conduct of the short term rental guests or the condition or operation of the short term rental and take any necessary remedial action to resolve violations of Marin County Code requirements in a timely manner. The short term rental property owner is responsible for this host’s compliance with all provisions of this Chapter.

5.41.070 Caps on the Number of Short Term Rental Licenses

The total initial number of short term rental licenses allowable in unincorporated Marin County is limited to 1,200, not including short term rental licenses in Dillon Beach.

The number of short term rental licenses for short term rentals in the townships of Marin County shall be capped at the limits indicated in Table 1 – Short Term Rental Caps, below.

Table 1 – Short Term Rental Caps

Township	Initial Number of Short Term Rentals	Ultimate Number of Short Term Rentals
Bolinas	63	54
Dillon Beach	125	204
Fallon	3	3
Forest Knolls	8	8
Inverness	93	86
Lagunitas	6	4
Marshall	28	27
Muir Beach	20	19
Muir Woods Park	19	19
Nicasio	11	8
Olema	3	3
Petaluma	2	2
Point Reyes Station	32	26
San Geronimo	10	7
Stinson Beach	192	192
Tomales	12	11
Valley Ford	1	1
Woodacre	12	8

The “Initial Number of Short Term Rentals” referenced above establishes the number of licenses available for issuance for the valid applications submitted before July 1, 2025 (first round licenses).

First round licenses may be renewed. However, subsequent to these first round licenses being issued, the number of new licenses being issued shall decrease to the “Ultimate Number of Short Term Rentals” established above. The cap on the ultimate number of short term rental licenses in each township shall be eventually achieved as license applications or renewals decline over time.

No new short term rental licenses shall be issued that would result in the number of short term rental licenses exceeding the county wide license cap of 1,200. In addition, after the first round of licenses has been issued, no new licenses shall be issued that would exceed the ultimate cap for a particular township short term rentals in the unincorporated area of Marin County.

5.41.080 Violations.

Any violation of the provisions in this Chapter shall be enforced through any legal remedies available to correct and/or abate a nuisance or violation of the Marin County Code, as

provided in Marin County Code Chapters 1.05 (Nuisance Abatement), 1.06 (Recordation of Notice of Violation), and 1.07 (Imposition of Administrative Fines for Ordinance Violations) as they pertain to violations related to real property. All the provisions for legal due process and appeal rights provided for in Marin County Code Chapters 1.05, 1.06, and 1.07 shall apply

Short term rental licenses may be suspended or revoked if the short term rental property owner fails to meet the standards set forth in this Chapter and/or the requirements of the license. Short term rental licenses shall not be renewed if there have been more than three verified violations of the standards or license requirements during the previous licensing term, as determined through the code enforcement process.