

## 4. PROCESS

### What happens after I apply?

1. The application is reviewed by the zoning division.
2. While under review, the property is posted for a 15-day period.
3. Following the posting period, there is a 5-day appeal period, during which the decision of the Zoning Administrator can be appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals.
4. Once the permit is approved, the application is reviewed by the Fire Marshal and the proposed STR unit receives a fire and safety inspection.
5. Once the Fire Marshal's inspection is complete, applicant may pick up his/her permit and pay for a business license.

### What happens after I'm approved?

Once you receive your permit, you are eligible to begin renting your STR unit. While renting, you must follow all rules outlined in the ordinance, including the inclusion of your permit number in any/all online advertisements.

### Do I need to renew my permit/license?

**Yes. All STR permits must be renewed 1 year from the original issuance date. Please note that the new STR regulations are subject to change during the 9-month review process. City of Charleston business licenses must also be renewed annually, at the beginning of each calendar year, regardless of the month they were first acquired.**

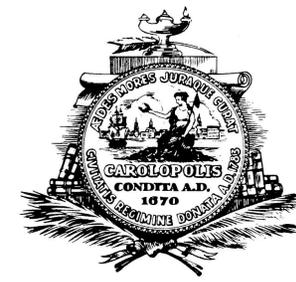
## QUESTIONS?

Dept. of Planning, Preservation & Sustainability  
843-724-3781 | [shorttermrental@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:shorttermrental@charleston-sc.gov)



Find out more at:  
[charleston-sc.gov/shorttermrentals](http://charleston-sc.gov/shorttermrentals)

\* Additional information may be required to complete the fire inspection. Please see the information bulletins on [charleston-sc.gov/firemarshal](http://charleston-sc.gov/firemarshal) for more information. A re-inspection fee of \$32.61 may be required if the first inspection is failed.



# SHORT TERM RENTAL APPLICATION GUIDE

# 1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

## What are short term rentals?

A short term rental (STR) refers to any rental of a dwelling unit/bedroom as a residential accommodation for less than 30 consecutive days.

## What are the new regulations?

The ordinance permits STRs in a homeowner's primary residence and requires the owner to obtain both a permit and business license. More specific regulations are determined by the individual STR permit category, which is assigned geographically. Due to these category-specific regulations, not every property is eligible for a permit.

For a full breakdown of the new regulations, see Sections 54-208 and 54-227 of the Charleston Zoning Ordinance, or visit:

[charleston-sc.gov/shorttermrentals](http://charleston-sc.gov/shorttermrentals).

## What are the permit categories?

**CATEGORY 1:** Old and Historic District

**CATEGORY 2:** All other peninsular areas outside Category 1 and STR Overlay Zone

**CATEGORY 3:** All non-peninsular areas of city

**COMMERCIAL:** Commercial Zoning Districts within STR Overlay Zone

**BED & BREAKFAST:** Residential Zoning Districts within STR Overlay

# 2. UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS

- A **DWELLING UNIT** refers to one or more rooms arranged for the use of one or more individuals living together as a single housekeeping unit.
- A **PRIMARY RESIDENCE** status is assessed at the 4% homeowner's assessment ratio by the county Assessor's Office.
- **ACCOMMODATIONS USES** are commercial uses to provide living or sleeping units, for remuneration, to one or more individuals with intended and/or usual occupancy not exceeding 29 consecutive days.
- The **OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT** is a designated historic district located in downtown Charleston. Boundaries for the Old and Historic District can be found on the City of Charleston Board of Architectural Review web page, [charleston-sc.gov/BAR](http://charleston-sc.gov/BAR).
- The **STR OVERLAY ZONE** is a zoning district in downtown Charleston within the Cannonborough-Elliottborough Neighborhood where commercial STRs are allowed as a conditional use on commercially zoned parcels.
- The City of Charleston's **CUSTOMER ACCESS PORTAL (CAP) ACCOUNT** enables citizens to submit, pay for, and track applications, permits, business licenses, inspections, and code violation complaints online.
- A **FLOOR PLAN** is a drawing to scale, showing the building where the STR unit will be located with all rooms labeled (living, dining, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, stairs, etc.) and all doorways shown. The plans must clearly note the rooms that will be used for the STR use and the rooms that will be used by the property owner for their residence.
- A **SITE PLAN** is a drawing to scale of a property that shows all buildings, driveways and parking spaces, and notes the location of the proposed STR unit and the location of each required off street parking space for all uses on the property (dwelling, STR use, etc.)

# 3. GETTING STARTED

## What do I need to apply?

In addition to a notarized application, you will need:

1. Site plan or survey of the property, drawn to scale
2. Photographs showing the current views of the building where the STR unit is proposed
3. Complete floor plans, drawn to scale, for the building where the STR unit will be located
4. (Class 1 only): Documents to demonstrate that the building where the proposed STR is located is listed in the National Register of Historic Places
5. (Class 2 only): Documents to demonstrate that the building where the proposed STR is located was constructed at least 50 years ago
6. Documents showing that the applicant qualifies as a resident of the property (copy of Driver's License or state issued ID) and letter from County Assessor's office proving the 4% tax status  
NOTE: Before applying, applicants should ensure that STR uses are not restricted by any recorded covenants or HOA rules.

## Where can I apply?

Online Applications are accepted and encouraged. To apply online, you must first create a CAP account, which may be used to submit your permit application and schedule a safety inspection. In-person applications will also be accepted at the city's Permit Center, located inside the Gaillard Center.

## What fees will I need to pay?

- There is a \$200 **ZONING AND APPLICATION REVIEW FEE** that is collected upon application submission.
- A \$40 **FIRE INSPECTION\*** base fee, a \$32.21 **PLAN REVIEW** fee, and an additional \$32.61 per number of floors in the unit being inspected. These fees will be collected when the permit is approved.
- There is a \$64 **BUSINESS LICENSE** fee, plus an additional \$3.90 per \$1,000 of expected income. Business license fees will be collected when the permit is received.