



For Immediate Release

April 19, 2019

Contact: Miguel Salinas, Talbot County Assistant Planning Officer at 410-770-8030

Short-Term Rental Properties Licenses Required in Talbot County

If you have ever rented a home for a weekend or even a week, you have stayed in a short-term rental (STR). STRs are advertised on sites such as VRBO, HomeAway, Airbnb and other rental sites. For homeowners who rent their homes on a short-term basis, it's important to know whether the city, town or county where it is located permits STRs, and if so, whether there are rules and regulations to abide by.

In Talbot County, a home can be rented short-term to visitors for a minimum three-night stay and the maximum stay cannot exceed 14 weeks. To lease a home on a short-term basis, homeowners are required to obtain a STR license through the Department of Planning and Zoning and pay the Talbot County Public Accommodations Tax; unlicensed short-term rentals are prohibited.

Talbot County recently contracted with STR Helper™ to monitor compliance in the County. Each week, a sweep of local and national online rental listing sites is conducted to identify property owners that are listing STRs. The sweep helps to identify listings that are advertising without a license. Even if an advertisement has been discontinued and moved to another site, the STR Helper™ system will track both the live and discontinued advertisements. County Code Enforcement staff are notified of the violation and enforcement actions are pursued.

In 2018, Talbot County updated the regulations for STRs as part of the update to Chapter 190 of the Talbot County Code (Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development). The updated regulations provided a six-month grace period for homeowners advertising and renting their homes on a short-term basis without a license to comply with the updated regulations.

The six-month grace period is ending soon. For current homeowners advertising and operating a STR without a license, it's imperative that you obtain additional information on the program and apply for a license; anyone operating or advertising an unlicensed short-term rental (STR) after May 10, 2019, is subject to a fine of not less than \$500. In addition, you cannot apply for a license for a period of 12 months from the date of the violation.

There are many steps involved with applying for a STR license, including notification to surrounding property owners, obtaining a satisfactory water quality report, and providing to-scale site and floor plans. Once the application is submitted, the home will be inspected for compliance with zoning requirements as well as compliance with safety requirements related to smoke alarm and fire extinguisher locations, emergency escape and rescue openings, and means of egress. If the home is on septic, the Talbot County Health Department will also inspect the property regarding the adequacy of the system. Once all the required materials have been submitted, and the inspections have been completed, the license application is scheduled for review by the County's Short-Term Rental Review Board at a public hearing.

Information on the process and the license application can be found on the Planning and Zoning Department webpage located at www.talbotcountymd.gov. New licenses are eligible to be accepted in the upcoming months of July and August. In the meantime, you should not operate or advertise your STR until your license is approved. STRs operating or advertising without license approval are subject to penalties.

Further information or assistance may be obtained during normal business hours by calling the Planning Office at 410-770-8030.