

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

**Office of the City Controller
Short-Term Rentals in Philadelphia:
Compliance, Licensing, and Enforcement**

June 2026



City Controller
Christy Brady, CPA

*Ensuring transparency, accountability,
and fiscal integrity in city government*





Office of the City Controller
Short-Term Rentals in Philadelphia:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why the Controller’s Office Conducted this Review

The Office of the City Controller (Controller’s Office) conducted a review of Philadelphia’s (City) short-term rental (STR) laws and regulations to assess compliance among STR hosts and identify opportunities to strengthen oversight and enforcement. This review outlines the process of acquiring and maintaining STR licenses, distinguishes the types of licenses and zoning designations required, and identifies issues preventing effective regulation and enforcement.

What the Controller’s Office Found

The Controller’s Office has determined how the City’s STR framework operates and where regulatory oversight and enforcement could be improved. Some of the most significant findings include:

- **Licensing Non-Compliance:** An analysis of 3,734 licenses associated with STR rental bookings found that 1,327 licenses were inactive, expired, or ineligible license types.
- **Complex Licensing Requirements:** Operating a short-term rental in the City requires multiple permits, licenses, property inspections, and tax accounts administered by different City departments, creating a complicated compliance process for hosts.
- **Limited Verification and Enforcement:** The Department of Licenses and Inspections’ (L&I) oversight of short-term rentals relies primarily on booking platform reporting and complaint-driven enforcement managed by a small staff, limiting the City’s ability to timely identify potentially non-compliant listings.

What the Controller’s Office Recommends

The Controller’s Office developed the following recommendations to address the findings:

- Simplify and consolidate the licensing process by creating a centralized application and renewal system within eCLIPSE and provide clear, plain-language guidance on zoning, licensing, operational, and annual renewal requirements.
- Improve verification and enforcement of licensing requirements by routinely validating license information submitted by booking platforms against City licensing records and implementing a structured enforcement process that includes timely notification of violations and escalating enforcement actions for repeat or continued non-compliance.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing penalties by assessing whether current penalties adequately deter non-compliance and whether additional enforcement tools are needed to address repeat or chronic violations.
- Expand proactive monitoring efforts by evaluating technology-assisted monitoring tools that can identify potentially non-compliant listings across multiple booking platforms, verify licensing information, and support proactive enforcement efforts.
- Improve coordination and data sharing across city departments by establishing a formal process for sharing relevant data to strengthen oversight and identify potential compliance issues.
- Strengthen verification of tax compliance by evaluating whether existing processes provide adequate procedures for the collection, remittance, and verification of taxes associated with STR activity and identifying opportunities to improve oversight.

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Introduction

Philadelphia is a major tourism destination, attracting millions of visitors annually to its historic landmarks, cultural attractions, sporting events, and nationally recognized dining scene. As many of the featured events of the summer of 2026 are underway, including the America250 celebration, the FIFA World Cup, and the MLB All-Star Game, an unprecedented surge of visitors is expected. Accommodation options, including hotels or short-term rentals, will play a critical role in meeting that demand.

Philadelphia’s lodging market is large and growing. The City has approximately 121 registered hotels with 19,615 rooms in operation.¹ From 2023 to 2024, hotel occupancy in the City increased from 63% to 67%.² The STR market has grown similarly. Philadelphia currently has over 4,000 active listings posted across several booking agent sites.³ However, a significant portion of available rental properties are operating outside the City’s regulatory framework.

The Controller’s Office examined Philadelphia’s STR regulatory framework due to reported issues with compliance and enforcement. This report outlines license requirements, tax obligations, conducts a data analysis of STR compliance from November 2025, provides specific examples identified from the Controller’s Investigations Unit, and compares how other cities enforce STR regulations.

Requirements for Short-Term Rentals

A short-term rental booking agent (Booking Agent) is an online platform, such as Airbnb or VRBO, that facilitates reservations by connecting hosts with potential guests. These platforms allow individuals and businesses to advertise short-term rental stays, which the City defines as rentals of 30 days or less.⁴

¹ Perez-Castells, A. (2024, January 24). *A sneak peek at five hotels opening in Philly in 2024*. Inquirer.com; The Philadelphia Inquirer. <https://www.inquirer.com/business/philadelphia-hotel-overnight-stay-new-20240124.html>

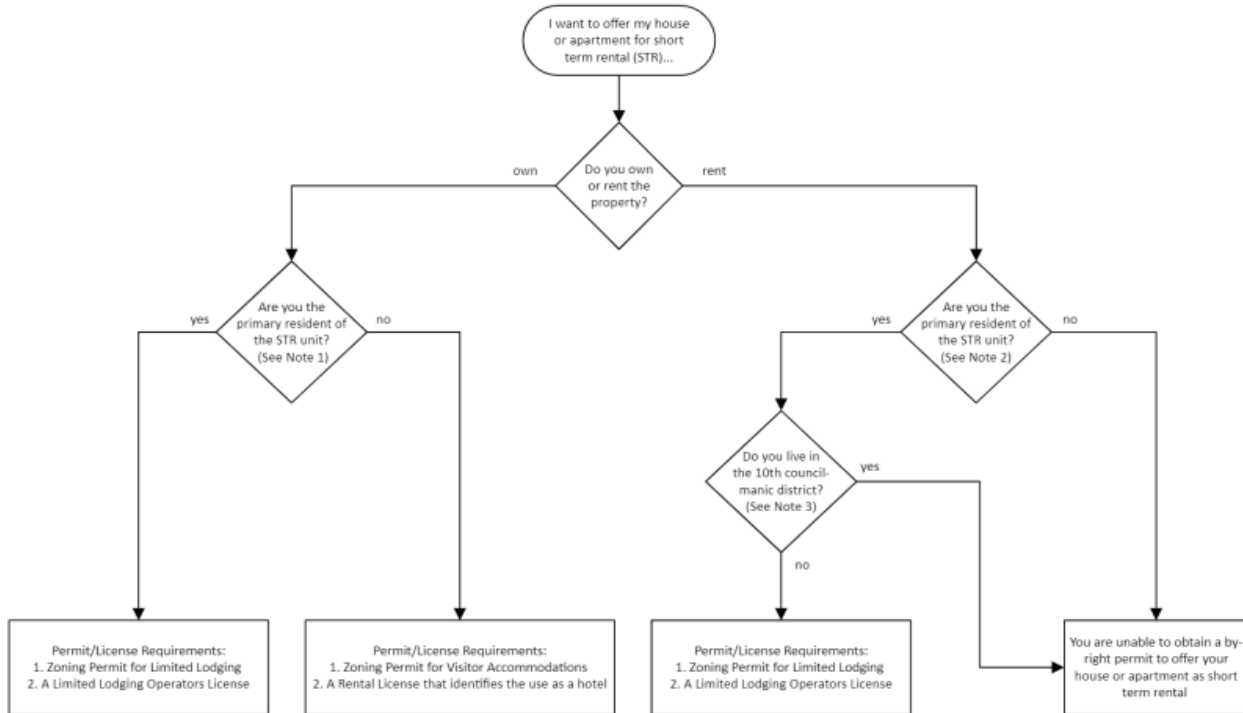
² Mosbrucker-Garza, K. (2025, April 30). *Philly may see fewer Canadian tourists in 2025*. WHYY. <https://whyy.org/articles/philadelphia-international-visitors-canadian-decrease-tourism-2025/>

³ *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Airbnb Market Data 2026: STR Report and Statistics* (2026). <https://www.airroi.com/airbnb-data/united-states/pennsylvania/philadelphia>

⁴ City of Philadelphia, *The Philadelphia Code: § 9-3910 Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent Licenses*, accessed June 7, 2026, https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-280381.

License Types and Eligibility

Limited Lodging Permit and License Requirements



Notes:

1. If you own the property, a primary resident is defined as a natural person who is the owner of the dwelling unit and is entitled to a homestead exemption for such dwelling unit.
2. If you rent the property, a primary resident is defined as (a) a natural person who lives in the dwelling unit as their primary domicile for more than half the year and (b) who is authorized in writing by the owner to provide limited lodging.
3. Use the following website to find the council district of your property: <https://www.arcqis.com/apps/InformationLookup/index.html?appid=5aa8ce86ed1a45c99c2c751bd9ebcc06>

Figure 1

Extracted Image from City of Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections Limited Lodging FAQ (see appendix A)

In order to lawfully operate a STR in Philadelphia, the owner of the property must complete the steps shown in figure 1 above.⁵ First, the STR host must identify what permits and licenses are required, which vary depending on if the property is owned or rented by the host. If the host is the primary resident of a property they own, or the primary resident of a rented property that they have occupied for more than six months with written authorization from the owner, the host must obtain a zoning permit for Limited Lodging and a Limited Lodging Operators License.⁶ However, if the

⁵ City of Philadelphia, Department of Licenses and Inspections. (2025, September). *FAQ: Can I rent my unit as a short-term rental/limited lodging using services like Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway, etc.? What permits or licenses do I need?* https://www.phila.gov/media/20250924082427/PZ_003_FAQ-Limited-Lodging-Rev-9.25.pdf

⁶ City of Philadelphia, Department of Licenses and Inspections. (2025, September). *FAQ: Can I rent my unit as a short-term rental/limited lodging using services like Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway, etc.? What permits or licenses do I need?* https://www.phila.gov/media/20250924082427/PZ_003_FAQ-Limited-Lodging-Rev-9.25.pdf

host is a property owner who is not the primary resident, a zoning permit for Visitor Accommodations and a Rental License with a hotel designation is required. The City does not permit STRs in instances when the host rents the property but is not the primary resident, or when rented property is located in the 10th Councilmanic District.

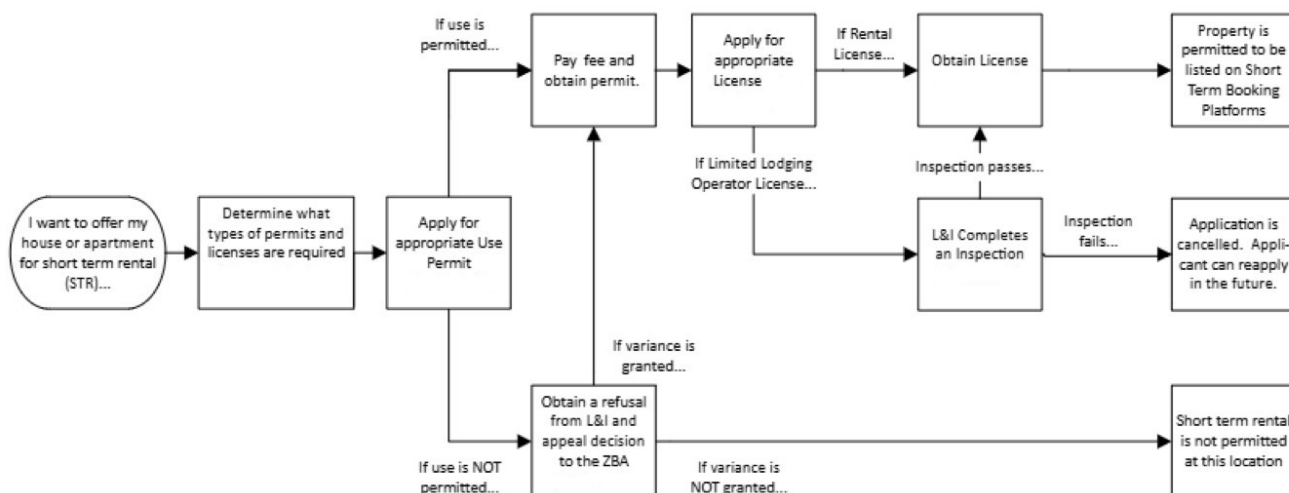


Figure 2

Extracted Image from City of Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections Limited Lodging FAQ (see appendix A)

After identifying the permits and licenses needed, the second step is to apply for a zoning permit for either Limited Lodging or Visitor Accommodation.⁷ Limited Lodging zoning requires one proof of residency, such as a library card, photo ID, or a piece of mail postmarked from the past 60 days, in addition to a copy of the lease and written authorization from the property owner, and the unit number where the host resides, if the property has multiple units. Visitor Accommodation Zoning is not by-right in all areas of the City. In those cases, the permit will be denied and must be appealed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) within 30 days.⁸

The third step requires obtaining a Commercial Activity License, a Business Income and Receipts Tax (BIRT) account, proof of Lead Safety Certification, and applicable inspection reports.⁹ Only

⁷ City of Philadelphia, Department of Licenses and Inspections. (2025, September). *FAQ: Can I rent my unit as a short-term rental/limited lodging using services like Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway, etc.? What permits or licenses do I need?* https://www.phila.gov/media/20250924082427/PZ_003_FAQ-Limited-Lodging-Rev-9.25.pdf

⁸ City of Philadelphia, Department of Licenses and Inspections. (2025, September). *FAQ: Can I rent my unit as a short-term rental/limited lodging using services like Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway, etc.? What permits or licenses do I need?* https://www.phila.gov/media/20250924082427/PZ_003_FAQ-Limited-Lodging-Rev-9.25.pdf

⁹ City of Philadelphia, "Get a Limited Lodging Operator License," Services (lead safety certification, zoning, tax-currency, no outstanding violations, virtual inspection for issuance and renewal

after completing these requirements can the host proceed to Step 4: applying for either a Limited Lodging Operator License or a Rental License, both of which must be renewed annually.¹⁰

Property owners who are out of compliance, including those with suspended licenses, are prohibited from collecting rent or pursuing eviction until the violation is resolved.¹¹

Licenses must be renewed annually. Renewal requires proof of residency and a valid lease agreement for renters (those staying in a STR) or proof of ownership for homeowners. Additionally, all city taxes must be paid, business accounts must be in good standing, the property must have no outstanding violations, lead safety requirements must be met, and the property must pass a virtual inspection.

Operational and Safety Requirements

Beyond licensing and eligibility requirements, short-term rentals are subject to a range of operational restrictions governing how the property may be used. Safety standards apply to all properties, including the required installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in designated rooms and hallways.¹² Signs advertising the property as a STR may not be posted on the premises; commercial-style signage of the kind associated with hotels or branded rental platforms is prohibited, as are physical modifications that give the residence a commercial rather than residential appearance. Occupancy is also restricted, as no more than three unrelated individuals may reside in the property at one time, and guests of renters are only permitted between 8 a.m. and midnight.¹³

Additionally, hosts are required to provide renters with information pertinent to their stay. This includes conveying information about trash and recycling collection days, trash disposal rules, and providing proper trash containers for renters.¹⁴ Hosts must disclose that excessive noise is

¹⁰ City of Philadelphia, "How to comply with Philly's short-term rental law," Department of Revenue: <https://www.phila.gov/2023-07-31-how-to-comply-with-phillys-short-term-rental-law/>

¹¹ Philadelphia, PA. (n.d.). Chapter 9-3900: Property licenses and owner accountability. In The Philadelphia Code. https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-280309

¹² Philadelphia, PA. (n.d.). Chapter 14-604: Limited Lodging. The Philadelphia Code. https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-292789

¹³ Philadelphia, PA. (n.d.). Chapter 14-604: Limited Lodging. The Philadelphia Code. https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-292789

¹⁴ Philadelphia, PA. (n.d.). Chapter 9-3900: Property licenses and owner accountability. In The Philadelphia Code. https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-280309

prohibited and may result in fines and penalties to the renters or hosts. The hosts must also provide their contact information and respond to complaints from the renters.¹⁵

Booking agents are separately regulated under Section 9-3910 of the Philadelphia Code. Under that provision, booking agents must submit quarterly reports to L&I through the Department's online portal, identifying each licensed operator for whom the agent facilitates bookings, along with the host's license type, license number, and category.¹⁵

Taxation Compliance

STR hosts are subject to several City taxes, including the Hotel Tax, Net Profits Tax, Business Income and Receipts Tax, and, where applicable, Wage Tax requirements.

In most cases, booking platforms collect and remit the Hotel Tax on behalf of hosts. For example, one booking agent (see Appendix C), automatically collects and remits the Hotel Tax on transactions completed through its platform. However, hosts remain responsible for complying with applicable licensing requirements and any additional tax obligations that may apply to their STRs.

Data Reporting

L&I requires all booking agents to submit a *Transaction History Report* described in Appendix B. Despite its title, the report does not include transaction-level booking data. This report should include the booking agent name, host name, address of the property, license type, license number, and rental license category associated with each listing. When L&I identifies a listing as non-compliant or operating without the required licenses, it notifies the booking agent and provides an opportunity for the host to correct the deficiency. If the issue is not resolved within five days, the booking agent shall remove the listing and confirm that it has done so. The Controller's Office analyzed a November 2025 STR transaction history report containing 3,734 listings. Of those listings, 1,239 reported Limited Lodging Operator Licenses, 1,856 reported holding Rental Licenses, and 639 were reported as "Other" license types.

¹⁵ Philadelphia, PA. (n.d.). Chapter 9-3900: Property licenses and owner accountability. In The Philadelphia Code. https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/philadelphia/latest/philadelphia_pa/0-0-0-280309

Of the 3,095 listings reporting appropriate license types, Limited Lodging Operator or Rental licenses, 2,407 were reported as active licenses, while 400 listings reported inactive licenses, 246 reported expired licenses, and 42 reported closed or revoked licenses.

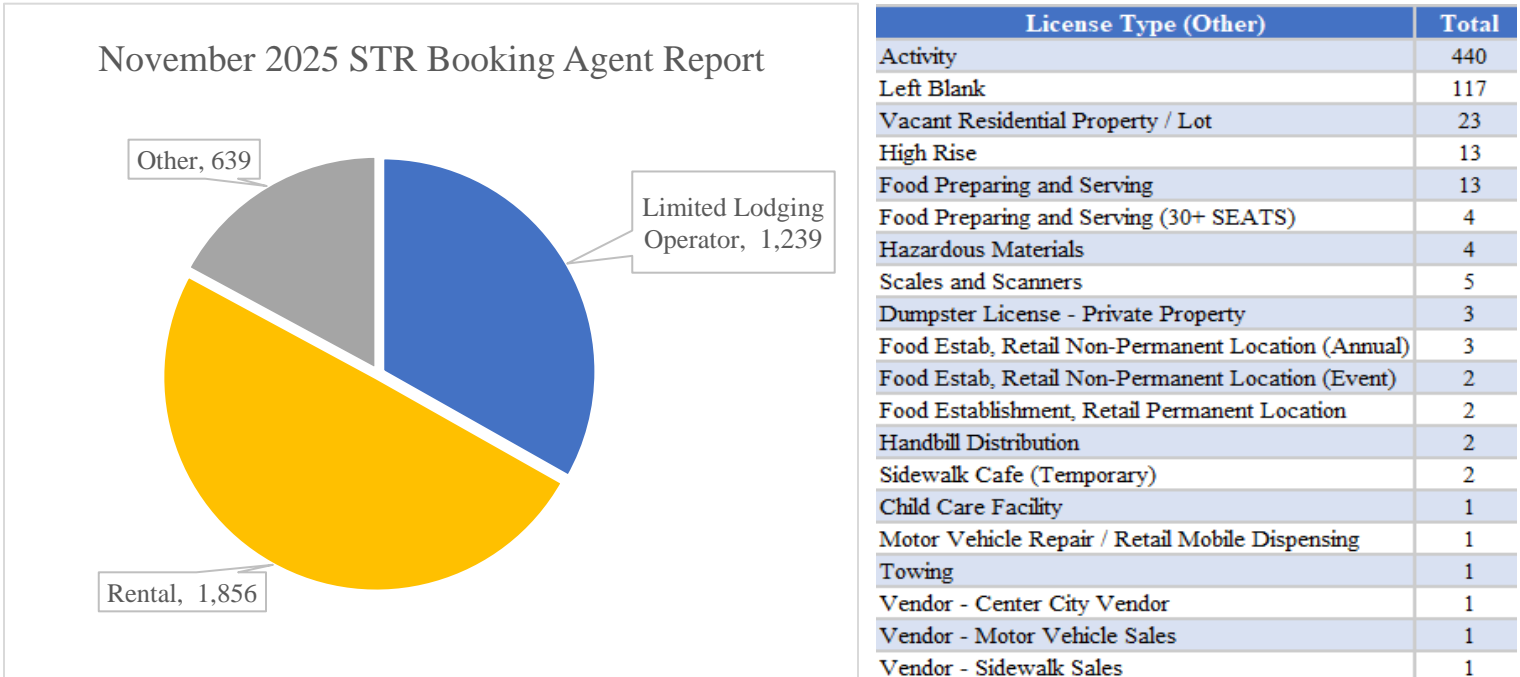


Figure 3

License Information reported in November 2025 Transaction Report

The Controller’s Office also reviewed the 639 listings classified as “Other” license types. A sample review found licenses unrelated to short-term rental activity. One listing advertised as “Calm and Cozy 2BR near everything” displayed a license number that corresponded to a Childcare Facility license, that expired in 2003. Another listing, “Charming Graduate Hospital Townhouse”, displayed a license number that corresponded to a Temporary Sidewalk Café license that expired in 2022.

The Controller’s Office also identified a host operating nearly 50 listings in Philadelphia where none of the properties reviewed were associated with the correct STR license information in the transaction report. While license numbers were provided, many did not match the license information displayed on the listing platform or did not identify the appropriate license type or rental category. For example, one reviewed property held a rental license but lacked the hotel designation for short-term rental activity. These findings suggest that a substantial number of listings remain active on the booking agent website while reporting inappropriate licenses.

Philadelphia Short-Term Rental Case Study

Licensing provides the City with information about who is operating short-term rentals, where those rentals are located, and who is responsible when issues arise. This accountability is important when responding to safety concerns, neighborhood complaints, or disputes involving guests and property owners. The Controller's Office Investigations Unit reviewed allegations involving three properties that raised compliance concerns related to the City's STR requirements.

Case 1: Unlicensed Operation

The first property investigated began with an anonymous complaint alleging that a STR was operating without the required licenses. The property had multiple complaints, including over one hundred 911 calls related to safety checks, disturbances on nearby highways, parking violations, and investigation of a person or vehicle. Property records indicate that the property had operated as a STR for five years without obtaining the required licenses. After the Controller's Office contacted L&I during our investigation in 2025, L&I cited the property for operating without the necessary licenses and notified the booking platform that the property was not authorized to operate as a STR in the City.

Shortly after the citation was issued, the owner submitted applications for zoning approval and licensing. The owner certified that the property would serve as a primary residence after obtaining a City ID, allowing it to be classified as a Limited Lodging Operator rather than a Visitor Accommodation. Notably, a City ID requires only minimal proof of residency, such as a utility bill, bank statement, lease, vehicle registration, pay stub, or a letter from a hospital, shelter, or social service agency. As a result, the application was eligible for a less restrictive approval process and did not require review by the ZBA. However, the Investigations Unit was unable to verify that the property served as the owner's primary residence and found evidence indicating that the owner maintained a residence and vehicle registration outside of Philadelphia.

Case 2: Licensing Dispute and Court Proceedings

The second property investigated began in June 2025 after a renter learned that the property was not properly licensed or zoned for short-term rental use and subsequently refused to pay rent or vacate the unit. By August 2025, L&I cited the owner with multiple violations and imposed fines, resulting in the property's removal from the booking platform. The occupant remained in the property, and the matter proceeded to Landlord-Tenant Court in October 2025. Court Records show that in November 2025, a judge ruled in favor of the property owner and ordered the occupant to pay a fine.

Case 3: Expired License and Improper Tax Benefit

The third property investigated began after a complaint alleged that the owner of a STR was improperly receiving benefits through the Longtime Owner Occupancy Program (LOOP) while

residing outside of Pennsylvania. The investigation found that the owner had been paying approximately \$806 annually in real estate taxes through the LOOP program. Without the benefit, the estimated annual tax obligation would have been approximately \$6,217. The property was also operating with an expired Rental License. The booking platform was notified by our office and removed the listing. The owner was subsequently removed from the LOOP program.

These cases demonstrate that non-compliance can have consequences for both property owners and the City. Property owners may face enforcement actions, loss of access to the booking agent platform, and legal disputes. The following section examines regulatory approaches adopted by peer cities and considers solutions that Philadelphia could evaluate while working to strengthen oversight of short-term rentals.

Comparative City Analysis

Nashville, Tennessee

Nashville, Tennessee has faced similar challenges to those identified in Philadelphia's STR market. As a major tourism destination, Nashville has struggled with licensing compliance and enforcement, which relies heavily on neighborhood complaints to identify potential violations.

To strengthen enforcement, Nashville contracted with a third-party compliance company.¹⁶ According to the company, its platform utilizes automated monitoring tools to identify listings across more than 70 STR websites, compare listings against local licensing requirements, and assist local governments in identifying potentially non-compliant properties. The platform also supports complaint intake and monitoring of local occupancy and rental restrictions. The company reports that roughly 91% of Nashville's STRs are compliant with local regulations.¹⁷ This example illustrates how technology-assisted monitoring may improve a municipality's ability to identify and address non-compliant listings.

Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, is a beach town located directly outside of Charleston with a population of approximately 95,000 residents.¹⁸ As tourism in the region has grown, so has the local STR market. To assist with oversight, Mount Pleasant utilizes a government technology company that provides monitoring for STR programs. According to the company the municipality's compliance rate increased from approximately 20% to more than 95% after

¹⁶ Granicus, "How the Codes Department Achieves 90%+ Compliance With Host Compliance": <https://granicus.com/success-stories/how-the-codes-department-achieves-90-compliance-with-host-compliance/>

¹⁷ Granicus, "How the Codes Department Achieves 90%+ Compliance With Host Compliance": <https://granicus.com/success-stories/how-the-codes-department-achieves-90-compliance-with-host-compliance/>

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "QuickFacts: Mount Pleasant Town, South Carolina," QuickFacts, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mountpleasanttownsouthcarolina/PST045224>

implementation of its monitoring system.¹⁹ This again demonstrates how technology-based monitoring tools can be used to facilitate STR regulation and compliance.

Denver, Colorado

While Nashville and Mount Pleasant have relied on technology-assisted monitoring to improve compliance, Denver took a different approach. Rather than focusing primarily on enforcement, Denver sought to increase compliance by simplifying the registration process for STR hosts.

Denver runs its STR licensing program through an online permitting and licensing platform similar to Philadelphia's eCLIPSE system.²⁰ According to their platform, compliance rates increased from approximately 14% to nearly 80% after Denver implemented a streamlined online registration process that allowed hosts to apply for licenses, submit documentation, and pay fees and taxes through a centralized system.

Denver's experience suggests that simplifying the registration process may encourage greater compliance by reducing administrative barriers for hosts. In contrast, Philadelphia's STR framework requires hosts to navigate multiple permits, licenses, and city departments, which may contribute to confusion regarding licensing requirements. Denver's experience indicates that improving the user experience can significantly increase compliance.

Recommendations

The compliance gaps documented in this report are the direct result of a regulatory process that is difficult to navigate and an enforcement system that depends on complaints rather than active detection. The Controller's Office proposes the following recommendations to benefit the City, STR hosts, booking agents, and renters alike.

- Simplify and consolidate the licensing process by creating a centralized application and renewal system within eCLIPSE and providing clear, plain-language guidance on zoning, licensing, operational, and annual renewal requirements.
- Improve verification and enforcement of licensing requirements by routinely validating license information submitted by booking platforms against City licensing records and implementing a structured enforcement process that includes timely notification of violations and escalating enforcement actions for repeat or continued non-compliance.

¹⁹ Deckard Technologies / EIN Presswire, "Mount Pleasant Reaches 95% Short-Term Rental Compliance Using Deckard Technologies" (Mar. 26, 2026):

²⁰ Accela, "Accela Strengthens National Short-Term Rental Regulation Leadership with Launch in Oklahoma City and 80% Compliance Rate in Denver" (Oct. 22, 2019): <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/accela-strengthens-national-short-term-rental-regulation-leadership-with-launch-in-oklahoma-city-and-80-compliance-rate-in-denver-300942644.html>

- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing penalties by assessing whether current penalties adequately deter non-compliance and whether additional enforcement tools are needed to address repeat or chronic violations.
- Expand proactive monitoring efforts by evaluating technology-assisted monitoring tools that can identify potentially non-compliant listings across multiple booking platforms, verify licensing information, and support proactive enforcement efforts.
- Improve coordination and data sharing across city departments by establishing a formal process for sharing relevant data to strengthen oversight and identify potential compliance issues.
- Strengthen verification of tax compliance by evaluating whether existing processes provide adequate procedures for the collection, remittance, and verification of taxes associated with STR activity and identifying opportunities to improve oversight and compliance.


Conclusion

Short-term rentals are an increasingly important component of Philadelphia's lodging market and will play a significant role in accommodating visitors during the major events scheduled for 2026 and beyond. Effective regulation of this growing industry requires a licensing and enforcement framework that is clear, efficient, and capable of identifying non-compliance.

The Controller's Office found that Philadelphia's current framework requires hosts to navigate multiple permits, licenses, inspections, and tax requirements administered across several City departments. Analysis of booking platform data identified hundreds of listings associated with inactive, expired, closed, or otherwise ineligible licenses, raising concerns about the City's ability to verify compliance and enforce existing requirements. The review also found that oversight relies heavily on booking platform reporting and complaint-driven enforcement, limiting the City's ability to proactively identify potential violations.

The recommendations in this report are intended to strengthen compliance by simplifying the licensing process, improving verification and enforcement efforts, enhancing interdepartmental coordination, and expanding the City's ability to proactively monitor STR activity. By improving oversight and accountability, Philadelphia can better protect residents and visitors, support compliant operators, and ensure that short-term rentals operate in accordance with City laws and regulations.

Appendix A



**Department of
Licenses and Inspections**
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Reference Code(s):
Philadelphia Zoning Code
Philadelphia Administrative Code
Philadelphia Building Code
Philadelphia Code Title 9

FAQ:

**Can I rent my unit as a short-term rental/limited lodging using services like Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway, etc.?
What permits or licenses do I need?**

Background:

The City of Philadelphia began regulating short-term rentals in 2015, and in 2021, Mayor Kenney signed Bill No. [210081](#), changing the zoning and licensing requirements for owners or renters that offer their properties as short-term rentals in Philadelphia. This new law requires that for a booking agent to advertise a unit for rent, the operator must provide a valid license from L&I. The requirements for obtaining this required license differ based on whether the unit is occupied by a primary resident or not.

Answer:

A unit cannot be offered as a short-term rental (less than 30 days) without obtaining the necessary permits and licenses. The [Limited Lodging Permit and License Requirements Flowchart](#) on page 3 can be used to determine which permits and licenses are required. The [Limited Lodging Process: Start to Finish Flowchart](#) on page 4 explains the general process for obtaining the required approvals.

Zoning Permit Requirements

A [zoning permit](#) is required to offer a unit for rent as a short-term rental for any amount of time. The type of permit required varies based on how the rental functions. The answers to the following questions determine which zoning permit is required:

1. Is there a primary resident who resides in the unit?
2. What is the maximum duration of the rental period?

The code defines primary resident as either:

- a natural person who owns and lives in the dwelling unit, and is entitled to a [homestead exemption](#) for such dwelling unit; or
- a renter (a) who is a natural person and lives in the dwelling unit as the renter’s primary domicile for more than half of the year and (b) who is authorized in writing by the owner to provide limited lodging.

Note: The holder of the Limited Lodging License establishing primary residence must be a natural person. If the property is rented, a contract between the owner and tenant shall be provided. The contract must include the name and signature of the authorizing agent and tenant, who must be two separate parties. *If a property manager is acting as the agent on the owner’s behalf, an executed agreement between the owner and managing agent must also be provided.*

The table below provides a summary of what zoning permit(s) you will need based on the factors above:

Description of Use	Zoning Permit(s) Required
Rental of a residential dwelling with a primary resident (rentals do not exceed 30 consecutive days for any visitor)	Limited Lodging*
Rental of a space which is not a primary residence (i.e., no primary resident resides in the unit).	Visitor Accommodations

* Limited Lodging is an accessory use. The unit must also have a zoning permit for Household Living (Single-, Two-, or Multi-Family).

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Reference Code(s):

Philadelphia Zoning Code
 Philadelphia Administrative Code
 Philadelphia Building Code
 Philadelphia Code Title 9

The zoning regulations of Limited Lodging can be found in [14-604\(13\)](#). The intention is for this use to be accessory to a residential use and not to be a detriment to the character and livability of the surrounding neighborhood.

Limited Lodging is an accessory use that is permitted in conjunction with Household Living uses.

The Zoning Code defines Visitor Accommodations in [14-601\(7\)\(n\)](#). This use is a commercial use that functions as a business and is not accessory to a residential use.

Please note, the Zoning Code does not permit the Visitor Accommodations use in lower density residential neighborhoods. The use is permitted by right in some of the zoning districts that allow commercial or industrial uses.

If you are not sure if Visitor Accommodations is permitted on your property, refer to the [Zoning Summary Generator](#).

The necessary zoning permit must be obtained before a license can be applied for.

License Requirements

After the necessary Zoning Permit is obtained, the owner or resident must obtain the required license. The license cannot be issued until after the zoning permit is obtained.

If a zoning permit for Limited Lodging is required based on the Zoning Permit requirements listed above, the person offering the unit for rent must also obtain a [Limited Lodging Operator License](#).

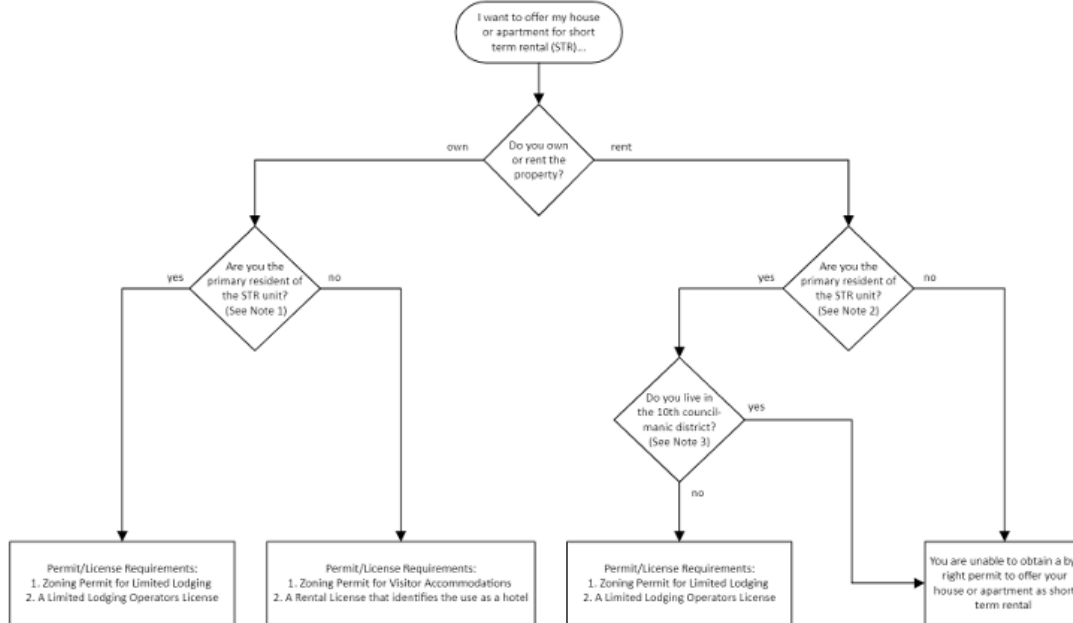
A limited lodging operator must:

- Reside in the unit for more than half the year, unless the property is located within the 10th Councilmanic District, in which case the operator must own the property.
- Only use a licensed [Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent](#) to advertise their unit.
- Clearly display their license number in any advertisements for the unit.
- To get this license, you need to [schedule and pass an inspection](#) with L&I. You also need to get an inspection to renew this license.

If a zoning permit for Visitor Accommodation is required based on the Zoning Permit requirements listed above, a [Rental License](#) must be obtained for the property. This rental license must be specifically for a Hotel use. Visitor Accommodations may either list their own properties for rent or they can use a licensed booking agent.



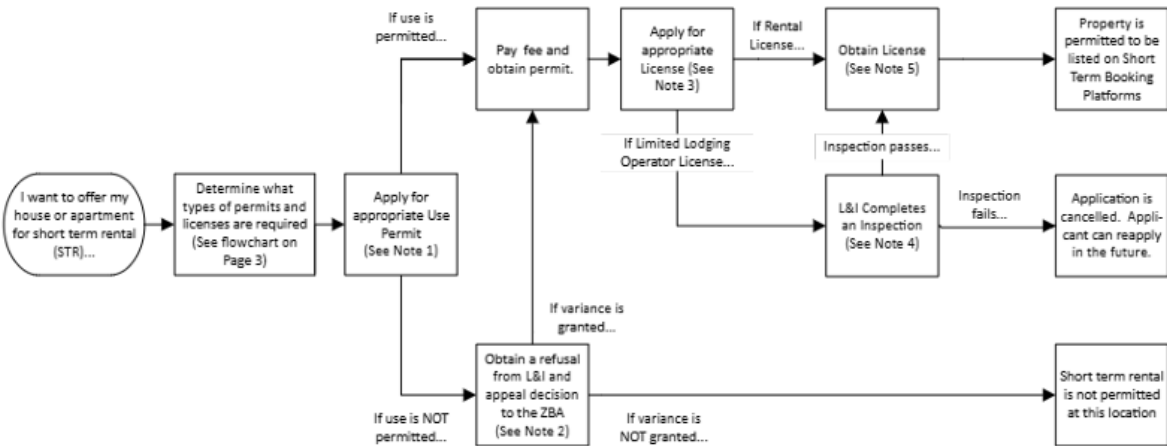
Limited Lodging Permit and License Requirements



Notes:

1. If you own the property, a primary resident is defined as a natural person who is the owner of the dwelling unit and is entitled to a homestead exemption for such dwelling unit.
2. If you rent the property, a primary resident is defined as (a) a natural person who lives in the dwelling unit as their primary domicile for more than half the year and (b) who is authorized in writing by the owner to provide limited lodging.
3. Use the following website to find the council district of your property: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/InformationLookup/index.html?appid=5aa8ce86ed1a45c99c2c751bd9ebcc06>

Limited Lodging Process: Start to Finish



Notes:

1. For more information about what to expect when applying for a use permit, see [Question #4](#) and [Question #5](#) on Page 5.
2. For more information about the ZBA appeal process, see [Question #6](#) on Page 5.
3. Before you can submit an application for this license, you will need a [Commercial Activity License](#) or [Activity License Number](#). Both are free and never expire.
4. If the property fails the first inspection, they are entitled to one reinspection. If the reinspection fails, the license application will be canceled.
5. This license must be renewed annually. To list a property for rent the license must be active.



Reference Code(s):

Philadelphia Zoning Code
Philadelphia Administrative Code
Philadelphia Building Code
Philadelphia Code Title 9

Additional FAQs

1. What is a Limited Lodging Operator?

A limited lodging operator is the person licensed to offer their primary residence for limited lodging. The limited lodging operator lives in the residence for at least half of the year.

2. What is a Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent?

A limited lodging and hotels booking agent is the entity that takes reservations and collects payment for guest accommodations in residential properties and/or hotels.

3. How do I know if a Booking Agent is Licensed?

You can search for business licenses through eCLIPSE. Go to <https://eclipse.phila.gov/>, then click "Click [here](#) to search eCLIPSE." From there, you can perform a search for a Business License.

4. I need a zoning permit for Limited Lodging. What do I need to submit with my application?

When you file an application, the following documents must be submitted with your application:

- Proof of residency demonstrated through a Pennsylvania or Municipal identification card. Change of address receipts are not accepted.
- If you are not the owner of the property, you must provide a copy of your lease and written authorization of the owner for short-term rental.
- If the property has multiple units, the identification submitted with your application must indicate the unit number where you reside.

5. I need a zoning permit for Visitor Accommodations; will I be able to get this permit?

The Zoning Code does not permit the Visitor Accommodations use in all parts of the city. To determine if your property can obtain a by-right permit for Visitor Accommodations, visit the [Zoning Summary Generator](#).

Open the [Zoning Summary Generator](#), type your address into the search bar and click the magnifying glass. Under the "Use Regulations" Section, you will see a list of use(s) permitted by-right.

If Visitor Accommodations is not listed under "Use(s) Permitted By-Right", then a zoning permit application will be denied by Licenses and Inspections (L&I). This decision can be appealed, and a permit will be issued only if a variance or special exception is granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

6. What do I do if my zoning permit application is denied?

If an application for a zoning permit is denied, the applicant will have the opportunity to appeal that decision to the ZBA. As part of this process, a sign must be posted to notify the community of the upcoming hearing and the applicant must also meet with the Registered Community Organization (RCO). Neighbors may appear at a ZBA hearing to say why a variance should not be granted.

For more information about the appeal process, visit the [ZBA's website](#).

7. What permits or licenses do I need if I lease a room in my home for more than 30 days but also list short-term rentals?

You will need a zoning permit for Household Living and for Visitor Accommodations. You will also need two licenses, a Rental License for rooms being leased more than 30 days and a Limited Lodging Operator License to conduct short term rentals.



Reference Code(s):

- Philadelphia Zoning Code
- Philadelphia Administrative Code
- Philadelphia Building Code
- Philadelphia Code Title 9

8. I own and live in a duplex (2 dwelling units on one property). What types of approvals do I need to offer short-term rental?

If you want to rent the unit that you live in as short-term rental, you will need to obtain a zoning permit for Two-Family Household with accessory Limited Lodging. The permit will identify which unit is approved as Limited Lodging. A Limited Lodging Operator License will also be required.

If you want to rent the unit that you do not live in as short-term rental, you will need to obtain a zoning permit for Single-Family Household Living and Visitor Accommodations. You will also need a rental license identifying the occupancy as Hotel.

9. I applied for a Limited Lodging Operators License and I was notified that I needed an inspection. What will the inspector be looking for? How do I schedule the inspection?

In preparation for the Limited Lodging License inspection, you should review the [Virtual inspections for Limited Lodging Operator License Information Sheet](#). This document explains what the L&I inspector will be looking for in the inspection and how to schedule it. Please note, the inspection should only be scheduled after you receive the Notice of Required License Inspection indicating that your license application has passed preliminary review. Inspections that are requested before this notice is received will be canceled.

10. Is a Building Permit or Certificate of Occupancy required to offer a unit as limited lodging?

In many cases, when the occupancy of a building is changed, a building permit is required to document the new occupancy and ensure that the building meets the code requirements for that new occupancy. If a building permit is required, a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) will be issued as well.

If a building or a space was used as a residence and is now going to be offering short-term rentals, a building permit and CO may be required to document the change in occupancy depending on the configuration of the rental and the original occupancy of the building. The table below outlines when a building permit and CO would be required.

If a building or a space was used as a non-residential use and is now going to be offering short-term rentals, a building permit and CO is always required.

If alterations are proposed, a building permit is always required regardless of occupancy.

One- or Two-Family Dwelling		
Configuration	Owner Occupied	Non-Owner Occupied
Whole House Rented	No Building Permit or CO	No Building Permit or CO
Up to five (5) rooms and ten (10) occupants ¹	No Building Permit or CO ²	Building Permit / CO required (R-3 occupancy ³ requiring sprinklers)
More than five (5) rooms and or ten (10) occupants ¹	Building Permit / CO required (R-1 occupancy ³)	Building Permit / CO required (R-1 occupancy ³)
Unit(s) within a building with three (3) or more units		
Building Permit / CO required (R-1 occupancy ³)		

Notes:

1. The number of occupants and rooms are inclusive of the owner and owner's room.
2. An example of this configuration is a small Bed and Breakfast.
3. Occupancy classifications are defined in Chapter 3 of the [International Building Code \(IBC\)](#).

**Reference Code(s):**

Philadelphia Zoning Code
Philadelphia Administrative Code
Philadelphia Building Code
Philadelphia Code Title 9

11. I am trying to list my property for rent on Airbnb but I am receiving a message stating that I am not in compliance with the requirements of the City of Philadelphia. What are my next steps?

First, you want to make sure that you have the appropriate permits and licenses issued. Once that is done, you should submit the following information to shorttermrental@phila.gov:

- Property Address
- Valid License No. for limited lodging or rental/visitor accommodations.
- Airbnb listing ID. According to Airbnb, you can find this in your Airbnb customer account. Any additional questions relating to this listing ID must be directed to Airbnb.

Additional Information

- Limited Lodging is permitted as an accessory use to a residential dwelling. Before considering this option, please review the standards outlined in [14-604\(13\)\(c\)](#) which regulate minimum requirements of these rental units. These standards include restrictions on the number of guests permitted, required contact information of the owner or operator, noise restrictions, etc. Failure to comply with these regulations could result in the issuance of violations.
- If you are interested in renting your apartment or condo, the issuance of a permit from L&I does not negate any prohibitions within your lease, HOA agreement or similar contract.


Questions?

Call 311 or (215) 686-8686 (if outside Philadelphia) or submit an online form via <http://www.phila.gov/li/get-help>.

Disclaimer:

This interpretation, policy or code application is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code application to specific projects may vary. There may be other ways to comply with the Code. If so, you are not required to use this method. You may want to investigate other options or consult with a professional identifying an equally code compliant solution.

Appendix B



Department of
Licenses and Inspections
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent Transaction History Information Sheet

License Requirements

To make reservations or collect payment for hotel accommodations on behalf of a limited lodging operator, you need a [Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent License](#).

As a condition of the Limited Lodging and Hotels Booking Agent License, Philadelphia Code [Section 9-3910](#) requires that a booking agent shall provide L&I information concerning transactions.

By [regulation](#), the department specified the frequency of the report and the specific information required to be submitted.

Transaction History Report Content

The licensed booking agent shall submit a regular report to the Department of Licenses and Inspections that includes the following information:

- The name of each licensed operator for whom a transaction has been consummated with respect to a property located in Philadelphia during the reporting period.
- The license type, license number, and rental license category associated with each booking, if applicable.
- The street address associated with each such booking, including the unit number, if applicable.

Report Submission

The reports shall be submitted electronically by emailing a spreadsheet in an XLS or CSV format to ligisteam@phila.gov. The reports are required to be submitted on a quarterly basis as follows:

- Quarter 1: January 1 - March 31, report shall be provided by April 30.
- Quarter 2: April 1 - June 30, report shall be provided by July 31.
- Quarter 3: July 1 - September 30, report shall be provided by October 31.
- Quarter 4: October 1 - December 31, report shall be provided by January 30.

Questions pertaining to the submission of this report can be directed to ShortTermRental@phila.gov.

Report Format

Page 2 of this document shows a template of the format that should be used to submit the reports.

Determining License Type / Category

The transaction report requires identifying the License Type or Category for each license. Licensing information can be verified through multiple sources:

- [OpenDataPhilly](#) for a complete dataset
- [Atlas](#) to search a specific address
- [eClipse](#) to search by license number; You do not need to log into eClipse to use this search function.



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Report Template

AGENCY_NAME	OPERATOR_NAME	ADDRESS	LICENSENUMBER	LICENSETYPE	RENTALCATEGORY
PHILLYBNB	SMITH, JOHN	1234 MAIN ST, UNIT 1234, PHILADELPHIA, PA 12345	123456	Limited Lodging Operator	
PHILLYBNB	NONAME LLC	4321 2ND ST, PHILADELPHIA, PA 12345	654321	Rental	Hotel, Residential Dwellings, Rooming House / Boarding House, Other
PHILLYBNB	GRITTY LLC	3601 S BROAD ST, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19148	877033	Rental	Hotel, Residential Dwellings
PHILLYBNB	LIBERTY BELL INC	526 MARKET ST, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106	534406	Rental	Hotel, Rooming House / Boarding House, Other
PHILLYBNB	LOVE SIGN LLC	1550 JFK BLVD, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102	884517	Limited Lodging Operator	
PHILLYBNB	SCHWARBER, KYLE	1 CITIZENS BANK WAY, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19148	816301	Limited Lodging Operator	
PHILLYBNB	KELCE, JASON	1 LINCOLN FINACIAL FIELD WAY, PA 19148	276985	Rental	Hotel
PHILLYBNB	BALBOA, ROCKY	2600 BEN FRANKLIN PKWY, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130	619296	Rental	Hotel, Residential Dwellings
PHILLYBNB	PENN, WILLIAM	1400 JFK BLVD, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102	145199	Rental	Hotel, Residential Dwellings
PHILLYBNB	SUAREZ, RANGER	1 CITIZENS BANK WAY, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19148	830701	Rental	Hotel, Residential Dwellings, Rooming House / Boarding House, Other

Appendix C



Home > Philadelphia, PA

Rules • Home host

Philadelphia, PA

When deciding whether to become an Airbnb host, it is important for you to understand the laws in your region or city. As a platform and online marketplace we do not provide legal advice, but we want to provide resources that may help you better understand applicable laws and regulations. This list is not exhaustive, but it may give you a good start in understanding your local laws. If you have questions, visit the short-term rental homepage or other government agencies directly, or consult a local lawyer or tax professional.

Registration assistance

Need help registering your listing or understanding if you are eligible to host in Philadelphia?

Airbnb has partnered with [Rocket Lawyer](#) to help connect you with a registration pro to guide you through the registration process.

Fill out the [Rocket Lawyer sign up form](#) to have a free consultation.

Short-term rental regulations

Hosts in Philadelphia are required to obtain a license to host short-term stays (fewer than 30 nights). See the [City's FAQs here](#). There is different eligibility based on your property type:

Before operating an STR, you are required to obtain a commercial activity license, a zoning permit, or a limited lodging operator license for primary residences, or a rental license with a hotel designation for non-primary residences.

Philadelphia classifies short-term rental [Back to top](#) categories:

1. Limited Lodging: The short-term rental of a unit which has a primary residence. In order to rent your primary residence short-term you will need a [Limited Lodging Operator License](#). You will need the following in order to apply:

- [Commercial Activity License](#)
- [Zoning Permit for Limited Lodging](#)
 - Get the [zoning regulations of Limited Lodging](#)

2. Visitor Accommodations: The rental of a unit that does not have a primary resident. If you are renting a dwelling unit that is not your primary residence, you need a [Rental License](#) with a hotel classification. In order to receive this you will need to following:

- [Commercial Activity License](#)
- [Zoning Permit for Visitor Accommodations](#)
 - Get the [zoning regulations for Visitor Accommodations](#)

Once you determine which type of license you'll need, you must submit your application.

- Applications can be completed [online using eCLIPSE](#). If you need help filing your application online, you can [schedule a virtual appointment](#). If you would like to apply in person, you need an [appointment to visit the Permit and License Center](#).

Please contact the [Department of Licenses and Inspections Department](#) directly for additional information.

License numbers must be clearly displayed on all advertisements for the short-term rental unit and licenses must be renewed annual. If you haven't added your license to [your listing\(s\)](#), we recommend doing that as soon as possible.

Comprehensive information including the application process, fees and renewals are available on the [City's website](#). We also encourage you to consult the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page to learn more.

Additional information

Who is eligible to rent out their property?

- In residential zones, only primary residences are eligible to host short-term stays unless you can obtain a variance.
- In commercial zones, non-primary residences are eligible to host short-term stays.
- Before operating your STR, you obtain a commercial activity license, a zoning permit, and a limited lodging operator license for primary residences, or a rental

license with a hotel designation for non-primary residences.

What do I need to rent out my property?

To offer your property as a short term rental, you will need:

- Registration Fee: \$150
- Philadelphia business tax account ID ([Department of Revenue](#));
- Commercial Activity License, ([Department of Licenses and Inspections](#));
- [Zoning Permit](#) for the use;

Once you've obtained these, you'll need to obtain the appropriate License to operate a short-term rental:

- If you are renting your primary residence, a Limited Operator Lodging License
- If you are renting a non-primary residence in a commercial zone, a [Rental License](#) with hotel designation

If the property is NOT owned by a natural person or a publicly-traded company, the City will request that you provide the name and mailing address of one of the following:

- Each individual with more than 49% interest in ownership of the property; or the two individuals with the largest interest
- If the property was recently sold, submit a copy of the settlement sheet or deed with the application.

If you are a tenant making an application, the City will require that you provide your executed lease agreement.

What do I need for a limited operator lodging license?

- Zoning permits for Limited Lodging and Household Living
- Commercial activity license
- Proof of ownership through recorded deed, or owner approval and lease
- Potentially a certificate of occupancy from the City, depending on occupancy (more information in the City's FAQ [here](#))
- Licensing fees: \$150

What do I need for a commercial activity license?

- Tax account number or SSN
- On record full tax compliance (no outstanding/unpaid taxes)
- Ownership information

- Names or numbers of either the two people with the biggest interest in the property OR each person with more than 49% ownership.
- No fee!
- Business income and receipts tax ID (which requires a Business Tax Account)

What do I need for a zoning permit?

- Proof of residency (ID Card)
- A Site plan
- Pay a fee to permit the use: (\$174 for additional uses) [Zoning & Use Permit Fees](#)

What if I want to rent out a property I own but don't want to live in?

- You need a rental license with a hotel designation.

What do I need to get a rental license with a hotel designation?

You need:

- Zoning permit for Visitor Accommodations
- Commercial activity license
- Proof of ownership through recorded deed, or owner approval and lease
- Potentially a certificate of occupancy from the City, depending on occupancy (more information in the City's FAQ [here](#))
- Licensing fees of: \$63 per unit

Is there any notice I must provide to either guests or neighbors?

- Trash and recycling collection days and any trash disposal rules and regulations. You must also provide proper trash containers for renters.
- The owner or their designee's contact information. The contact person must handle any complaints from the renters.
- Inform renters that they are only allowed guests between the hours of 8 a.m. and midnight and that excessive noise is prohibited and violators are subject to fines and penalties.

Is there anything else I have to do with my short term rental property?

- Install smoke alarms:
 - In each bedroom.
 - In the hallway in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.

- On each floor of the home, including basements.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms:
 - Within 15 ft. of the entrance to every bedroom or within 15 ft. of a bed in sleeping areas if there isn't an enclosed bedroom.
 - Centrally on a wall or the ceiling, but not directly in front of a door to a bathroom or within 5 ft. of a cooking appliance.
 - Under the installation requirements for smoke alarms if they are combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Do not post signs for lodging on your home.

Are there any tax requirements?

- **Airbnb collects** the City of Philadelphia Hotel tax, which is 8.5% of the amount received through renting.

Do I have to keep any records?

- Keep records for at least one year that show:
 - That the home remained your primary residence.
 - The dates the home was rented.
 - The number of renters.

Payment

The total registration fee is \$150. You may also need to obtain a Philadelphia business tax account ID (**Department of Revenue**); a Commercial Activity License, (**Department of Licenses and Inspections**); and **Zoning Permit** for the use.

Taxes

The City requires that hosts pay the monthly City of Philadelphia Hotel tax, which is 8.5% of the amount received through renting. Visit the [City's website](#) for more information.

Other contracts and rules

It's also important to understand and abide by other contracts or rules that bind you, such as leases, condo board or co-op rules, HOA rules, or rules established by tenant organizations. Please read your lease agreement and check with your landlord if applicable.