



Short Term Rental (STR) FAQ

The City Council has adopted new regulations for Short Term Rentals (formerly referred to as Tourist Homes) in LSMC 14.44.064. Please contact City Hall at (425) 622-9400 if you have further questions.

Q: What is a Short-Term Rental?

A short-term rental (STR) is defined as a residential dwelling unit or portion thereof rented on a weekly or nightly basis for temporary lodging (less than 30 days). Often, STRs are listed on platforms such as AirBNB or Vrbo. Unlike long-term rentals, there are additional city regulations that apply.

STRs must be operated within permanent legal structures. RVs, boathouses, and open land may not be used as STRs.

Q: Where can I find a copy of the full list of regulations?

The complete regulations can be found under [Ordinance 1139](#) and online at [LSMC 14.44.064](#).

Q: I own or operate an existing STR. How can I get it permitted?

Here are links to the [checklist](#) and [application](#). You'll also need to submit a [Type I application](#). All items can be submitted through the city's [online permit portal](#). You will first need to create an account if you don't have one already.

Q: What are the permit fees?

The permit application fee is \$500. A \$100 renewal fee will be required annually upon renewal.

Q: Is a business license required?

Yes, a business license is required. You can apply for your state license and City endorsement [here](#). Lodging taxes will need to be remitted to the state per RCW 64.37.020.

Q: Do I have to live on the property?

Yes, the regulations require the owner or operator to reside on the property as a primary residence for at least 240 days of the year. However, owners or operators with permanent residences in the Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area are not required to live onsite. Both the yellow and grey areas on [this map](#) represent the Urban Growth Area. When the owner or operator is travelling or away, they must designate a local contact.

Q: What is the difference between an owner and operator?

In many cases, the owner may also manage the day-to-day operations of their STR. However, sometimes they may delegate another person or entity to manage the STR, such as a long-term tenant that lives on site or a property management company. In this case, the operator's primary residence would still be required to be located within the Urban Growth Area.

Q: I would like to use my primary residence as an STR. Can I lease it while I am on vacation?
Yes. However, you will need to identify a 24/7 local contact that can respond to complaints and take remedial action if necessary. Contact info for the local contact must be submitted to the city.

Q: Is there a limit on the number of days per year I can lease my STR?
No, there is no limit on the number of days per year or the duration of the stay.

Q: Can I use my Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) as an STR?

Yes, assuming it meets all other regulations and is a legal, permitted structure. Please contact the Planning and Community Development Department for more information about permitting an ADU.

Q: I have two or more dwelling units on my property. Can I lease more than one as an STR?
No, only one STR unit is allowed per property, which might be the primary structure, an ADU or duplex unit.

Q: Is an inspection required?

No, however, applications will have to provide documentation that working fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and clearly marked exits are present in the STR. The city reserves the right to conduct inspections of the short-term rental in response to health and safety complaints.

Q: Do I need to provide parking for STR guests?

Yes, at least one off-street parking stalls must be provided for every two bedrooms. Parking stalls must be at least nine feet wide and 19 feet long.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of STRs within the city?

Yes, a maximum of 50 total licenses can be active at any one time. You can find our zoning map for reference here.

Q: Can two adjacent properties have STRs?

No, STR properties must be separated by at least 150 feet when measured as a radius from parcel edge to parcel edge.

Q: Can I use my property as a venue for weddings, banquets, fundraisers, or other large events?

No, STRs cannot be used as event venues for compensation.

Q: Are other permits required?

Short-Term Rental units may require building permits if structural or other building modifications are made to accommodate the STR, such as new entrances, walls, plumbing, electrical or if an ADU is constructed.