



GEORGIA VERMONT

Short Term Rental (STR) Licensing Ordinance

I. **Authority:**

This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority set forth in Chapters 59 and 61 of Title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, including specifically 24 VSA § 2291(29). This Ordinance shall be designated as a civil ordinance under 24 V.S.A. § 1971(b).

II. **Purpose:**

The purpose of this ordinance is to seek to balance the well-established practice of renting residential dwelling units to travelling transients and the visiting public, while preserving the character of residential neighborhoods and minimizing and potential negative impacts of Short-Term Rentals, and continuing to promote public health, safety and welfare of visitors and residents, both fulltime and part-time. By establishing an orderly process for identifying Short-Term Rental properties in the Town, and compiling a database of the Designated Responsible Persons and emergency contact information for each Short-Term Rental property, the Town intends to ensure an effective and expedient response to an emergency that may arise in connection with the Short-Term Rental property.

Furthermore, through the establishment of a dynamic Registry of Short-Term Rental properties, the Town seeks to gather information regarding the practice of renting residential dwelling units on a short-term basis, so the Town may better evaluate and determine through data what regulation of such rental properties, if warranted, is appropriate and consistent with the best interests of the Town, its residents (full-time and part-time) and visitors.

III. **Definitions:**

The following definitions shall apply to this Ordinance.

A. "Advertising" shall mean any method used to promote the existence or availability of a STR. Advertising includes but is not limited to the use of websites, STR platforms, search engines, emails, signs, displays, radio & television broadcasts, newspapers, periodicals, direct mail, or other printed and electronic media.

B. "Designated Responsible Person" shall mean a Person or Persons designated and authorized by the Owner to act as their agent, or that Person's employee or agent, capable of and responsible for responding to emergency situations and other issues related to the STR when the property is being rented or leased as an STR, including providing first responders with timely interior and exterior access to the Short-Term Rental. For the sake of clarity, the Designated Responsible Person may be the Owner of the STR.

C. "Dwelling Unit" shall mean one or more rooms, connected together, constituting a separate, independent house keeping establishment for Owner occupancy, rental or lease, physically separated from any other rooms or dwelling units which may be in the same building, and containing independent cooking, sanitation and sleeping facilities.

D. "Person" shall include any natural person, corporation, municipality, the State of Vermont or any department, agency, or subdivision of the State, and any partnership, unincorporated association, or other legal entity.

E. "Owner" shall mean the Person(s) in whom is vested title to real property in or on which a STR is located, or that is rented as an STR, regardless of whether that title is undivided or fractional. While an Owner may be represented by, and Owner obligations under this Ordinance may be performed by, an agent, the Owner is ultimately responsible for the STR and compliance with this Ordinance.

F. "Short-Term Rental Registration form" shall mean the form that the Owner of a Short-Term Rental property must submit to the Town or its designee containing required information related to the Short-Term Rental property.

E. "Short-Term Rental" or "STR" or "Short-Term Rental property" means any lease or rental of residential real property, including a furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling room or self-contained Dwelling Unit, or a portion thereof, to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year, but specifically excluding commercial lodging establishments such as hotels, motels, inns and bed and breakfasts. For the sake of clarity, the definition of Short Term Rental shall include residential real property located within a Commercial Lodging Facility that is held in separate and unaffiliated ownership from the Commercial Lodging Establishment itself, as in the case of individually owned rooms within a so-called condominium hotel, where said residential real property is rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year.

IV. Short-Term Rental Registration and Other Requirements:

A. Prior to renting an STR property, the Owner of the property proposed for STR, or their authorized agent, shall complete and submit to the Town a STR License and pay any required fee(s) for each Dwelling Unit they may separately rent as an STR. An authorized agent may register and pay required fees on behalf of multiple STR owners provided the required fees are paid for each Dwelling Unit. An STR License may be completed and submitted at any time during the calendar year, provided submission of the form precedes rental of the involved STR Dwelling Unit. The STR License, once completed and submitted, shall cover the STR for the remainder of the calendar year and shall be subject to the renewal provisions hereof beginning January 1 of the following year.

B. The STR License shall be developed by the Zoning Administrator and, subject to the requirements of this Ordinance, may be administratively modified or amended from time to time by the Selectboard at the Board's sole discretion.

C. The STR License shall require that the Owner of STR property provide the following information to the Town, as well as such additional information about the STR as the Zoning Administrator or Selectboard may reasonably require:

(1) Physical (E-911) address(es) of all Short-Term Rental property offered for lease/rental;

(2) The contact information required by 18 V.S.A. 4467 shall be displayed in plain sight within the STR.

(3) Either the owner of the STR, or the owner's designated manager, shall be geographically proximate and available and on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week during rentals to respond in the event of an incident.

(d) Accurate occupancy limits shall be included in all advertisements of the STR. Advertised occupancy limits shall not exceed the number of bedrooms x 2 plus 2 (excluding children under 2 years old). The official number of bedrooms may be confirmed using wastewater permit records for the property.

(4) All vehicles associated with the STR of a property, including guests of the short-term renter(s), shall have designated off-road parking. Vehicles shall not use shared private driveways, private roads, or public highways.

(5) Provisions must be in place for timely trash removal after each rental.

(6) If an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is used as an STR, then the parcel owner shall be required to live on the property full time, with the property being their primary residence.

(7) The owner of the STR is responsible for the collection and payment of applicable Vermont Taxes, including Vermont's Meals and Rooms Tax (MRT) and Local Option Tax.

D. After completing and submitting a STR License, the Owner shall report to the Town any material change(s) in the required information submitted to the Town within thirty (30) days of the occurrence of the change.

E. Upon the conveyance of title to any STR Licensed property in the Town, and no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the conveyance as evidenced by the date on an instrument conveying the property filed in the Town's Land Records, the new Owner shall complete a new STR License with updated information to continue to use the property as a STR.

F. The owner of the STR, or the owner's designated manager, who receives a verified noise complaint may be required to install noise monitoring system and post designated quiet hours.

G. The owner shall obtain the educational information packet regarding Short-Term Rentals provided by the Vermont Division of Fire Safety, as required by 18 V.S.A. 4468(a).

H. The owner of the STR shall inform, in writing, all adjacent residential neighbors of their application for an STR license within 14 days of submitting their application.

I. In addition to non-compliance with other mandatory provisions hereof, it shall be a violation of this Ordinance for the Owner of real property used as an STR to:

- (a) Lease or rent their property as a Short-Term Rental without first registering it with the Town as provided herein.
- (b) Provide intentionally false or materially misleading information on any Short-Term Rental Registration form.
- (c) Fail or refuse to pay the STR Registration fee or renewal fee.

J. The Owners of all STR properties shall ensure that the Georgia Fire Department has year-round, 24-hour access to the STR through a Fire Department approved lock box or other reasonable means of providing immediate access authorized by the Fire Department.

K. All STR properties shall have a Designated Responsible Person, who may be the STR Owner, who is available and authorized to respond to emergency situations and other issues related to the STR when the property is being rented or leased as an STR. The designated Responsible Person shall respond within 45 minutes of notification by a Georgia Firefighter or Police Officer regarding any issue or problem involving a STR when the property is being rented or leased as an STR. For the purposes of the foregoing sentence, "respond" shall mean arrive, in person, at the location of the involved STR property, unless specifically excused from doing so by a Georgia Firefighter, Police Officer, the ZA or other Person authorized to enforce this Ordinance. This provision is not intended to require a Designated Responsible Person to violate the law, including speed limits, or place themselves or others in an unreasonable at-risk situation to facilitate a timely response.

V. Short-Term Rental Licenses:

A. Applications

Applicants for a license shall submit a completed STR License application, available via the Online Permit Portal, including the following information:

1. Submission of Vermont Short Term Rental Safety, Health and Financial Obligations Form, as required by 18 V.S.A. 4468(b).
2. The owner must identify a Designated REsponsible Person who will serve as a local point of contact when the owner is unavailable.
3. Declaration of occupancy based on the number of approved bedrooms as determined by a Wastewater Permit or Lister Card shall not exceeded.

B. Violations:

The ZA may revoke or deny the license of a Short-Term Rental upon violations of these regulations within the preceding twelve-month period. Revocation or denial of license shall prohibit the owner from using the premises as a Short-Term Rental, during which period the owner shall be subject to fines for any unlicensed rental operation until a valid license is issued. For purposes of this subsection, a violation shall be deemed to have occurred if the ZA has received / filed a notice of violation of the regulation and sent a notice of violation to the owner or owner's designated representative. The owner or owner's designated representative does not remedy the violation or the violation persists; or The Vermont Judicial Bureau, or another court or tribunal having jurisdiction, enters a judgment or decision against the person on such charge and such judgment or decision becomes final; or The Health Officer or State of Vermont has issued a complaint or action against the STR.

C. Appeals:

A Short-Term Rental owner may appeal a determination by the ZA to revoke or deny registration of the short-term rental under this subsection at any time by appealing the decision to the Selectboard following the appeal process.

D. Fees

The Selectboard may, from time to time, establish and adopt fees related to the administration of this Ordinance, including STR registration and renewal fees, and may incorporate all such fees into a duly adopted fee schedule, which may be amended from time-to-time at the Selectboard's sole discretion.

E. Enforcement

Any Person who violates a provision of this civil ordinance shall be subject to a civil penalty for each such violation. Each day the violation continues shall constitute a separate offense; provided, however, that liability for continuing violation(s) shall not accrue unless and until seven (7) days have expired after notice of the violation. The Town of Georgia Municipal Officer shall all be designated and authorized to act as Issuing Municipal Officials to issue and pursue before the Judicial Bureau, or another court having jurisdiction, municipal complaints to enforce this Ordinance. An Issuing Municipal Official or the Town Attorney may dismiss or amend a municipal complaint in appropriate circumstances in accordance with law or court rules.

1. Waiver Fees

An Issuing Municipal Official is authorized to recover waiver fees, in lieu of a civil penalty, in the following amounts, for any person who declines to contest a municipal complaint and pays the waiver fee:

First Offense.....\$100

Second Offense.....\$200

Third Offense.....\$300

Fourth and Subsequent Offenses..\$400

Offenses shall be counted on a twelve (12) month basis, beginning January 1 and ending December 31 of each year. An Issuing Municipal Official shall have discretion, for good cause shown, to issue a written warning, without re-covering a waiver fee, for any First Offense. In such instance, the written warning shall be counted as a First Offense for calculating the number of annual offenses.

2. Civil Penalties

An Issuing Municipal Official is authorized to recover civil penalties in the following amounts for each violation:

First Offense.....\$200

Second Offense.....\$400

Third Offense.....\$600

Fourth and Subsequent Offenses..\$800

Offenses shall be counted on a twelve (12) month basis, beginning January 1 and ending December 31 of each year. An Issuing Municipal Official shall have discretion, for good cause shown, to issue a written warning, without re-covering a civil penalty, for any First Offense. In such instance, the written warning shall be counted as a First Offense for calculating annual offenses.

3. Other Relief

In addition to the enforcement procedure available under Chapter 59 of Title 24, the Municipal Officer is authorized to commence a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain injunctive relief and/or to seek such other appropriate relief to enforce this Ordinance as is authorized by law.

VI. **Severability**

If any provision of this ordinance is deemed by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional, invalid or unenforceable, that provision shall be severed from the ordinance and the remaining provisions that can be given effect without the severed provision shall continue in effect.

VII. **Effective Date**

This Ordinance shall take effect on XXXX XX, 2025.

Adopted at Town of Georgia this ____ day of _____ 2025.

Kristina Senna _____

Brian Dusmore _____

Paul Jansen _____

Carl Rosenquist _____

Kellie Bosenberg _____

Received and Recorded: _____

Town Clerk: _____

Cheryl Letourneau