

Hocking County Short-Term Rental Ordinance

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of this Ordinance is to promote public health, safety, and welfare by regulating short-term rentals (STRs) in Hocking County, ensuring responsible operation standards, compliance with local laws, and ensuring that emergency services are able to access each property with their equipment at all times during the calendar year.

Section 2: Definitions

- A. **Address:** The official address of a property that is part of the Hocking County Addressing System (and not on a privately maintained driveway).
- B. **Administrator:** The Director of the Hocking County Regional Planning Office who is charged with enforcing the provisions of this Ordinance and/or his or her designated agent.
- C. **Bedroom:** A room that is at least a minimum of 70 ft. for one person and a minimum of 120 ft. for two persons where the room's primary use is sleeping and has two means of egress (either windows or doors) per Ohio State Building Code. This definition does not include couches, daybeds, recliners, or futons placed in a living room.
- D. **Driveway:** A privately maintained thoroughfare that cuts through an individual parcel of property and that may access numerous dwellings including but not limited to dwellings used for STRs.
- E. **Local Contact Person:** A designated individual residing in Hocking County, Ohio available 24/7 to respond to complaints or emergencies.
- F. **Living Room:** A room in a house for general and informal everyday use.
- G. **Operator:** The property owner or authorized agent responsible for managing an STR.
- H. **Short-Term Rental (STR):** A dwelling unit rented for 29 or less consecutive days.
- I. **Street:** A publicly maintained thoroughfare for automobiles regardless of what level of government it is maintained by (federal, state, county, township, etc.)

Section 3: Registration & Permit Requirements

- A. **Generally.** To be considered a legally valid STR a dwelling unit must have received a permit from the Hocking County Regional Planning Office.
- B. **Minimum Registration Requirements.** Registration for a Short-Term Rental unit must include at a minimum the following items (which must be completed prior to application):

1. Completion of an application form provided by the Hocking County Regional Planning Office;
 2. Complete owner and local contact person information;
 3. Proof of paid liability coverage with a minimum coverage of ;
 4. A letter of good standing from the County Auditor's office (confirming that the applicant does not have any outstanding taxes);
 5. Documentation confirming registration with the County Auditor to be taxed in accordance with the County's Lodging Excise Tax;
 6. Documentation from the County Health Department confirming that the rental is in compliance with all applicable health inspections;
 7. Site Plan showing the location of all buildings - including but not limited to the building or buildings that will be rented out to short-term residents. The address of each STR shall be located on the site plan. [*The reason for this requirement is for the County Emergency Management Agency to know the exact location of any and all buildings on the premise to be used for a short-term rental.*]
 8. Completion of a Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) background check for the primary applicant;
 9. Proof of Platform registration (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO) to assist with the proper amount of taxes being paid to the County. The platform selected must be approved by the County Office of the Bed Tax Administrator.
 10. A signed affidavit stating that the prospective STR owner has been given a list of all of the required operational standards (See Section 4, *Operational Standards*, below) and acknowledges that he or she understands that noncompliance with these standards could lead to fines, suspension of an STR permit, revocation of an STR permit, or any other remedy available under Section 5, *Inspections and Enforcement*, or that is available via state or federal law.
 11. Payment of all application and related fees.
- C. **Inspection Required.**
1. *Generally.* To obtain an STR permit, the Administrator shall first complete an inspection of the site to ensure that the property meets the requirements of this Ordinance.
 2. *Additional Assistance and Information.* The Administrator may request additional information of the STR owner and may request assistance from another Hocking County or township agency to make a determination as to whether or not the standards of this Ordinance have been met.

Section 4: Operational Standards

A. Local Contact Person.

1. *Generally.* An applicant for an STR permit shall be required to have and maintain a local contact person who shall serve as in a capacity of receiving any and all complaints that might arise related to the STR. Said contact person must:

- a. Reside within Hocking County; and
 - b. Must be able respond to complaints within 30 minutes on a 24/7 basis.
 2. *Multiple Local Contact Persons Permitted.* An STR owner may provide multiple local contact persons provided that the STR owner specifically lists out the times that each local contact person is available. There must be availability on a 24 hour basis for someone to respond.
- B. **Guest Conduct and Information Notice.** All STR owners shall provide their tenants with a Guest Conduct and Information Notice (notice) that shall be posted in a conspicuous place within the kitchen of the STR which shall at a minimum include the following:
1. *Local Contact Person.* The contact information both phone and email for the 24-hour accessible contact person. See Sec. 4-A, *Local Contact Person*, for specific requirements.
 2. *Disposal of Garbage.* Specific instructions explaining how to dispose of all garbage after leaving the property shall be explained on the notice to the STR tenant.
 3. *Notice of County Noise Ordinance.* An STR owner shall provide all of their STR tenants the specifics of the County's Noise Ordinance.
 4. *Notice of Powers and Duties of the County Sheriff's Department.* An STR owner shall provide the contact information of the County's Sheriff's Department's non-emergency phone line and a list of the situations where a County Officer may become involved with an STR tenant.
 5. *Posting of Maximum Number of Persons on the Deck.* An STR owner shall provide the maximum number of persons who are permitted on the dwelling unit's deck (if applicable). This number shall be the same amount that has been certified by the applicant's engineer or building inspector. See Sec. 4-F, *Deck Safety*.
 6. *Emergency Information.* The phone number of the applicable utility providers and an emergency exit map for the dwelling and property shall be provided.
- C. **Occupancy Limits.** All STR units shall have a specific occupancy limit. This limit is based upon the number of bedrooms [with two (2) guests per bedroom being the maximum amount of persons permitted in each dwelling.] Children under the age of ten (10) do not count toward this total.
- D. **Required Parking.**
1. *Required Amount of Parking.* Sufficient parking must be provided for at least one vehicle per four (4) residents at the occupancy limit. So for example, should the maximum number of persons permitted at an STR be eight, then two parking spaces shall be required.

2. *Markings Not Required.* Parking spaces are not required to be marked, however, there must be enough space to meet the requirements of the required amount of parking as stated above.
3. *Parking Space Size.* The size of a required parking space for this Ordinance shall be a minimum width of nine (9) feet and a minimum length of eighteen (18) feet.
4. *Space for Emergency Vehicles.* There must be enough space for both Hocking County and township emergency vehicles to access the full extent of the property. The width of the County's largest emergency vehicle is [REDACTED] ft. As such this shall value plus four (4) feet shall be the required amount of space to meet this standard.
5. *Turning Around and Backing Out.* There must be enough room for an emergency vehicle to either back out or turnaround at or near a dwelling unit that is used for an STR.
6. *Parking on Private Property.* To satisfy the required amount of parking standard, as listed above in this section, the parking must be on the same private property as the STR. Parking that is within a publicly maintained right-of-way does not count toward this requirement.

E. Driveway Standards.

1. *Purpose.* The purpose of the driveway standards requirement is to ensure that all STRs are accessible to the Hocking County Emergency Services for any emergency that may occur on site during any time of the calendar year.
2. *Standard.* For a site to be accessible for the Hocking County Emergency Services, the County needs to be able to transport all of its available equipment to the site of the emergency. Using this methodology, it was determined that each driveway that houses an STR must have a driveway with the following specific standards [REDACTED].

- F. Deck Safety.** For all dwelling units that have a deck attached to the dwelling that is larger than five feet off the ground, an engineer or building inspector must certify that the deck is stable at the time of the STR permit application. The engineer or building inspector must also certify a maximum number of persons who can be on the deck at any given time.
- G. Fencing.** Prospective STRs where a dwelling unit is within 200 ft of an adjoining property must have fencing (where one is unable to see through to the other property) placed between the two properties to provide a buffer between the neighbors and the building intended for STR use. The requirement to add the fencing shall be the sole responsibility of the STR applicant. Should there be sufficient landscaping or natural vegetation between the two properties this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Administrator.

H. Address Numbering.

1. *Each Dwelling Unit Individually Numbered.* Each dwelling unit shall be individually numbered and shall be marked and clearly visible from the street or any internal driveways.
2. *Placard on Each Dwelling Unit.* A placard of the size of [REDACTED] shall be placed on each dwelling unit for easy identification of each dwelling unit.
3. *Internal Numbers.* Internal numbers are for the identification of dwelling units that the STR owner has identified on the site plan that is required as part of the STR application process. See Sec. 3-B, *Minimum Registration Requirements*.
4. *Internal Property Routing Signs.* Whenever internal driveways split into two or more driveways on a property, the STR owner shall clearly mark at the intersection of the driveway which way someone should turn to access each individual unit on the property.
5. *Signage Requirements.* All signs shall be limited to [REDACTED] sq. ft.

- I. **Structures Prohibited from being an STR.** The following structures are prohibited from being rented out as an STR: campers, RVs, travel trailers, sheds, garages, or any structure not intended for permanent human habitation.
- J. **Renter Age Requirements.** The principal renter of a dwelling unit shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- K. **Rental Period.** The minimum rental period for an STR shall be one (1) day.
- L. **Insurance Requirements.** STR operators must maintain [REDACTED] amount of liability insurance sufficient to cover potential damages or incidents.
- M. **Building Standards.** In addition to the operational standards listed above, an STR must meet all building standards required as required by Hocking County and the State of Ohio.

Section 5: Inspections and Enforcement

- A. **Inspections.** The Administrator reserves the right to make an inspection of any property that may or may not currently be in compliance with the standards of this Ordinance. Said inspection or inspections may occur periodically or at any time to ensure that properties are not in violation of the terms of this Ordinance.
- B. **Enforcement.** Violations may result in fines, suspension, or revocation of an STR permit. Repeat or serious violations may lead to permanent disqualification.