

Renting Your Dwelling Unit in Destin

Registration and Zoning Requirements

Long-Term – Short-Term - Seasonal: What is the difference between these terms and what difference does it make?

- Long term is rental of a dwelling unit to a single entity for more than 180 days.
- Short-term is rental of a dwelling unit for less than 30 days.
- Seasonal is rental of a dwelling unit for more than 30 days but less than 180.

There is a code distinction between short-term and the others. Short-term rentals are permitted only in the residential zones closest to the Gulf of Mexico. They are not permitted in most zones north of Highway 98. Long term and seasonal rentals are not regulated by the City.

Location, Location, Location – Check Your Zoning: Before you rent your dwelling for short-term purposes, it is important to assure that City zoning allows it to be rented for less than 30 days. There is a requirement to register short-term rental units with the City.

Short Term Rental Registration Requirement: The owner or “responsible party” must register every residential unit available for short-term rental with the City of Destin. Registration is made through the Code Enforcement Division of the Community Development Department in City Hall and is coordinated through Kelly Hooten, the Clerical Assistant in that Department. The registration program requires the “responsible party” for the conduct of the occupants in and the upkeeps of the rental unit to be identified in City records. It also requires that the property be posted with a sign prominently placed on the property of the short-term rental no further than 5 feet from the public right-of-way and in a manner that is visible and not obscured. The sign must be no larger than 18” X 12” and no smaller than 16” X 10”. The sign must contain the name, address and 24/7 emergency contact phone number of the “responsible party.”

You Are the “Responsible Party”: The responsible party is the designated agent or owner of the property. If you don’t have a designated property manager or rental agent, then you are the responsible party.

“Do Unto Others”: Basic Expectations of Renters: The basis of the registration requirement is simply the “golden rule.” The required signage containing the contact information for the “responsible party” gives the neighbors next to the rental unit a point of immediate contact in case the renters are not treating the neighborhood the way they would want to be treated “back home.”

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Acknowledgements to Renters: Owners and/or Agents are required to inform renters of codes that promote continuity between the long-term residents and the short-term renter. These acknowledgements include the following:

- All vehicles must be parked in the driveway of the residence and clear of all grassy areas and sidewalks.
- Noise that exceeds the City’s Noise Ordinance will be unlawful and considered a nuisance.
- No garbage container shall be located at the curb for pickup before 12 PM of the day prior to pickup and garbage containers shall be removed before midnight of the day of pickup.
- Trespassing upon other property or facilities not clearly for public use is unlawful.

Filing Complaints about Renters: If you observe “renters behaving badly”, your first line of defense is to call the phone number of the “responsible party” listed on the rental sign. If there is no answer, or no response to fit the urgency of the complaint, call the Code Enforcement Department of the City of Destin (during weekdays 9 AM to 5 PM). After hours, call the Sheriff at _____. A City Code Enforcement Officer is always on call, 24-hours a day and is available through your call to the Sheriff. Either a Sheriff’s deputy or a City Code Enforcement Officer will assist you with your concern.

“Lock-out Units” and Other Zoning Lingo: Here is a short list of related Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code standards that people who rent their property should know about:

- Lock-out unit:
- Dwelling unit:
- Density:
- Cooking facilities:

[Ken: Please provide concise definitions for these terms in relation to short-term rentals]