

Short-Term Rental Operator's Guide



What is a Short-Term Rental?

Short-Term Rental means the temporary rental (less than 30 days) of a portion of, or the entire dwelling unit, secondary suite, or room located on a property that is zoned to permit residential use. This definition specifically includes Bed and Breakfasts. Nanaimo residents can rent their **primary residence** for stays of less than 30 consecutive days as a Short-Term Rental (STR). Before listing a STR, operators must get a business licence. This guide is intended to inform a STR operator of relevant bylaws and recommended good neighbour and lifesafety practices.



Zoning and parking requirements

The following outlines [Zoning](#) and [Parking Bylaw](#) requirements that all STR operators must adhere to. In order to operate a Short-Term Rental in the City of Nanaimo:

- The property must be the operator’s **primary residence** in a residential, commercial, or mixed-use zone in which they live at least eight months in a calendar year.
- An additional off-street parking space must be provided for each STR booking.
- The maximum number of bedrooms that may be rented as a Short-Term Rental are limited to: 1) no more than two guest rooms and four guests (inclusive of secondary suite guest rooms) in most residential zones; or 2) four guest rooms and six guests in commercial and multiple family zones, as outlined in the table below:

Zones	Maximum Number of Guest Rooms	Maximum Number of Guests
R1/R1a/R1b to R5, R7, R10 to R14, AR1, and AR2	2	4
R6, R8, R9, R15, COR1, COR 2, COR3, CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, CC5, CC6, DT1 to DT12, W2, W3, CD1, CD2, CD4 to CD10	4	6

To find out the zoning of your property, check out the City’s [Zoning Map](#).

How to get a business licence

All STR operators in the City of Nanaimo are required to obtain a business licence. STR operators can apply for a Short-Term Rental business licence in the following ways:

- In person at the City of Nanaimo Service and Resource Centre located at 411 Dunsmuir Street;
- [Online](#); or
- By mail: c/o Business Licensing, 455 Wallace Street, Nanaimo, BC, V9R 5J6

Short-Term Rental business licence applicants will be asked to provide the following:



Proof of primary residence - for example, a British Columbia (BC) Driver’s Licence or BC Services Card showing the same address as the proposed STR, plus one of the following showing the same address as the STR:

- Home owner’s grant declaration;
- Recent piece of mail;
- Voter identification card; or,
- Income tax form;



A parking plan that includes one designated parking space per guest booking, in addition to parking requirements for other uses. Where the unit is a strata, and the required parking involves common property, the parking plan must be approved by the Strata Council or President.



Contact information for the business that will be shared publicly on the [City’s Business Licence Directory](#).



Pay an annual business licence fee.

If you no longer wish to run a Short-Term Rental at your location, please contact Business Licensing at 250-755-4482 or business.licence@nanaimo.ca.

Health and safety information

All STRs should be located in dwelling units, or secondary suites, legally constructed with a valid building permit. A separate permit or inspection is not required for a STR. STR operators are encouraged to review and follow the following building and fire safety best practices:

- Provide guests with 24-7 contact information in case of an emergency
- Post a fire plan at all entrances and exits
- Provide smoke alarms as appropriate
- Provide working and accessible fire extinguishers as appropriate
- Provide carbon monoxide detectors as appropriate
- Ensure all smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide detectors are in working order
- Inspect, test annually, and keep related records for smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide detectors

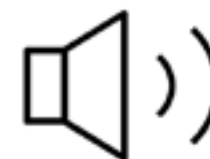
How to be a good neighbour/ Information for guests

Short-Term Rentals are often located within residential neighbourhoods. If managed poorly, guest noise, traffic, and behaviour can negatively impact neighbouring residents and businesses. STR operators are asked to be a good neighbour by:

- Providing a contact for the City and neighbours to call if a concern arises, and being responsive to neighbourhood complaints within a 24-hour period
- Reminding guests they are in a residential neighbourhood and informing them of City of Nanaimo noise and parking bylaws
- Ensuring guests have a designated off-street parking space



The City of Nanaimo has a number of bylaws that help make our community a safe and enjoyable place for residents and visitors. The following are some of the regulations your guests should be aware of (please note, your strata bylaw may have additional regulations):



Noise

The City of Nanaimo Noise Control Bylaw prohibits any person from making noise or sound on public or private property that disturbs or tends to disturb the quiet, peace, rest, enjoyment, comfort, or convenience of the neighbourhood, or of persons in the vicinity. This includes “playing or operating any radio, stereophonic equipment, television receiving set, or other instrument, or any apparatus for the production or amplification of sound, where the noise or sound is clearly audible at a point of reception in a residential area between the hours of **11:00 p.m. one day and 9:00 a.m. the following day**”. Noise Control Bylaw No. 4750 can be found here: <https://www.nanaimo.ca/bylaws/ViewBylaw/4750.pdf>



Dogs

Dogs must be leashed, and in control at all times, except in designated off-leash parks. Dog owners must pick up after their dog. Animal Responsibility Bylaw can be found here: <https://www.nanaimo.ca/bylaws/ViewBylaw/7316.pdf>



Garbage

The City of Nanaimo coordinates with the Regional District of Nanaimo on waste reduction and the ultimate shared goal is to become a zero waste community through waste reduction and diversion efforts. Ensure your guests have access to separated food scraps, recycling, and garbage bins, and they understand how to use them. The City of Nanaimo has also implemented [Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw 2020 No. 7283](#) banning single-use plastic bags. Consider providing your guests with a reusable cloth bag they may use for shopping while staying in Nanaimo.



Parking

The City of Nanaimo [Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw](#) requires one off-street parking space per guest booking. Make sure your guests use parking in the driveway, or in a designated off-street parking space and encourage guests to not park on the street. Many Nanaimo streets have restricted parking for use by residents ONLY and with an approved parking permit.

Frequently asked questions

1) Does the maximum number of guests restriction include children?

No, the maximum number of permitted guests refers to adult guests over 18 years of age only and does not include children.

2) Can I rent out my entire home?

Yes, provided your home is your primary residence, a Nanaimo homeowner or renter (with homeowner's permission) is permitted to rent out an entire home for guest bookings of less than 30 days per booking as a Short-Term Rental, during the period the home is not occupied by the primary resident. Of course, this is subject to compliance with all Short-Term Rental requirements, including the maximum number of adult guests and guest rooms permitted within the [zone](#).

3) What is considered a primary residence?

The Zoning Bylaw defines a primary residence as: *the dwelling unit that a person resides in for at least eight months per calendar year, and that a person declares for legal purposes including voter registration, filing of income taxes, British Columbia Driver's Licence, British Columbia Medical Services Card, Home Owner Grant, and British Columbia Identification Card.*

A Short-Term Rental operator will be required to provide proof of primary residency as part of the business licence application. An operator can only have one primary residence and as such, cannot operate a Short-Term Rental in more than one dwelling unit or secondary suite in the City of Nanaimo.

4) I already pay Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) and provincial taxes, why do I need to pay a business licence application fee?

The City's business licence application fee is additional to the provincial MRDT and PST and federal GST taxes required for all short-term accommodation in British Columbia. The business licence fee is consistent with fees required for other home-based businesses.

5) I already have a business licence for my home-based business. Do I need a business licence for my Short-Term Rental?

Yes, a business operator is required to obtain a separate business licence for each business they operate, including a Short-Term Rental.

6) Can I operate a Short-Term Rental within a secondary suite?

Yes, a Short-Term Rental operator may rent rooms within an attached or detached legal or authorized suite provided the number of guest rooms, including the suite, does not exceed the maximum number of guest rooms permitted within the zone, and the operator lives on the property.

7) What if I live in a strata building?

It is the responsibility of the owner/operator to confirm compliance with strata bylaws and rules. Where the unit is a strata and the required parking involves common property, a parking plan must be approved by the Strata Council or President.

8) Can I operate a Short-Term Rental if I don't own my home?

Yes. With the property owner's permission, a renter can operate a Short-Term Rental within their primary residence, provided all other bylaw conditions are met.

9) Can I rent to the same guests for more than 30 consecutive days?

Yes. If a room or dwelling unit is rented to a tenant for more than 30 consecutive days, it is no longer considered a Short-Term Rental, but would be permitted within the City's Zoning Bylaw as a long-term rental of a dwelling unit.

10) I own a single family home that is located in a multiple family zone and want to operate a Short-Term Rental. How many rooms can I rent out?

If a STR is located in a multiple family or mixed-use zone (R6, R8, R9, R15, COR1, COR2, COR3, CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, CC5, CC6, DT1 to DT12, W2, W3, CD1, CD2, CD4 to CD10) the STR can have up to four guest rooms. In all other zones, the maximum number of guest rooms is limited to two.

11) If I live onsite year-round, can I rent a portion of the dwelling unit throughout the year as a Short-Term Rental?

Yes, a resident may rent out a portion of their primary residence throughout the year as a Short-Term Rental.