

Short-Term Rental FAQs



Why does the City of Galveston use this registration platform?

With more than 4,400 rental properties under management, efficient strategies are required to manage the significant increase in registered properties since 2020. Rentalscape, the updated program, ensures valid licenses, accurate tax payments, and enables the tracking of occupancy for analysis of visitation patterns.

How do I keep my account current?

By maintaining a valid annual registration.

When is registration renewal?

Registration renewals for the calendar year will begin on December 1st and are due by December 31st.

What happens if I do not renew my registration by December 31st?

The invalid GVR number and property address will be sent to the listing platforms, and your rental listing will be removed. If this occurs, you will be responsible for contacting the platforms and having your property reinstated.

I am a new short-term rental owner. How do I register?

You can register your property on the City of Galveston website at www.galvestontx.gov/rentals.

What is a GVR #?

GVR stands for Galveston Vacation Rental number. All properties being used as a short-term rental in the City of Galveston must have one. A GVR # is required for all listings.

How do I get a GVR #?

When you register your short-term rental property, you are assigned a GVR number.

Do I have to have a registration number for each unit, or can I just register them all under one number?

You must have a unique registration number for each rentable unit.

What information do I need to have on hand when I go online to register my property?

You will need your property address or GCAD number (found at www.galvestoncad.org), number of bedrooms, sleeping capacity, the name and telephone number of a 24-hour contact for the property who lives within one hour of the rental property, and a bank account (ACH) or credit card for the registration fee. A small convenience fee will be added to all online payments.

Can a property management company register on behalf of the properties it manages and pay in one payment?

Yes, a property management company can register and pay on behalf of the properties it manages.

What happens if I sell my house? Will the GVR # stay with the property?

No. When a property changes ownership, a new registration is required, which will generate a new GVR number.

If I stop renting my property as a short-term rental, do I need to notify the agency or do anything?

Yes. You should notify the City of Galveston by email at STR@Galvestontx.gov that the property is no longer being used as a short-term rental.

How do I pay Hotel and Occupancy Tax (HOT)?

Rentalscape simplifies the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) payment process. To remit HOT payments, visit https://str.deckard.com/tx-galveston-city_of_galveston-str (www.galvestontx.gov/rentals) where you can file your HOT report and submit payment.

When are HOT payments due?

Tax-remitters must file their tax reports by the 20th of the month following the reporting period. Properties that do not generate more than \$500 per month in taxes or \$1,500 per quarter can be reported on a quarterly basis. If your HOT report is more than \$1500 in a quarter, you are required to file monthly reports. Quarterly due dates are April 20th, July 20th, October 20th, and January 20th.

Will booking websites collect and remit the Galveston HOT (Hotel Occupancy Tax)?

At this time, only Airbnb, VRBO, and some property management companies will be collecting and remitting the local hotel and occupancy tax. In August 2021, the Galveston city council approved an ordinance requiring AirBnb and VRBO to collect and pay hotel occupancy tax for transactions that occur on their platforms. VRBO does not collect or remit tax for Integrated Property Managers, which are property managers that use their own payment source.

Will the City of Galveston record payments made by the platforms to my online account?

No. The platforms will be reporting and remitting the local hotel tax in one lump sum. No payments will be posted to individual accounts.

How can I ensure Airbnb and VRBO are paying my taxes?

To verify the proper amount is being paid on your behalf, we recommend contacting Airbnb and/or VRBO. You may try looking at the detailed charges on any of your reservations and print copies of your records. You should see two tax lines: one for the state and one for Galveston. If this is not happening, please contact the platform immediately and ask them to correct the error. Note: If you previously requested a custom tax, be sure to update your listing and opt for all taxes to be withheld.

Do I still need to file a zero report once the platforms start paying all my taxes?

Yes. You do have to file zero reports. The new system requires you to file returns, even when no HOT is due or has been paid on your behalf by Airbnb or Vrbo. You will be asked to provide information on the rental activity that occurred on the Airbnb and Vrbo platforms. Be sure to retain all transaction reports and other pertinent information provided to you by Airbnb and VRBO.

How can I report a noncompliant property or submit a complaint about a rental?

Residents and visitors can call a 24/7 monitored hotline at 409-247-8160 to report complaints about STR properties.

How will the STR registration fee funds be spent?

The annual \$250 registration fee paid by short-term rental owners is collected by the City of Galveston. In addition to covering expenses for administering Hotel Occupancy Tax collections, tracking and compliance, these fees support a 24-hour STR call center that allows residents to report potential issues with STRs in their neighborhoods.