

## SHORT-TERM RENTAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### **How do I know if I need to register a Short-term Rental?**

- Per Section 14-87 (a): A Short-term Rental is only permitted in a dwelling unit, or a portion thereof, by a tenant or occupant for residential purposes, Short-term Rentals are prohibited in accessory structures.
- Do you rent or lease property for less than thirty (30) consecutive days? If so, then you need to register as a Short-term Rental with both the State of RI and the Town of Jamestown.
- Per Section 14-87 (c): No tents, storage units, boats, recreational vehicles, and the like shall be used and/or occupied while on the Short-term Rental property.

### **What do I need to do before I register?**

Before the property owner registers, you will need the following information:

- Ability to upload a scanned copy of your driver's license(s), voter registration, State identification card or other suitable form as proof of domicile
- Provide your State of Rhode Island Short-term Rental Registration Number
- Sign up for a free account with OpenGov at:  
<https://jamestownri.viewpointcloud.com/categories/1078/record-types/6387>
- Know the year your house was built. [CLICK HERE](#) to access GIS on Town website
- If you have a private septic/ On-site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) at your property, you will be asked for the date of last OWTS inspection
- Does your property have a pool and/or jacuzzi? If yes, please email [Dennis Begin](#) Building Official to review the necessary pool safety code.
- Does your property have a fireplace or gas insert? If yes, the chimney must be cleaned and inspected prior to receiving Building Official inspection approval. The receipt/report must state that chimney is in good working order to be accepted.
- Please ensure the eligibility of your property before you start the registration and read all the frequently asked questions

### **When do I register my Short-term Rental Unit?**

The Town Ordinance for Short-Term Rentals states that registration and inspections must be completed in the fall so they are valid January 1 – December 31 of the next year (i.e. November 2023 for January 1 – December 31, 2024 STR rental period). The Short-Term Rental Ordinance does not allow for rolling registrations and inspections throughout the year unless there is a property transfer involved. We are anticipating having all the inspections completed in November 2023. The registrations will be going to the Town Council for approvals on December 4 and 18, 2023.

For 2025 and beyond: On or before October 1 of each year the record owner of the Short-term Rental unit shall complete the Short-term Rental registration application online. The Short-term Rental license, when issued, is valid for a one-year period from January 1 to December 31 of the following year. Any mid-term inspection-license due to transfer of property per Section 14-85 shall follow the compliance schedule as stated in the ordinance.

### **How do I register a Short-term Rental Unit?**

The Town's Short-term Rental registration is online. [CLICK HERE](#)

If you do not have access to a computer, come to the Town Hall and use the public computer outside the Town Clerk's office and the required documents can be submitted to the Town Clerk.

**How do I sign up for a free account with OpenGov.com?** [CLICK HERE](#)

**How do I register a Short-term Rental with the State of Rhode Island?** [CLICK HERE](#)

**What is the State Registration Number I am asked to use when filling out my Town of Jamestown Short-term Rental Application?**

When filling out the application for Short-term Rentals with the Town of Jamestown, there is a question asking for your State of Rhode Island Rental Registration Permit #. The number will start with RE. followed by a 5-digit number – STR. [CLICK HERE](#) to look up your number.

**What are the fees?**

The Short-term Rental registration has a fee that is split up into four (4) categories as follows and you will be charged the total of the fees upon submitting the registration application:

- \$30 Building Inspection
- \$30 Fire Inspection
- \$125 Annual registration and license fee
- Bedroom Fee:
  - Short-term Rentals within the Commercial Downtown District = \$0
  - Owner Occupied Unit – Jamestown resident where the Owner of the Property is residing on the property and it serves as their primary residence = \$50 per bedroom rented
  - Resident Owned-Not Occupied - Jamestown Resident where Short-term Rental is not primary residence = \$100 per bedroom
  - Non-Owner-Occupied Properties - owned by a non-Jamestown Resident = \$200 per bedroom

The fee for the number of bedrooms shall be capped at 4.

**Is the Registration Fee Refundable?**

No, registration and license fees are required to be paid upon application and are non-refundable.

**What is the Definition of a Resident?**

The definition of resident is the record owner(s) of a parcel of real estate who (1) physically resides in the Town for no less than 183 days per year; and (2) has designated a property in the Town as their legal residence for a driver's license, voter registration, State identification card or other suitable form as proof of domicile.

**What is Considered a Bedroom?**

A bedroom or sleeping accommodation is any room in a residential structure that is a minimum of 70 square feet in area and not less than seven feet wide, which is susceptible to present or

future use as a private sleeping area, which has at least one window (5.7 square feet in area) and one interior method of entry and egress but excluding closets, shared spaces open to the house and bathrooms.

### **How Do I sign up for Inspections?**

You will submit your Short-term Rental registration online and select your time preference for inspections. The separate inspections will be completed in the designated timeframe on the same day. You will receive a separate email confirmation with your appointment date and time, which will include change and/or cancellation instructions. Inspection results emails will be sent automatically from OpenGov and the applicant will log in to OpenGov for pass or fail results for each inspection. Inspection issues can be corrected by the owner and re-inspected for an additional inspection fee.

The fee is \$30 for each for an inspection from the Building Official designee and Fire Marshal. The fees are paid during the online registration process.

The purpose of the inspection is to assess the safety of the STR unit, including to confirm the occupancy limit of the unit pursuant to section 14-87 of the Short-term Rental Ordinance, determine compliance with Rhode Island State 2021 Building Codes, and determine if smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are installed in compliance with State Fire Code for dwelling units.

The sample checklists and fire safety code in the links below list what the Building Official Designee and Fire Marshal will be inspecting:

Sample checklist for Building Official designee [CLICK HERE](#)

Sample checklist for Fire Marshal [CLICK HERE](#)

Fire safety code for the State of Rhode Island [CLICK HERE](#)

### **What is Address Identification?**

Per Rhode Island Dwelling Code section R319.1: “The address identification shall be legible and placed in a position that is visible from the street or road fronting the property. Address identification characters shall contrast with their background. Address numbers shall be Arabic numbers or alphabetical letters. Numbers shall not be spelled out. Each character shall be no less than 4 inches (102 mm) in height with a stroke width of not less than 0.5 inch (12.7 mm)...Where access is by means of a private road and the building address cannot be viewed from the public way, a monument, pole or other sign or means shall be used to identify the structure.”

### **Why Do I Have to Provide the Year My House Was Built?**

Fire safety codes for smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors vary based upon the year your house was built. [CLICK HERE](#) to access Maps – GIS on the Town of Jamestown website. In the search bar, enter your property address and select your property. In the pop-up, scroll down, you will be on the Documents & Links tab, and select the property card. The year the house was built is listed on the property card.

**How do I change or cancel my inspection appointment?**

Please cancel or change inspection appointments at least 24 hours in advance. The inspection confirmation email will contain instructions on how to cancel and/or change your appointment.

**How long is an inspection valid?**

Both the Building Official and Fire Marshal inspections are valid for two (2) years and must be completed no later than the application period filing of the requisite year.

**Are there any occupancy limits for Short-term Rentals?**

The maximum occupancy for the Short-term Rental unit shall be two persons per bedroom, excluding children under 12 years of age. Short-term Rentals are only permitted in a dwelling unit or a portion thereof, by a tenant or occupant for residential purposes. Short-term Rentals are prohibited in accessory structures and structures that do not constitute a dwelling unit or portion thereof.

**Do I have to register my timeshare as a Short-term Rental Unit?**

No, timeshares in the Town of Jamestown do not have to be registered as a Short-term Rental Unit at this time.

**Can I receive my Short-term Rental license if I owe taxes and/or water bills to the Town?**

No, a Short-term Rental license will not be issued to any entity owing taxes and/or water bills to the Town.

**What happens if I don't register?**

If you are Short-term Renting and you have not registered, you will receive a first violation letter asking you to register and a penalty of \$250.00. The Town will give you a second violation letter if you do not comply and a penalty of \$500.00. If you still refuse to comply, you will then receive a final violation letter and the matter will be referred to District Court for remediation and a penalty of \$500.00, where each day of non-compliance counts as a distinct and separate violation.

**Who Enforces the Short-term Rental Ordinance?**

The Town Council authorizes the Zoning Enforcement Officer of the Town to implement, investigate, enforce and prosecute the provisions of the Short-term Rental Ordinance.

**What are the Penalties for Violations?**

- First offense penalty of \$250 per day
- Second offense penalty of \$500 per day
- Violation Citation and Summons shall be heard and adjudicated by the District Court

**Can a Short-term Rental License be revoked or suspended?**

The Zoning Enforcement Officer may refer a Short-term Rental license to the Town Council/Licensing Authority for a show-cause hearing. The Town Council/Licensing Authority has the authority to revoke, suspend or take such other equitable action as deemed appropriate and necessary.

**Who do I complain to about a problem with a Short-term Rental?**

- For emergencies, call 9-1-1
- If there is a problem that requires immediate action (i.e., a loud party at 2:00 a.m.) – call the Jamestown Police Department at 401-423-1212.
- For all other complaints, please contact the Zoning Enforcement Officer at 401-423-9803.