

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of these regulations 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 ensure that Hocking County emergency services are able to adequately respond.

Section 2: Definitions

A. Address: The official location of a property that is part of the Hocking County Addressing System (and not on a privately maintained driveway).

B. Applicant: The property owner who is requesting to use their property as an STR.

C. Authorized Agent: Someone whom the property owner has granted the legal authority to manage a property.

D. Campground. A parcel of land designed, used, or intended to be used to provide temporary living quarters for recreational purposes, where sites are offered for tents or recreational vehicles, and which may include related facilities such as restrooms, bathhouses, picnic areas, and recreational amenities.

E. Designated Sleeping Location: A place within an STR that has a bed and that is intended by the STR operator as a location for where a guest is to sleep.

F. Driveway: A privately maintained thoroughfare that cuts through an individual parcel of property or multiple parcels of property and that may access numerous dwellings including but not limited to dwellings used for STRs.

G. Dwelling Unit. A building or other structure that is intended to be used for human habitation that provides adequate facilities for sleeping and basic sanitation. This includes buildings or structures that have at least one bathroom which includes a sink, toilet, and shower or bathtub, or, in the case of basic or rustic dwellings, provide alternative sanitation facilities (outhouses, composting toilets, portable sanitation or similar) and access to water for washing.

H. Furniture: All large movable equipment such as tables and chairs, used to make a house, office, or other space suitable for living or working.

- 30 **I. Local Contact Person:** A designated individual who is available 24/7 to be on-site to respond
31 to complaints or emergencies within 60 minutes of being notified about an issue.
- 32 **J. Operator:** The property owner or authorized agent responsible for managing an STR.
- 33 **K. Placard:** A sign that is attached to a wall.
- 34 **L. Short-Term Rental (STR):** A dwelling unit rented for 29 or less consecutive days that is not
35 licensed as hotel or motel.
- 36 **M. STR Administrator:** The Director of the Hocking County Regional Planning Office who is
37 charged with enforcing the provisions of these Regulations and/or his or her designated agent.
- 38 **N. Street:** A publicly maintained thoroughfare for automobiles regardless of what level of
39 government it is maintained by (federal, state, county, township, etc.)

40 **Section 3: Application and Permit Requirements**

- 41 **A. Generally:** To be considered a legally valid STR a dwelling unit must have received a permit
42 and any legally required renewal from the Hocking County Regional Planning Office.
- 43 **B. Minimum Application Requirements:** An application for an STR permit must include at a
44 minimum the following items:
- 45 1. Completion of an application form provided by the Hocking County Lodging Tax
46 Office;
 - 47 2. Complete owner and local contact person information;
 - 48 3. Proof of paid property owner liability coverage with a minimum coverage of one
49 million (\$1,000,000) dollars;
 - 50 4. A letter of good standing from the County Auditor's office (confirming that the
51 applicant does not have any outstanding County or Township taxes or any unpaid late
52 fees);
 - 53 5. Documentation confirming the property in question is registered with the Lodging Tax
54 Administrator to be taxed in accordance with the County's Lodging Excise Tax,
 - 55 6. Documentation from the County Health Department confirming that the property in
56 question is in compliance with all applicable health inspections;
 - 57 7. Site Plan showing the location of all buildings - including but not limited to the building
58 or buildings that will be rented out as an STR. The address of each STR shall be located
59 on the site plan.

60 8. Documentation confirming that the property in question to be used as an STR meets
61 the definition of dwelling unit, as defined in these Regulations (See Section 2,
62 Definitions)

63 9. A signed affidavit stating that the prospective STR owner has been given a list of all of
64 the required operational standards (See Section 4, Operational Standards, below) and
65 acknowledges that he or she understands that noncompliance with these standards
66 could lead to fines, suspension of an STR permit, revocation of an STR permit, or any
67 other remedy available under Section 7, Inspections and Enforcement, or that is
68 available via state or federal law.

69 10. For dwelling units that have five (5) or more bedrooms, the State of Ohio requires that
70 the Hocking County Health Department complete an annual water sampling and test.
71 See Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Rule 3701-28-03, Permits, system approval and
72 sampling requirements. Proof of up-to-date compliance with the Hocking County
73 Health Department is required for this submittal for these dwelling units only.

74 11. Payment of all fees (See Sec. 3-C below).

75 **C. Fees:** The basic fee for an annual STR Permit shall be \$50. The permit is required to be
76 renewed on an annual basis. The County shall add to the cost of the permit when a third-party
77 vendor completes the initial inspection for an STR Permit. The cost of the third-party vendor
78 shall be passed onto the applicant without any increase or reduction in the fee assessed by the
79 third-party vendor.

80 **D. Inspection Required:**

81 1. Generally. To obtain an STR permit, the STR Administrator shall first complete an
82 inspection of the site to ensure that the property meets the requirements of this
83 Ordinance.

84 2. Additional Assistance and Information. The STR Administrator may request additional
85 information of the STR owner and may request assistance from another Hocking
86 County or township agency to make a determination as to whether or not the standards
87 of this Ordinance have been met.

88 **E. Permit Renewal:** Yearly STR renewal permits shall cost \$50. The County reserves the right
89 to re-inspect should there be any change in circumstances to the property. If there is no change

in circumstance to the property as determined by the STR Administrator, re-inspection is not required.

Section 4: Operational Standards

A. Local Contact Person

1. *Generally.* An applicant or that applicant's local contact person shall be required to respond and be on-site within an hour's time.
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 guests 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 while staying at the property and after leaving the property shall be explained on the notice to the STR guest.
3. *Guests Prohibited from Target Shooting on the Property.* STR guests are prohibited from using the property for target shooting. This requirement does in no way prohibit responsible homeowners from target shooting on their own property. The reasoning for this rule is that STR guests are not aware of their surroundings and could accidentally set up a target in a location that might not look dangerous but does create a very dangerous situation for guests and owners located on neighboring properties.
4. *Emergency Information.* The phone number of the applicable utility providers and an emergency exit map for the dwelling and property shall be provided.
5. *Quiet Hours.* The Guest Conduct and Information Notice shall provide for quiet hours between the hours of 11:00pm and 8:00am.

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119 ~~5.6.~~ *Guest Acknowledgement.* For guests to be able to rent an STR, the principal renter of
120 the unit shall be required to sign an acknowledgement form stating that they are aware
121 and have received notice of the aforementioned rules. Electronic check boxes, or
122 acknowledgement check boxes obtained through the internet are sufficient to meet
123 standard.

124 **C. Designated Sleeping Locations:**

- 125 1. *Distance Between Furniture Used for Sleeping:* All furniture used for the purposes of
126 sleeping shall be positioned to be compliant with all applicable laws and regulations of
127 the State of Ohio, including, but not limited to, Section **3701-25-03** of the Ohio
128 Administrative Code.
- 129 2. *Bunk Beds:* Bunk beds are compliant provided that they are compliant with all
130 applicable laws and regulations of the State of Ohio, including, but not limited to,
131 Section **5101:2-9-28** of the Ohio Administrative Code.
- 132 3. *Two points of Ingress and Egress.* All designated sleeping locations are required to
133 have two points of ingress and egress (windows or doors) and be in compliance with
134 all applicable laws and regulations of the State of Ohio, including, but not limited to,
135 **Section 1031.2 of the Ohio Building Code/Ohio Fire Code, and 1301:7-7-10 of the**
136 **Ohio Administrative Code.**

137 **D. Required Parking:**

- 138 1. *Required Amount of Parking.* Sufficient parking must be provided for at least one
139 vehicle per six (6) guests at the occupancy limit. For example, should the maximum
140 number of people permitted at an STR be twelve (12), then two (2) parking spaces be
141 required.
- 142 2. *Markings Not Required.* Parking spaces are not required to be marked, however, there
143 must be enough space to meet the requirements of the required amount of parking as
144 stated above and the parking space size as stated below.
- 145 ~~2.3.~~ *Parking Space Size.* The size of the required parking space for these Regulations shall
146 be ~~a minimum width of nine (9) feet and a minimum length of eighteen (18) feet~~
147 ~~sufficient to satisfy the requirements of subsection D(1).~~
- 148 4. *Parking on Private Property.* To satisfy the requirement of Subsection D(1) Required
149 Amount of Parking, the parking must be on the same private property as the STR.

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Parking that is within a publicly maintained right-of-way, or a private driveway does not count toward this requirement. Parking on a private driveway on the property of an STR may be permitted provided there is enough space for an emergency vehicle to pass.

3.5. All Items in this Section (D) shall apply only to STRs not in operation at the adoption of these Regulations.

E. Driveway Standards

1. All parts of driveways of an STR that fall within the county highway right -of-way shall comply with the Hocking County Driveway & Roadside Pipe Policy, or its successor documents, and section 5543.16 of the Ohio Revised Code.
2. If the portion of an STR driveway outside of the county right of way is impassable by Hocking County emergency vehicles, guests must be informed of such in the Guest Conduct and Information Notice.
3. If the portion of an STR driveway outside of the County Highway right of way could become impassable because of inclement weather, guests must be informed of such in the Guest Conduct and Information Notice.
4. Bridge Crossing. Should a prospective STR have a driveway that contains a bridge crossing, then said bridge or crossing shall be of a sufficient structure to ensure that the bridge or crossing can support any necessary emergency support vehicles. All Items in this subsection E(4) shall apply only to STRs not in operation at the adoption of these Regulations. However, if emergency personnel cannot access the STR due to bridge limitations, that information must be disclosed in the Guest Conduct and Information notice.

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F. Deck Safety: For all dwelling units that have a deck attached to the dwelling said deck shall meet all structural requirements as shown in the AISC Handbook, FHA Bulletins or Architectural Graphic Standards and all applicable sections of State laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, Section 307.37 of the Ohio Revised Code, and Section 4101:1 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

G. Landscaping:

1. *Generally.* Prospective STRs, where a dwelling unit is within 200 ft of an adjoining personal residence, must have landscaping installed between the two properties to provide a buffer between the neighbors and the building intended for STR use.
2. Landscaping to be Installed. The landscaping to be installed shall be within a ten (10) foot buffer to the property line and shall be three (3) shade trees and two (2) evergreen trees or ten (10) shrubs per one hundred (100) linear feet. At the time of installation all trees or shrubs that are installed must be at least six feet tall.
3. Earth Mounding. In lieu of landscaping, earth mounding is permitted as an acceptable alternative provided that said mounds are at least four (4) feet high.
4. Responsibility of STR Applicant. The requirement to add landscaping or earth mounding shall be the sole responsibility of the STR applicant.
5. Natural Vegetation Already in Place. Should there be sufficient landscaping or natural vegetation between the two properties that provides a sufficient buffer during the times of the year where leaves are found on trees this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the STR Administrator.
6. All Items in this Section 4(G) shall apply only to STRs not in operation at the adoption of these Regulations. If, after the adoption of these regulations, a private residence is constructed within 200 feet of an existing STR that was not required to comply with this Section 4(G), this section shall not apply to that STR.

H. Address Numbering:

1. *Each Dwelling Unit Individually ~~Numbered~~Identified.* Each dwelling unit shall be individually ~~numbered-identified~~ and shall be marked, clearly visible from the street or any internal driveways, and have ~~numbering-the identifying information (unit numbering or naming)~~ that is made of retroreflective material (ASTM D4956 Type I or higher standard) to be easily seen at night. Alternatively, dwelling unit signs may be externally illuminated with a continuous light source.
2. *Placard on Each Dwelling Unit.*
 - *Size.* A placard the minimum size of one (1) sq. ft shall be placed on each dwelling unit for easy identification of each dwelling unit.
 - *Materials and Durability.* Placards must be made of durable materials such as plastic, metal, or weather-resistant composites.

- *Lettering Height.* The height of the lettering shall be uppercase and at least four (4) inches in height for each numerical or letter used.
- *Reflectivity.* Placards must use retroreflective materials that are of a standard of ASTM D4956 Type I or higher. Alternatively, dwelling unit signs may be externally illuminated with a continuous light source.

3. *Internal Numbers Identifying Information.* Internal numbers are for the identification of dwelling units that the STR property owner has identified on the site plan that is required as part of the STR application process. See Sec. 3-B, Minimum Application Requirements.

I. Internal Property Routing Signs: Whenever internal driveways split into two or more driveways on a property, the STR owner shall clearly mark with arrows at the intersection of the driveway which way someone should turn to access each individual unit on the property. To ensure that directional signage guiding vehicular traffic to residential properties located on internal or private roadways is legible, safe, and consistent the following is required:

1. *Lettering Height.* The height of the lettering shall be uppercase and at least four (4) inches in height for each numerical or letter used.
2. *Contrast Required.* Letters and numbers used must contrast sharply with the background (such as white letters on a dark background or vice versa).
3. *Reflectivity.* Internal property routing signs must use retroreflective materials that are of a standard of ASTM D4956 Type I or higher. Alternatively, dwelling unit signs may be externally illuminated with a continuous light source.
4. *Sign Height.* Signs must be mounted at a height of five (5) to seven (7) feet above ground level.

J. Prohibitions of Rentals: Any building or structure that does not meet the definition of dwelling unit, as defined within Section 2, Definitions, of these regulations is strictly prohibited from being rented as an STR. Campgrounds, as defined within Section 2, Definitions, of these regulations are permitted within the County, but are not classified within the definition of an STR.

K. Renter Age Requirements: The principal renter of a dwelling unit shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

L. Rental Period. The minimum rental period for an STR shall be eighteen (18) hours.

- 242 **M. Insurance Requirements.** STR property owners must maintain one-million dollars of liability
243 insurance sufficient to cover potential damages or incidents.
- 244 **N. Building Standards.** In addition to the operational standards listed above, an STR must meet
245 all building standards currently applicable to the building that have been adopted by Hocking
246 County and that have been adopted by the State of Ohio (including but not limited to the most
247 recently adopted State of Ohio Fire Code) and are actively enforced by the State of Ohio.

248 **Section 5: Variance Process**

- 249 **A. Purpose.** The purpose of the variance process is to permit STRs that do not meet the standards
250 of this Ordinance when the property owner has taken reasonable steps to comply with the intent
251 of this Ordinance.
- 252 **B. Applicability.** All STR applications which do not meet the requirements of ~~the County's~~
253 ~~driveway standards, parking standards, or landscaping standards~~ these regulations shall have
254 the option of applying for a variance to be granted an STR permit.
- 255 **C. Criteria.** For an STR variance to be granted, ~~one of the following criteria must be met~~ the
256 applicant must demonstrate an existing hardship and explain why that hardship reasonably
257 prevents the applicant from complying with these regulations. A variance granted for any
258 section or subsection of these regulations applies to that section or subsection only. Multiple
259 variances may be sought in the same application; however, the Variance Board may accept or
260 reject individual sections within a single application. STRs must continue to comply with any
261 sections of these regulations that do not have an approved waiver. :
- 262 ~~1. Demonstrated Existing Hardship.~~
- 263 a) ~~The applicant must show that strict compliance with the driveway standards~~
264 ~~or parking standards would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship~~
265 ~~due to the physical characteristics of the property (e.g., topography, lot~~
266 ~~configuration, existing development).~~
- 267 b) ~~The hardship must not be self-imposed or created by the applicant's actions.~~
- 268 ~~2. Alternative Parking and Access Plan.~~
- 269 a) ~~The applicant must submit an alternative parking and access plan that~~
270 ~~ensures safe and adequate access for guests, emergency vehicles, and service~~
271 ~~providers.~~

- b) The plan may include, but is not limited to:
1. Use of off-site parking within a reasonable walking distance;
 2. Shared driveway agreements with adjacent properties;
 3. Use of gravel or permeable surfaces where paved driveways are not feasible;
3. *Traffic and Safety Mitigation*
- a) The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed STR use will not create traffic congestion, sight distance hazards, or unsafe turning movements;
- b) Mitigation measures may include:
1. Limiting the number of guest vehicles;
 2. Posting clear signage for access and parking;
 3. Providing a guest transportation plan (e.g., shuttle service, ride-share incentives);
4. *Bridge Crossing*. Should a prospective STR have a driveway that contains a bridge crossing, then said bridge or crossing shall be of a sufficient structure to ensure that the bridge or crossing can support any necessary emergency support vehicles. ~~All items in this subsection C(4) shall apply only to STRs not in operation at the adoption of these Regulations. However, if emergency personnel cannot access the STR due to bridge limitations, that information must be disclosed in the Guest Conduct and Information notice.~~
5. *Neighborhood Compatibility*
- a) The applicant must show that the STR use will be compatible with surrounding residential uses and will not negatively impact the character of the neighborhood;
- b) Evidence may include, but is not limited to:
1. Letters of support from adjacent property owners;
 2. A history of responsible rental use (if applicable);
 3. Commitment to noise, trash, and occupancy management plans;
- c) All items in this section 5(C)(5) shall apply only to STRs not in operation at the adoption of these Regulations.

- ~~6. Compliance with Other STR Standards. The property must meet all other applicable STR requirements, including, but not limited to:~~
- ~~a) Designated sleeping locations;~~
 - ~~b) Any fire, building, or safety code that has been adopted by Hocking County and that is applicable to the building in question;~~
 - ~~c) Tax compliance; and~~
 - ~~d) Local contact person availability for complaints or emergencies.~~

Section 6: Administration

A. Creation of Committee to Hear Variances: To be able to administer the STR variance process, the County shall create an STR Variance Board. The creation of the STR Variance Board shall be completed through a separate regulation.

B. Liability. With the creation of the STR Variance Board, Hocking County and associated personnel do not accept any liability from the granting of an STR variance.

C. Rules and Procedures. The specific rules and procedures that the committee shall abide by shall be determined upon establishment of the STR Variance Board.

Section 7: Inspections and Enforcement

A. Timeframe for Compliance: All property owners shall have six (6) months as of the effective date of this Resolution to file an application for an STR permit. Once an application is received, the County shall have six (6) months to inspect and respond. STR owners shall then have six (6) months to comply with any violations of these regulations. Compliance time frames may be extended by a vote of the Variance Committee.

B. Inspections: The county reserves the right to inspect any STR when a credible allegation of a violation of these Regulations has been made.