

Guide to Registering Your Short-term Accommodation

Department of Municipal
Affairs and Housing

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Overview

Nova Scotia is changing the regulations for operating short-term accommodations. Effective September 30, 2024, all short-term rental (STR) accommodations operating in Nova Scotia must be registered under the new Short-term Rentals Registration Act (STRRA) to advertise and operate.

Who Needs To Register?

By law, all STRs need to register. This includes any dwelling unit, tourist accommodation, or room that is intended for temporary lodging and rented out for periods of 28 consecutive days or less at any point during the year.

You don't have to register if you only provide:

- Long-term accommodations (like a year-to-year lease, month-to-month lease or leases for more than 28 days in a row)
- A campground that does not provide any roofed accommodations (like campsites where travelers bring their own tents, trailers or recreational vehicles - RVs)
- short-term accommodation that is not offered for the travelling public such as accommodation intended for health care workers or caregivers or accommodation intended for temporary workers.

What Are The Types Of Short-Term Accommodations?

There are three categories under the new Regulations:

Primary Residence STR, Commercial STR, and Traditional Tourist Accommodation.

Primary Residence STR: A short-term rental offered in the space where you live. A Primary Residence STR is the rental of your whole home (while you are away) or up to 4 bedrooms as rented rooms. Your primary residence is the primary home where you spend most of your time, perform daily activities, receive your mail. It is the residence that you consider to be your main home and the address you use when filing your taxes.

(If you are renting five or more bedrooms individually within your home, see Traditional Tourist Accommodation rates below.)

Commercial STR: A Commercial STR is a dwelling unit that is not your primary residence and includes whole homes, condominium units, apartments, and backyard/secondary suites (see Appendix A: Definitions for more detail). It is an accommodation that would otherwise be suitable as long-term housing but is rented on a short-term basis.

Traditional Tourist Accommodation: Accommodations that have traditionally served tourists (like hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts), personal vacation homes (offered as rental for 150 days or fewer annually) and unusual lodgings (i.e. yurt) are included in this category.

What Is The Registration Fee?

Registration fees range from \$50 to \$2,000. Your registration fee depends on your short-term accommodation’s category and location. The new registration fee schedule is detailed in the table here.

Host Category	Rate									
<p>Primary Residence STR ^{NEW} A short-term rental offered in the space where you live – your primary residence.</p> <p>(If you are renting five or more bedrooms individually within your home, see Traditional Tourist Accommodation rates below.)</p>	\$50									
<p>Commercial STR ^{NEW} A dwelling unit that is not your primary residence and includes whole homes, condominium units, apartments, and backyard/secondary suites. It is an accommodation that would otherwise be suitable as long-term housing but is rented on a short-term basis.</p> <p>Commercial STR rates, by Tier:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="162 1323 1218 1617"> <tr> <td data-bbox="162 1323 292 1417">Tier 1</td> <td data-bbox="292 1323 1218 1417">Bedford, Beechville, Cole Harbour, Dartmouth, Halifax, Lakeside, Lower Sackville</td> <td data-bbox="1240 1323 1385 1417" style="text-align: center;">\$2000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="162 1438 292 1501">Tier 2</td> <td data-bbox="292 1438 1218 1501">All other communities not in Tier 1 or Tier 3</td> <td data-bbox="1240 1438 1385 1501" style="text-align: center;">\$500</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="162 1522 292 1617">Tier 3</td> <td data-bbox="292 1522 1218 1617">Town of Clark’s Harbour, Town of Digby, Town of Lockeport, Town of Mulgrave, Town of Shelburne</td> <td data-bbox="1240 1522 1385 1617" style="text-align: center;">\$240</td> </tr> </table>	Tier 1	Bedford, Beechville, Cole Harbour, Dartmouth, Halifax, Lakeside, Lower Sackville	\$2000	Tier 2	All other communities not in Tier 1 or Tier 3	\$500	Tier 3	Town of Clark’s Harbour, Town of Digby, Town of Lockeport, Town of Mulgrave, Town of Shelburne	\$240	
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<p>Traditional Tourist Accommodation</p> <p>Accommodations that have traditionally served tourists like hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts. Personal vacation homes and unusual lodgings (i.e. yurt) are also included in this category.</p> <p>If you are renting 5 or more bedrooms individually in your primary residence you are subject to the fees in this category.</p>	
	<p>1 to 4 bedrooms \$50</p> <p>5 or more bedrooms \$150</p>

How do i register?

STEP 1 – PREPARE TO APPLY

Before you start your registration application, you will need to know:

- Applicant’s full name and business name (if applicable) used for each STR.
- Civic address (not PO Box #) for each STR.
- The number of bedrooms in each STR.

You will also need to provide proof of compliance documentation with your registration application. Required documentation varies based on the type of accommodation. Please see the table here to determine what you will require.

Type of STR Accommodation	Required Document(s)
All	ONE supporting document from your municipality showing your STR or tourist accommodation is compliant with the applicable municipal land use by-law. Your municipality will confirm what documentation is required. Please contact your municipality for more information.

<p>STR in a primary residence, rented room or bed and breakfast.</p>	<p>TWO supporting documents showing proof of primary residence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a copy of the host’s driver’s licence or government-issued photo identification card; • a copy of the host’s most recent tax return; • a copy of the host’s most recent property tax bill • a copy of the host’s current lease agreement; • any other form of documentation that provides proof of the applicant’s primary residence, if the Minister is satisfied that unique circumstances exist and that the documentation confirms the applicant’s primary residence.
<p>STR in a personal vacation home</p>	<p>TWO supporting documents that demonstrate that the STR is not the applicant’s primary residence (see above).</p>
<p>STR in rented accommodation (i.e. the host is a tenant)</p>	<p>Proof of property owner’s permission</p>
<p>STR in a condominium</p>	<p>Proof of condo board’s permission</p>

STEP 2 - SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Once you have all your supporting documents and information, you’re ready to submit your application.

The application process takes approximately 10 minutes.

- If you’re registering multiple short-term accommodations, you’ll need to submit one (1) application for each accommodation.
 - o Each application needs its own set of supporting documents.
- Before you submit your application, we will give you an estimate of your registration fee. The estimated registration fee is based on the information you provided. After we review your application, your final registration fee may be adjusted.
- You must complete all relevant sections of the application, including uploading required documents.

You’ll receive an application number once you submit your application. The application number **is not** your registration number. You can NOT use the application number to advertise your accommodation.

STEP 3 - APPLICATION REVIEW

It should take about 10 business days for us to review your application. It may take longer if your application is incomplete, if we need more information or if application volumes are high.

While reviewing your application, we may ask you to provide more information. Following the application review, we will let you know if your application has been approved or denied. If it has been denied, we will tell you why

STEP 4 - PAY YOUR FEE

If your application is approved, we will send you an email to inform you of the amount of your registration fee and send you instructions for submitting payment. Your final fee may be different than the estimate you received when you applied.

STEP 5 - GET YOUR REGISTRATION NUMBER

Once you pay your registration fee, you'll receive your registration number. You need your registration number to operate and to advertise your STR on online booking platforms.

What happens next?

We will email you confirmation of your application.

Application review

We strive to process registrations within 10 business days, however, this period may be impacted by registration volumes.

If we need more information about your application

We will call or email you.

If your application is approved

We will email you instructions on how to pay your registration fee. Once you've paid, we will issue a registration number for your STR.

If your application is denied

We will email you details about the denial.

If you decide to appeal

Submit an email to STAadmin@novascotia.ca noting your intention to appeal. We will provide you with guidance on how to appeal the decision to deny your application, including the process, deadlines, and required documentation.

Some municipalities have additional requirements for Short-Term Rentals, for example related to additional licensing or a municipal marketing levy. Make sure you understand the requirements for all levels of government. Your municipality can help you understand your obligations.

How will we ensure all SRTS are following the rules

Fines for not following the rules

All short-term accommodation operators must register to legally operate. The new STR rules reflect greater attention on compliance and enforcement. The updated registration process will help ensure STRs are compliant. Significant changes to the penalties for non-compliance include increased fines ranging from \$1,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. Further, the Province will work closely with municipalities and rental marketing platforms to ensure compliance with new STR regulations and municipal rules.

How the compliance & enforcement program works

The compliance and enforcement framework will guide the implementation of the registration, compliance and enforcement structures, categorized into five main pillars:

- Education and Outreach
- Administration and Support
- Compliance and Monitoring
- Enforcement and Penalties
- Reporting and Analytics

The process begins with public education, which arms hosts with the information necessary to successfully apply for STR registration. Their registration with the province and subsequent listing of STR properties online enables the compliance and monitoring activities at the next step. The results of compliance and monitoring efforts inform the issuance of necessary enforcement measures. Finally, the tracking of metrics like registration rates and compliance rates throughout these phases, in addition to the potential monitoring of STR properties that are converted to long-term housing, enable the Government to assess and report results about the program's effectiveness.

Where do i get more information?

Our [website](#) is the best place to find the most up-to-date information on STR classifications, registration fees and Commercial STR Tiers. Helpful definitions for terms that you may encounter in the registration process are provided in Appendix A.

<https://novascotia.ca/changes-tourist-accommodations-registry/>

If you would like to contact us, please send an email to STAadmin@novascotia.ca or you can reach us by phone at:

902-424-5200

Toll-free (within North America): 1-800-670-4357

TTY (toll-free within North America): 1-877-404-0867

Appendix A: Definitions

Act

The rules concerning short-term rental accommodations in Nova Scotia. The *Short-Term Rentals Registration Act* (formerly the *Tourist Accommodations Registration Act*).

Adjudication

The process the province completes to see if a short-term rental registration application meets the rules and requirements.

Applicant

A person who is applying to register as a host or platform operator for short-term rentals under the *Short-Term Rentals Registration Act*.

Backyard suite

A smaller home that is in a separate building from the main home/dwelling on the same property. Has its own kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area.

Examples: Garden Suite or loft over a garage.

Bed and breakfast

A type of traditional tourist accommodation within the host's primary residence, where individual bedrooms within a dwelling unit are rented to separate parties or groups and may include spaces for the provision of meals and other connected services and facilities.

Commercial STR

A Commercial STR is a dwelling unit that is not your primary residence and includes whole homes, condominium units, apartments, and backyard/secondary suites. It is an accommodation that would otherwise be suitable as long-term housing but is rented on a short-term basis.

Commercial STR is a category of short-term accommodations under the Regulations. This category also includes rooms for rent that do not meet the definition of “rented room”

Dwelling

A building currently being used or capable of being used as one dwelling unit or multiple dwelling units but does not include a traditional tourist accommodation. For clarity a dwelling is the whole building, and a dwelling unit is the individual units/homes within the dwelling.

Dwelling unit

A living space that has its own private entrance, either from outside the building or from a common area, and has its own kitchen, bathroom and sleeping area.

Host

The person advertising the short term rental accommodation on marketing platforms.

Hostel

Dormitory-style accommodation that offers separate sleeping spaces with shared facilities for cooking, eating and washing.

Personal vacation home

A dwelling primarily intended for seasonal or recreational use by the owner (or their family and friends). It is not a primary residence or a Commercial STR. Personal vacation homes may not be rented for more than 150 days per registration year.

Platform operator

A person or business that helps people book short-term rental places online and makes money from these bookings.

Examples: Airbnb, Vrbo, and Booking.com.

Primary Residence STR

Your primary residence is the primary home where you spend most of your time, perform daily activities, and consider to be your main home. A person can have only one primary residence.

Primary Residence STR is a category of short-term accommodations under the Regulations. It is a short-term rental offered in the space where you live – your primary residence. A Primary Residence STR can either be your whole home (while you are away) or up to 4 bedrooms as rented rooms.

To prove it's your primary residence, you will need documents like tax returns, driver's license, or ID.

If renting 5 or more bedrooms individually in your primary residence, fees applicable to a Traditional Tourist Accommodation will apply.

Processed

An application that has been reviewed and adjudicated to determine if it meets the rules and requirements

Registry

A record of all short-term rental accommodations and platform operators approved by the Province to operate a short term rental.

Rented room

A type of short-term rental that can either be in a host's primary residence (like a guest room) or a dormitory-style room that is part of an educational institution. If a room for rent is not one of the above, it is a type of Commercial STR.

Resort

A resort is a type of Traditional Tourist Accommodation that includes one of the following:

- More than one type of accommodation (ie; hotel and motel) at the same civic address under the same ownership
- Several accommodations of the same type (ie; cottages) at the same civic address under the same ownership
- Provides accommodations and accessory amenities such as restaurants, recreational facilities or meetings rooms at the same civic address under the same ownership

Resorts are assessed for commercial use under the Assessment Act.

Roofed accommodation

The term “roofed accommodations” is from the Act:

every building, part of a building, group of buildings or place of accommodation that provides one or more residential units used mainly for the reception of the travelling or vacationing public, cottages or cabins, or any building or part of a building designated as a roofed accommodation by the regulations

It is used to clarify which STRs must register under the Act.

Secondary suite

A smaller, self-contained living space within a main home. Examples include a basement suite or an apartment attached to the main house. (See related: *Backyard suite*)

Short-Term Rental (STR)

Short-term accommodation available to rent 28 consecutive days or less.

Tiers

The Commercial STRs category includes three Tiers:

- **Tier 1** - Halifax, Dartmouth, Cole Harbour, Bedford, Lower Sackville, Beechville, Lakeside
- **Tier 2** – all remaining communities not included in Tier 1 or Tier 3
- **Tier 3** - Town of Clark’s Harbour, Town of Digby, Town of Lockeport, Town of Mulgrave, Town of Shelburne

Traditional Tourist Accommodation

Accommodations that have traditionally served tourists (like hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts).

Traditional Tourist Accommodation is also a category of short-term accommodations under the Regulations.

In addition to traditional tourist accommodations, rates for rented rooms in a primary residence (i.e. guest rooms), personal vacation homes and unusual lodgings (i.e. yurt) are also included in this category.

Unusual lodgings

Unique types of short-term rentals like yurts, domes, stationary RVs, or small cabins, that are fixed in place and not considered a whole home or commercial rental.