



Short Term Rentals – General Information & Guidelines

Short Term Rentals (STRs) or vacation rentals do not have a universally accepted definition across all jurisdictions. However, based on Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) [90.100](#), they can be broadly categorized as private dwelling units/residences wherein:

- The occupant rents the unit for vacation purposes only, not as a principal residence; and
- The occupant has a principal residence other than at the unit; and
- The period of authorized occupancy does not exceed 45 days.

More specifically, local jurisdictions may develop additional taxation or finance standards for STRs beyond the definition highlighted within state statute. Deschutes County Code [Chapter 4.08](#) currently defines STRs which must remit Transient Room Tax (TRT) as any overnight lodging establishments which is utilized for a period of up to 30 consecutive calendar days in unincorporated areas (outside the city limits of Bend, Redmond, Sisters, and La Pine).

STRs are a complex issue with many unresolved questions concerning their overall legality in the face of state land use laws and other standards from local jurisdictions. Based on recent court decisions and analysis of state land use standards, the following generally asked questions represent our best understanding of STRs to date:

Q1. Where are STRs generally allowed?

A1. As a general rule, STRs are allowed within zoning districts that allow single-family or multi-family residences as outright permitted uses. These include the Rural Residential Zone ([RR-10](#)), Multiple Use Agricultural Zone ([MUA-10](#)), Suburban Low Density Residential Zone ([SR 2 ½](#)), Urban Area Reserve Zone ([UAR-10](#)), and the unincorporated communities of [Tumalo](#), [Sunriver](#), and [Terrebonne](#). STRs are also expressly allowed within designated Destination Resorts (e.g. Tetherow, Caldera Springs, Eagle Crest, Juniper Preserve) pursuant to each resort's master plans. This list is not exhaustive and the specific circumstances of each individual property will ultimately determine the feasibility of STR usage. Any uncertainty or questions regarding specific properties should be directed to CDD.

Q2. Are STRs allowed on my Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) or Forest (F1 or F2) Zoned property?

A2. These are generally not allowed, (See [1000 Friends of Oregon v. Clackamas County](#)). Special circumstances, such as existing land use permits expressly allowing STR uses or non-conforming uses, may be an exception. Owner-occupied STRs may be allowed with prior permitting. Additionally, STRs within Exclusive Farm Use or Forest Zoned properties which are **also** located within a designated Destination Resort are permitted pursuant to each resort's master plans. Please contact CDD (planning@deschutes.org) to discuss additional details.

Q3. Are STRs allowed in designated Flood Plain areas?

A3. Yes, in principle, provided the dwelling/residence in question was lawfully established, then an STR use can be allowed. However, these situations are also contingent on the underlying Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan designation for a particular property. Properties with Comprehensive Plan designations of Agriculture or Forest would not be permissible for STR use based on the case law described above. Please contact CDD (planning@deschutes.org) to discuss additional details.

Q4. Are STRs allowed in structures, temporary or permanent, other than the primary dwelling on my property, including, but not limited to, garage conversions, recreational vehicles, tents, teepees, yurts, and similar structures or shelters?

A4. These are generally not allowed. Structures or other accommodations utilized as an STR must be lawfully established as a dwelling. There may be special circumstances, such as existing land use permits expressly allowing STR uses or non-conforming uses. Please contact CDD (planning@deschutes.org) to discuss additional details.

Q5. Can I utilize my accessory dwelling unit (ADU) as an STR?

A5. Until passage of a local rural ADU ordinance, rural properties in Deschutes County are generally not permitted more than one single-family dwelling on an individual property. Even after passage of a local rural ADU ordinance, state statute specifically prohibits any constructed ADU from use as an STR. Additionally, per Board of County Commissioners direction, any property which does construct a rural ADU in the future will not be permitted to use any structure onsite as an STR, including the primary dwelling. Special circumstances, such as existing land use permits expressly allowing this use or non-conforming uses, may be an exception. Please contact CDD (planning@deschutes.org) to discuss additional details.

Q6. Can I create a locked-off area in my dwelling as an STR, where the renter doesn't have access to the main kitchen?

A6. These are generally not allowed. Special circumstances, such as existing land use permits expressly allowing this use or non-conforming uses, may be an exception. Please contact CDD (planning@deschutes.org) to discuss additional details.

Q7. Are there restrictions related to outdoor fires connected to STR use?

A7. All decisions related to outdoor fire restrictions are at the discretion of the Deschutes County Sheriff and any relevant fire protection districts. These standards apply to all properties County-wide, regardless of STR status.

Q8. How can code violations or nuisance complaints be handled at STR properties?

A8. Any suspected land use code violations should be reported to the Deschutes County [Code Compliance Division](#) for further review and action. Any nuisance complaints such as noise violations should be directed to the Deschutes County Sheriff.

In general, applicants should be aware that payment of Transient Room Tax (TRT) does not constitute formal land use review and approval. All structures onsite, including dwellings utilized as an STR, are subject to all relevant land use codes, building code standards, and onsite wastewater disposal requirements. Applicants should contact CDD directly if they have questions concerning any of these standards.