

City of Rio Dell Vacation Dwelling Unit Regulations
Section 17.30.340 Rio Dell Municipal Code

§ 17.30.340 VACATION DWELLING UNITS

(1) Purpose and Intent.

The purpose and intent of the vacation dwelling unit regulations are:

(a) To provide the opportunity for vacation rentals for transient use within Urban Residential (UR), Suburban Residential (SR), Suburban (S) and Rural (R) zones.



(b) To regulate the location and number of vacation dwelling units within Rio Dell.

(c) To mitigate impacts on parking by requiring the use of existing off-street parking facilities.

(d) To protect the visual appearance and character of residential zones.

(e) To minimize disruptions to surrounding neighborhoods.

(f) To ensure that all vacation dwelling units are operating with valid business licenses and paying all applicable taxes and fees.

(2) Definitions.

For the purposes of this subchapter, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

(a) "Good Guest Guide" means a document provided to occupants by the property owner that summarizes general rules of conduct, consideration, respect, and potential remedial actions. In particular provisions, for parking, occupancy limits, emergency response, and minimizing noise and quiet hours shall be included.

(b) "Occupant" means a person in possession of, or with the right to use, any public or private dwelling or lodging for sleeping purposes. As used in this chapter, an occupant is a person sleeping overnight at a vacation rental unit.

(c) "Property" means a parcel of land in its entirety, including all structures within the parcel boundaries.

(d) "Transient Use" means any contractual use of a dwelling or portion thereof for residential or sleeping purposes by an occupant, for any period of time which is less than 30 consecutive days.

(e) "Vacation Dwelling Unit" means an entire dwelling which is contracted for transient use. The dwelling shall provide complete independent living facilities for 1 or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. A vacation dwelling unit is differentiated from a lodging house or Bed and Breakfast Inn in that a vacation dwelling unit is rented in its entirety, whereas lodging houses and Bed and Breakfast Inns rent individual rooms. Bed and Breakfast Inns go further by having a full time resident inhabiting the dwelling unit, and may provide 1 or more meals to occupants.

(f) "Visitor" means a guest of an occupant visiting temporarily at a vacation dwelling unit, but not an overnight "occupant."

(3) Permits, Application Requirements, Fees, Inspection and Notice Requirements.

(a) Permits.

(i) An approved vacation dwelling unit permit shall be obtained prior to operation. Vacation dwelling unit permits shall be ministerial, without discretionary review or a hearing.

(ii) Individual properties with multiple vacation dwelling units need only acquire a single vacation dwelling unit permit; however, property owners adding a new vacation dwelling unit to an existing permit shall be required to reapply for a vacation dwelling unit permit.

(iii) Vacation dwelling unit permits shall be subject to annual review and no-fee renewal by the Department of Community Development.

(iv) A vacation dwelling unit permit shall lapse and become void by July 31st of each year unless the business license for the vacation dwelling unit is renewed and in good standing, all applicable taxes and fees are paid, and there are no outstanding Police, Fire, or Building Department violations.

(v) If a vacation dwelling unit permit lapses, a new vacation dwelling unit permit shall be required.

(vi) Unless a lapse occurs pursuant to division (a)(iii) above, approval of a vacation dwelling unit permit shall run with the land and shall be fully transferable to a new property owner provided the new property owner obtains a business license within 2 months of the purchase of the property.

(b) Application Requirements.

(i) Applications for vacation dwelling unit permits shall be filed with the Community Development Director on forms provided by the Department.

(ii) Each vacation dwelling unit applicant shall designate a local emergency contact person on the application form, including a 24-hour-emergency contact phone number. That person may be the property owner, property manager, or designee, and that person shall live within 30 miles of the city limits so that he or she can respond personally to an emergency. The Development Services Department shall forward the emergency contact phone number to the Police Department and Rio Dell Fire Protection District, and shall notify the property owners within 300 feet of the property. The property owner shall immediately notify the Community Development Department in writing of any changes to the designated emergency contact person or number.

(c) Fees.

(i) Vacation dwelling unit permit applications shall be accompanied by fees established by resolution of the City Council to cover the cost of processing the application, noticing, and inspections as prescribed in this subchapter. Existing vacation dwelling units in operation prior to the effective date of this subchapter shall not be subject to the vacation dwelling unit permit fee, provided the unit has a history of operating with a valid business license and has paid all applicable taxes.

(d) Inspections.

(i) All vacation dwelling units shall be inspected by the Building Department and the Rio Dell Fire Protection District for the required smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, fire extinguishers (Type 2A10BC every 75 feet of travel distance, mounted in a conspicuous location, along the path of egress from the highest hazard area (i.e kitchen or laundry rooms)) and emergency egress prior to the approval of the required Business License.

(ii) Additional inspections may be required at the discretion of the Chief Building Official. The cost of any required inspection shall be borne by the vacation dwelling unit owner.

(f) Notice.

(i) Within 5 days of the approval or conditional approval of a vacation dwelling unit permit by the Director, written notice shall be mailed to the applicant and to all property owners within 300 feet of the vacation dwelling unit property.

(ii) The notice shall include the 24-hour emergency contact number for the vacation dwelling unit, and the procedure to appeal.

(4) Appeals.

(a) Except as provided in division (b) of this section, within 30 days following the decision of the Director on a vacation dwelling unit permit application, the decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission by the applicant or any property owner located within 300 feet of the vacation dwelling unit property. An appeal shall be filed with the City Clerk and state specifically wherein it is claimed there was an error or abuse of discretion by the Director. Notice of the date, time and place of an appeal to the Planning Commission shall be provided to all property owners located within 300 feet of the vacation dwelling unit property at least 10 days prior to the appeal meeting.

(b) The decision of the Director to deny the annual permit renewal may be appealed to the Planning Commission solely by the applicant. The appeal must be filed within 10 days of the date of denial.

(5) Business License Required.

Following the approval of a vacation dwelling unit permit, the property owner or vacation dwelling unit manager shall obtain a Business License before commencing operations. Property owner or managers with multiple vacation dwelling units or properties need only acquire a single business license.

(6) Existing Vacation Dwelling Units; Permit Required.

Existing vacation dwelling units shall apply for a permit within 6 months of the effective date of this subchapter, and diligently pursue until approved to avoid abatement action.

(7) Development Standards.

All vacation dwelling units shall comply with the following development standards.

(a) Vacation dwelling units are principally permitted in the Urban Residential (UR), Suburban Residential (SR), Suburban (S) and Rural (R) zones.

(b) A vacation dwelling unit may either be a principal dwelling or a legally established secondary dwelling unit.

(c) A newly constructed vacation dwelling unit shall comply with the development standards and building requirements for residential dwellings, and may be operated as a vacation dwelling unit only after the Building Department has issued a certificate of occupancy for the dwelling unit.

(d) All vacation dwelling units shall have smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and a fire extinguisher. Carbon Monoxide alarms are not required in dwellings which do not contain fuel-burning appliances and that do not have an attached garage.

(e) Existing off-street parking spaces shall be reserved for occupants of the vacation dwelling unit. Occupants shall be encouraged to park in existing, legal off-street parking spaces, in order to minimize impacts to on-street parking.

(f) The existence of the vacation dwelling unit shall not be apparent. The vacation dwelling unit shall not change the residential or commercial character of the property or neighborhood by the use of colors, materials, or lighting.

(8) Operation

(a) Vacation dwelling units shall not be permitted for any use other than transient occupancy or residential use.

(c) The maximum number of occupants allowed in a vacation dwelling unit shall not exceed 2 persons per bedroom plus an additional 2 persons (e.g. a 2-bedroom unit may have 6 occupants). Children aged 8 and under are not counted toward the occupancy total.

(c) The total number of visitors and occupants at a vacation dwelling unit shall not exceed a number greater than double the maximum number of occupants (e.g. a 2-bedroom unit with a 6 occupant limit, may have a total of 12 people at one time). Visitors are not allowed on the premises between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

(d) All vacation dwelling units shall be provided weekly garbage collection services. Trash and refuse shall not accumulate or be stored within public view, except in proper containers for the purposes of collection. There shall be no storage of trash and/or debris on the site or within the unit.

(e) Emergency preparedness information regarding local hazards, such as earthquakes and ocean related hazards, in a form approved by the city, shall be posted within the vacation rental in an easily visible location, such as the entry or kitchen area.

(f) The Good Guest Guide (House Rules) and the 24-hour emergency contact phone number shall be prominently placed for the occupants' use inside the vacation dwelling unit.

(g) In the event of an emergency, concerned persons are encouraged to promptly call the emergency contact number, and if appropriate, report the emergency through the 911 emergency calling system or the Police Department. It is unlawful to make a false report or complaint regarding activities associated with a vacation dwelling unit.

(h) The property owner and emergency contact shall act in good faith to resolve complaints regarding the vacation dwelling unit, and engage in dispute resolution with neighbors. The Community Development Department and/or Police Department shall investigate any vacation dwelling unit with recurrent emergency calls or complaints.

(i) If the vacation dwelling unit owner or emergency contact is deemed to be negligent in responding to an emergency situation more than 2 times in a 12-month period, or if more than 2 documented law enforcement violations occur in any 12-month period, the vacation dwelling unit permit may be revoked. The Director of Community Development may also revoke a permit if the vacation dwelling unit is deemed chronically non-compliant with the provisions of this chapter, or is negligent or remiss in correcting noted Building or Fire Code violations or issues. Documented, significant violations may include copies of citations, written warnings, or other documentation maintained by law enforcement, Fire Department, or Building Department.

(j) Properties with gated entries shall have a Fire Department approved device such as a Knox box with keys for the lock, Knox lock, or Knox key actuated switch on electric gates installed which permits emergency response vehicles and personnel to enter the property.

(k) Each individual holding a valid business license for a vacation dwelling unit existing at the time the vacation dwelling unit ordinance is adopted, shall be subject to the requirements of this subchapter upon its effective date. In order to avoid abatement proceedings, the owner of an existing vacation dwelling unit shall apply for a vacation dwelling unit and permit and City of Rio Dell business license permit within 6 months of the effective date of this chapter, and diligently pursue the application unit approved.

(l) Violations of this chapter are punishable as either infractions or misdemeanors, pursuant to the provisions of Rio Dell Municipal Code. Each separate day in which a violation exists shall be considered a separate violation.

(9) Applicable Taxes.

The rental or other contractual use of a vacation dwelling unit shall be subject to a Transient Occupancy Tax ("TOT") and any other mandated taxes. Each vacation dwelling unit owner and/or manager shall comply with § 3.15 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code, which addresses the collection, record keeping, reporting and remittances of applicable TOT.