

Municipal Regulation of Short-Term Rentals in Connecticut

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February 15, 2024 | 2024-R-0044

Issue

This report answers several questions related to short-term rentals in Connecticut. We address each question separately below.

Which Connecticut towns have expressly regulated short-term rentals?

We identified 12 towns that have expressly regulated short-term rentals, either by ordinance or through their zoning codes (see Table 1 below). We have [attached](#) copies of each town's ordinance or regulations to this report.

Table 1: Connecticut Towns Regulating Short-Term Rentals

Ordinances	Zoning Regulations		
Bozrah	Ashford	Chester	Ledyard
Simsbury	Bridgeport	Greenwich	Lyme
Stonington	Canton	Hartford	Preston

Do any of these towns require property owners to register their short-term rentals with the town?

Stonington is the only town we identified that requires property owners to annually register with the town through a platform. The registration must include the following information about the rental:

1. the property owner's name and the rental's address;
2. the owner's proof of residency or home ownership, as applicable;
3. the owner's phone number and email address, or that of an authorized agent who will respond to complaints (in person, by phone, or by text, within 60 minutes of being contacted);
4. the owner's sworn statement that the rental will have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors that comply with the town's building and fire codes;
5. any online listing where the property is publicly advertised; and
6. an owner's agreement that they will use their best efforts to assure that renters will not disrupt the neighborhood or interfere with neighboring property owners' rights to quietly enjoy their properties.

Stonington also requires these property owners to obtain a permit for their rental. (An owner must register their rental to receive a permit.) Once the permit is approved, the town provides the owners with a registration number for each registered rental. The owner must include this registration number in the property's listings.

Among the other 11 towns, all but Greenwich require some or all property owners to obtain a permit for their short-term rentals. Bridgeport, for example, requires a special permit for only "Type B" rentals, which it defines as those in which on-site events (e.g., weddings and business seminars) are held. Canton similarly requires a special permit and site plan for only those short-term rentals with non-lodging uses (e.g., parties, photo shoots, and corporate retreats). Chester requires a special exception for short-term rentals in residential districts or for special events in short-term rentals in commercial districts.

The other towns generally require permits for all short-term rentals. Greenwich defines short-term rentals in its zoning regulations and restricts them to only lodging-type uses, but does not impose a special permit requirement.

Do the regulations address enforcement?

In the nine towns we identified that regulate short-term rentals through their zoning codes, the regulations are generally enforced in the same manner as other zoning regulations. (By law, zoning commissions must provide for the manner in which zoning regulations must be enforced ([CGS § 8-3\(e\)](#))). However, two of the towns (Ashford and Ledyard) have specific enforcement-related provisions in their short-term rental zoning regulations. In the three towns that regulate short-term

rentals by ordinance (Bozrah, Simsbury, and Stonington), the ordinances are enforced by designated town officials. We briefly describe the relevant provisions below.

Ashford. Ashford’s zoning regulation allows its zoning enforcement officer to revoke a short-term rental’s permit if he or she receives information (e.g., complaints or documentation) that the permittee is not complying with the regulations. It specifies that this noncompliance includes any activity or condition that interferes with a neighbor’s reasonable and lawful use and enjoyment of his or her property.

Ledyard. Ledyard’s zoning regulation allows the town building or zoning official to inspect a short-term rental with 24-hour advance notice to determine its compliance. It also allows the town’s Planning and Zoning Commission to revoke the rental’s permit, after a public hearing, for failing to comply.

Bozrah. Bozrah’s ordinance charges the first selectman and any employee the Board of Selectmen appoints with enforcing its short-term rental ordinance. The enforcement official may (1) revoke a permit if a short-term rental is found to violate the ordinance and (2) take legal action or issue fines to remediate the violation. Violations are subject to a \$250 citation. Similarly to Ledyard, Bozrah’s ordinance allows the enforcement official to inspect a short-term rental with a minimum of 24-hour advance notice to the owner.

Simsbury. Under Simsbury’s ordinance, the town manager designates the town employees or designees (i.e., authorized enforcement agency) that enforce its short-term rental ordinance. The authorized enforcement agency determines if a violation has occurred and issues citations to correct them. Violations may be assessed fines of up to \$250, subject to the statutory hearing and appeals process for municipal citations ([CGS § 7-152c](#)).

The authorized enforcement agency may suspend a permit until the owner comes into compliance (owners have up to 30 days to correct violations). If the violations are not corrected in the allowed timeframe, Simsbury’s director of planning and community development may revoke a permit. If revoked, an owner may not receive a new permit for that property for 12 months.

Stonington. Stonington’s ordinance explicitly gives the town the right to refer potential nuisance or safety issues to relevant enforcement agents, including the police, fire, zoning, building, or health district. It establishes civil penalties for violators ranging from a written warning for certain first offenses to a \$250 fine and loss of a short-term rental permit for one year (or permanently, in the case of owners who violate the ordinance’s primary residence requirement again after a prior one-

year permit suspension). Violations are subject to the statutory hearing and appeals process for municipal citations ([CGS § 7-152c](#)).

Could Connecticut enact a registration requirement and fee on short-term rentals comparable to those in Massachusetts?

The legislature could enact a registration requirement for short-term rentals that is comparable to Massachusetts' registry for lodging operators. Similarly, it could allow municipalities to impose a community impact fee on short-term rentals that is patterned after the local option fee in Massachusetts. We briefly describe these policies below.

Public Registry of Lodging Operators. Massachusetts requires short-term rental operators (as well as traditional lodging operators) to register with the state's revenue department ([Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 62C, § 67](#)). This data is used to populate a [searchable registry](#) that the public can use to find general information about each registered property, including the street name (but not the number) and town where it is located ([Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 23A, § 68](#)). Operators receive a registration number for each registered property. This number must be posted in the rental unit and provided to any intermediary (e.g., Airbnb) the operator uses. The revenue department may request the intermediary remove a property listing if it does not have a registration number. Municipalities may have a separate, additional registration or licensing requirement as well.

Community Impact Fee for Short-Term Rentals. Massachusetts imposes a state room occupancy tax (5.7%, plus an additional amount in select towns) and allows municipalities to impose an additional local tax of up to 6% (6.5% for Boston). Municipalities that impose a local room occupancy tax may also adopt a community impact fee on short-term rentals of up to 3%.

As the Massachusetts [revenue department website](#) explains, these towns can charge the fee on short-term rentals that are (1) professionally-managed units (i.e., owners of two or more short-term rentals units located in the same town and with the same operator that are not owner-occupied) and (2) owner-occupied two- and three-family dwellings. Units that are rented for 14 days or less per year are exempt from state and local room occupancy taxes and the community impact fee. Whoever collects rent is generally responsible for collecting taxes and fees and remitting it to the revenue department, which distributes each municipality's share. Municipalities must dedicate at least 35% of their community impact fees to affordable housing or local infrastructure projects ([Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 64G, § 3D](#)).

You may also find these resources helpful:

- [*Frequently Asked Questions: An Act Regulating and Insuring Short-Term Rentals*](#)
- [Local Tax Options database](#) (showing each municipality's local option taxes and community impact fees)
- Massachusetts regulations, "[Room Occupancy Excise Returns and Payments](#)" (830 Mass. Code Regs. 64G.1.1(10))

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