

Arapahoe County approves short-term rental regulations

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Arapahoe County's policymakers have approved new short-term rental regulations, which will go into effect in late June.



The regulations for short-term rental properties, such as those rented through companies like AirBNB and VRBO, include a 500-foot separation between properties, a designated responsible agent who can respond to concerns and an annual license fee.

The decision to pass the regulations was first made and then revoked in a Board of County Commissioners meeting in late April after technical issues kept online participants from being able to hear or comment on the meeting.

On Tuesday, commissioners voted on the matter again and unanimously approved the regulations, which are intended to “take direct action on neighborhood concerns while preserving property owners’ ability to earn income from their homes,” according to a news release.

Under the new regulations, only a property owner or long-term lessee can apply for a short-term rental license and the property must serve as the applicant’s primary residence.

There will be a 500-foot separation requirement between new short-term rentals, a 100-license countywide cap for multifamily structures, and standards for noise, parking and occupancy.

Each license will require a designated local responsible agent, who must be reachable by phone within 15 minutes and able to arrive on-site within 60 minutes to address tenant or neighbor concerns, according to the ordinance.

Licenses will cost \$200 for the initial application, then \$350 annually.

The full list of regulations and more information is available on the county's website.

In the April meeting, multiple people spoke both for and against the regulations, with proponents citing issues with parking and noise from rentals and opponents saying the rules for owners aren't clear and response time requirements are not feasible.

A woman who said she has operated a rental property in the county for "years without complaints" said the regulations are too intense.

"Why are we regulating this like it's Fort Lauderdale on spring break?" she said.

Another short-term rental owner criticized the regulations for their lack of clarity, saying that owners like him are OK with rules — but only if they are clear and fair.

"This feels like something where you could follow the rules and still lose your license," he said. "If that happens, it's not just a temporary setback."

A resident of the Holly Hills neighborhood in Arapahoe County told commissioners she once came home to 52 cars on her street of single-family residences. She struggled to find a place to park because of short-term rental properties and events held at them, she said.

"It was quite the shocker to see the impact that the total lack of regulation had on our neighborhood," she said.

County staff have been working on the project to create regulations for short-term rentals since 2023.

The proposed regulations came in response to a series of resident complaints about such properties, including the neighborhood impacts of parking and large gatherings.

Staff members conducted surveys, held public comment sessions and reviewed short-term rental regulations adopted by neighboring jurisdictions to create a licensing framework for rental owners in unincorporated Arapahoe County.

The regulations only apply to shortterm rentals in unincorporated Arapahoe County, not on properties within the city limits of Aurora or Centennial. - Note

Property owners who operate a short-term rental within six months before the ordinance takes effect can apply for a legacy exemption to the new regulations, but they must apply for a county license within 60 days of the ordinance's adoption.

Commissioner Leslie Summey said short-term rentals benefit residents, but also come with responsibilities.

"These regulations strike the right balance — protecting the character of our neighborhoods, maintaining housing availability, and giving property owners a clear, fair framework to operate within," Summey said in a Tuesday news release. "Arapahoe County took the time to get this right, and I'm proud of the thoughtful process that got us here."