

STATE OF WISCONSIN
TOWN OF WASHINGTON, VILAS COUNTY
CODE OF ORDINANCES

**CHAPTER 21: SHORT-TERM RENTAL LICENSING ORDINANCE
AMENDED NOVEMBER 6, 2023**

21.01 Title and Purpose

This ordinance is entitled the Short-Term Rental Licensing Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure that the quality and nature of the short-term rentals operating within the Town of Washington are adequate for protecting public health, safety, and general welfare and to protect the character and stability of neighborhoods within the town.

21.02 Authority

The Town Board of the Town of Washington has been authorized to exercise village powers pursuant to §60.10(2)(c) and §60.22(3), Wis. Stats. The Town Board adopts this ordinance under its general village powers authority and §66.1014 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

21.03 Definitions

Property Manager means a person who is not the property owner and who provides property management services for one or more short-term rentals and who is authorized to function as the agent of the property owner for the receipt of service of notice of municipal ordinance violations and for service of process pursuant to this ordinance.

Property Owner means the person who owns the residential dwelling that is being rented.

Residential dwelling means any building, structure, or part of the building or structure, which is used or intended to be used as a home, residence, or sleeping place by one or more persons maintaining a common household, to the exclusion of all others.

Short-term rental means a residential dwelling that is offered for rent for a fee and for fewer than 29 consecutive days.

21.04 Short-Term Rental License

- A. No person may maintain, manage, or operate a short-term rental more than 10 nights each year without a Town of Washington short-term rental license issued pursuant to this ordinance.
- B. Licenses shall be issued using the following procedures:
 - 1. All applications for a short-term rental license shall be filed with the town treasurer on the forms provided. Applications must be filed by the Property Owner or Property Manager. No license shall be issued without the completed application form, documentation requested with said application form provided, and payment of the required application fee.
 - 2. The town treasurer may issue a short-term rental license to all applicants following receipt of all information and documentation requested by the application.
 - 3. A short-term rental license shall be effective for one year and may be renewed for additional one-year periods. A renewal application must be filed with the town treasurer at least 45 days prior to license expiration so that the town board has adequate time to consider the application. The renewal application shall include any updated information since the filing of the original application. An existing license becomes void, and a new application is required any time the ownership of a residential dwelling licensed for short-term rentals changes.
 - 4. The town board may suspend, revoke, or non-renew a short-term rental license following a hearing if the board determines that the licensee:
 - a) Failed to comply with any of the requirements of this ordinance
 - b) Has been convicted or whose Property Manager has been convicted of engaging in illegal activity while on the short-term rental premises on 2 or more separate occasions within the past 12 months
 - c) Has outstanding fees, taxes, or forfeitures owed to the town
 - d) After conviction of a third violation of any provision of this ordinance the short-term rental license will be permanently revoked

21.05 Operation of Short-Term Rentals

- A. Each short-term rental is required to have the following licenses and permits:

1. A State of Wisconsin Tourist Rooming House License.
 2. A seller's permit issued by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.
 3. A Town of Washington Short Term Rental License.
- B. All rentals shall be subject to the Town of Washington Room Tax Ordinance.
1. Failure to pay room tax within thirty (30) days after the due date will result in automatic suspension of the Short-Term Rental License granted by the Town of Washington.
- C. Each short-term rental shall comply with all of the following requirements:
1. No residential dwelling zoned Single Family Residential District (R-1) may be rented for a period of 7 or fewer consecutive days.
 2. No recreational vehicle, camper, tent, or other temporary lodging arrangement shall be permitted on site as a means of providing additional accommodations for paying guests or other invitees.
 3. Any outdoor event held at the short-term rental shall last no longer than one day, occurring between the hours of 10am and 11pm. At minimum, a seven consecutive day interval must occur between outdoor events held at the short-term rental unless, in special circumstances, written permission is obtained from the Town Chairperson or Town Clerk. Any activities occurring at the short-term rental shall comply with other applicable regulations.
 4. A local property management contact, either the Property Owner or an appointed Property Manager, must be on file with the town at all times and must be located within 40 miles of the short-term rental. The Property Owner and/or Property Manager must provide the town with current contact information and must be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by telephone. The Town Treasurer must be notified by telephone or email 24 hours prior to any change in contact information.
 5. Each short-term rental shall maintain a register and require all primary registrants to register with their full legal names and addresses. The register shall be kept on file for at least one year from the current licensing period. The register shall also include the time period for the rental and the monetary amount or consideration paid for the rental.
 6. The number of occupants in any unit shall not exceed the limits set forth in the Wisconsin State Regulation ATCP 72.14 for Hotels, Motels, and Tourist Rooming Houses.
 7. The owner of the short-term rental shall have appropriate residential and/or commercial property and liability insurance for the home that is used for short term rental and provide a certificate of insurance

with the license application and renewal. All Property Managers shall carry casualty and liability insurance issued by an insurance company authorized to do business in the State of Wisconsin with liability limits of not less than \$300,000 per individual and \$1,000,000 aggregate.

8. Each short-term rental property shall have adequate off-street parking for those using the property at any given time. Parking on town roads or right of way is not permitted. A map of the rental property illustrating designated parking spaces shall be provided by the property owner/manager during the application and/or renewal process and at any time there is a change in designated parking.
9. Each short-term rental property shall have an annual fire inspection conducted by the local fire chief or designee.
10. Garbage must be stored in a secured container and properly disposed of on a weekly basis.
11. A Code of Conduct, created and maintained by the property owner/manager shall be provided to all renters.
12. Compliance with all state, county and local regulations is required.

21.06 Penalties

Any property owner who violates any provision of this ordinance may be subject to a forfeiture of \$500.00 plus court costs for each offense.

Penalties set forth in this section shall be in addition to all other remedies of injunction, abatement, or costs whether existing under this ordinance or otherwise.

21.07 Fees

Initial and renewal short-term license application fees are determined and set by the town board and placed in the Town of Washington Fee Schedule which may be revised from time to time by the town board.

21.08 Severability

Should any portion of this ordinance be declared invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such a decision shall not affect the validity of any other provisions of this ordinance.

21.09 Adoption of Ordinance

This ordinance, adopted by a majority of the town board with a quorum present and voting and proper notice having been given, formally adopts the Town of Washington Short Term Rental Licensing Ordinance.

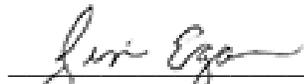
This ordinance repeals and replaces all short-term rental licensing ordinances previously adopted by the Town of Washington.

21.10 Effective Date and Publication

All existing short-term rental properties shall have a grace period of 120 (one hundred twenty) days to bring rental properties into compliance with the provisions of this ordinance.

This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption and publication as required under §60.80, Wis. Stat.

Adopted this 6th day of November, 2023



Jim Egan, Town Chairperson

Attest:



Nancy Sobralski, Town Clerk

Effective Date: November 7, 2023

Publication/Posting Date: November 7, 2023

STATE OF WISCONSIN
TOWN OF WASHINGTON, VILAS COUNTY
CODE OF ORDINANCES

**CHAPTER 21: AMENDMENT TO SHORT-TERM RENTAL LICENSING
ORDINANCE PREVIOUSLY AMENDED ON NOVEMBER 6, 2023**

WHEREAS, the Town of Washington has previously enacted a Short-Term Rental Licensing Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, that Ordinance was amended on November 6, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Washington has been made aware of a substantial increase in the amount of refuse and garbage that is being brought to the Town of Washington transfer station; and

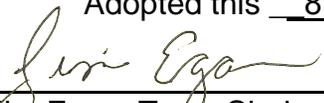
WHEREAS, it is determined that the garbage increase is a result of the number of short-term rental properties in the Town of Washington;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises contained herein; Section 21.05(c)(10) is amended to state as follows:

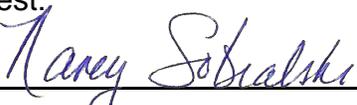
“Garbage and recyclables must be stored in a secured container and properly disposed of on a weekly basis. With the mailing of the 2025 real estate tax bills, all properties identified as a short term rental and in receipt of a Town of Washington Short Term Rental License, will no longer receive a transfer station permit with their property tax bill from the Town of Washington Treasurer. Garbage and recyclables generated at a property licensed as a short term rental will no longer be disposed of at the Town of Washington Transfer Station as of January 1, 2026. Garbage pickup services for the addresses licensed as short term rentals will need to be contracted.”

That all other sections of Chapter 21 unless amended herein remain in full force and effect.

Adopted this 8th day of September , 2025.



Jim Egan, Town Chairperson

Attest:


Nancy Sobralski, Town Clerk

Effective Date: September 9, 2025

Publication/Posting Date: September 9, 2025

Town of Washington Ordinance Amendment Record

Chapter 21: Short-Term rental Licensing Ordinance Adopted October 2, 2023

Date	Article	Section	Amendment Summary
11-06-2023	21.05	(C)(7)	Changed "provide proof of insurance" to "provide certificate of insurance"
11-06-2023	21.05	(C)(11)	<p>Deleted: "A Code of Conduct, created and maintained by the property owner/manager shall be provided to all renters. and shall be provided to the Town of Washington. The Code of Conduct should include, but not be limited to, the provisions of this ordinance."</p> <p>Replaced with: "A Code of Conduct, created and maintained by the property owner/manager shall be provided to all renters."</p>
11-06-2023	21.10		Changed "All short-term rental properties shall have a grace period of 120 days..." to "All existing short-term rentals shall have a grace period of 120 days..."
09-08-2025	21.05	(C)(10)	<p>Added "Garbage and recyclables must be stored in a secured container and properly disposed of on a weekly basis. With the mailing of the 2025 real estate tax bills, all properties identified as a short term rental and in receipt of a Town of Washington Short Term Rental License, will no longer receive a transfer station permit with their property tax bill from the Town of Washington Treasurer. Garbage and recyclables generated at a property licensed as a short term rental will no longer be disposed of at the Town of Washington Transfer Station as of January 1, 2026. Garbage pickup services for the addresses licensed as short term rentals will need to be contracted."</p>