

Short-Term Rental Checklist

Action Checklist — ClearLegalTips.com (2026)

Host with clear terms and stay on the right side of local rules.

Confirm You Can Legally Host

- ☐ Confirm your city/county allows short-term rentals and get any required STR permit or registration number
- ☐ Check any night caps or owner-occupancy limits, and display your permit number on the listing if required
- ☐ Confirm who remits the occupancy / lodging / transient tax — the platform in some places, but you for direct bookings
- ☐ If you rent (not own) the home, get your landlord's written permission — listing it is usually a sublet
- ☐ Confirm your insurance: a homeowner's policy usually excludes commercial STR; add an STR endorsement or dedicated policy

Set Up the Stay

- ☐ Set check-in/check-out dates, nightly rate, fees, and refundable deposit
- ☐ Watch the ~30-day line: a stay of about 30 consecutive days can turn a guest into a tenant with eviction rights
- ☐ List your house rules (no parties, no smoking, quiet hours, guest limit, pets, vehicles)
- ☐ Set your cancellation policy or point to the platform's Flexible/Moderate/Strict policy

Protect the Property

- ☐ Document the property's condition with dated photos before and after each stay
- ☐ State what the damage deposit covers and when it is returned
- ☐ Flag high-risk amenities (pool, hot tub, grill) as use-at-your-own-risk in the agreement

Execute

- ☐ Have the guest read and sign the short-term rental agreement (in addition to any platform booking)
- ☐ Collect payment and the damage deposit before check-in
- ☐ Keep the signed agreement and photos on file for the deposit return and any dispute

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Work top to bottom before your first guest. The permit and tax steps decide whether you can host at all — a missing permit can bring fines that dwarf a booking. A short stay is a license, not a lease, which is what lets you remove a problem guest as a trespasser; that protection disappears once a stay is long enough to create a tenancy (about 30 consecutive days in many states). This checklist is general information, not legal advice; confirm your local rules and consult a licensed attorney for your situation.