



## *Community Development*

125 NW Chehalis Avenue  
Chehalis WA 98532

The Lewis County Code proposed amendments are presented with development regulations on the odd pages, edits shown in underline for text to be added and ~~strike through~~ for text to be removed, and commentary on even pages. Complete new chapters are not underlined for ease of reading. Commentary is an explanation of the code amendments and serves as legislative intent. Commentary is not required for every proposed code amendment.

Public comments may be provided on both the development regulations and the commentary; however, the development regulations are what will be adopted and will apply to new development in Lewis County.

Public comments may be provided when the record is open. The record is open when a public hearing on the development regulations are noticed in the newspaper. To receive the notices directly, please subscribe to the [Lewis County Planning Announcements](#).

Question should be directed to Mindy Brooks at [mindy.brooks@lewiscountywa.gov](mailto:mindy.brooks@lewiscountywa.gov) or 360-740-2610.

Project webpage: [lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/comprehensive-plan-and-development-regulation-amendments/comprehensive-plan-periodic-update/](http://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/comprehensive-plan-and-development-regulation-amendments/comprehensive-plan-periodic-update/)

*This is new code.  
It is not underlined for readability.*

## **LEWIS COUNTY CODE 17.105 SHORT TERM RENTALS**

Lewis County is introducing requirements for short-term rentals. All existing and new short-term rentals will be required to meet these requirements.

Because this is a new code section, it is not underlined so it is more readable.

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**Chapter 17.105**  
**Short-Term Rentals**

Sections:

- 17.105.010 Purpose
- 17.105.020 Applicability
- 17.105.030 Allowance of short-term rentals
- 17.105.040 Standards
- 17.105.050 Permit Issuance

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### **17.105.030**

Short-term rentals are allowed in Lewis County and there is no limit on the total number of short-term rentals within the county as a whole. There may be additional requirements related to short-term rentals within Urban Growth Areas.

- (1) The goal is to cap the total number of dwellings that can be used as STRs within UGA - Small Towns, which are Onalaska and Packwood, and Type I LAMIRDs, which includes High Valley, Timberline, Ashford/Paradise, Mineral, etc. Every year existing STRs will be required to renew their permit through a self-certification application. Any STR that does not renew will have their permit revoked and those will become available. Outside of UGA - Small Towns and Type I LAMIRDs, there is no cap on the number of STRs.
- (2) New requirements to allow up to two (2) ADUs per parcel within UGAs is to expand housing opportunities, not to expand STR opportunities. Therefore, there is a cap on how many dwelling units per parcel can be used as STRs. In order to not create a loophole for detached bedrooms, those will be counted as dwelling units for the purposes of the STR limitations.
- (3) Within UGA - Small Towns there is an allowance for multifamily housing to be provided as STRs if a portion of the dwelling units are provided at a control rent of 80% Area Median Income. Please see Chapter 17.17 LCC.
- (4) RV parks and campgrounds can provide treehouses or other outdoor opportunities for transient accommodations.
- (5) Under the existing LCC, two (2) or more recreational vehicles (RVs) being provided as short term rental on a single parcel is considered a RV Park and have to meet the requirements of Chapter 17.144, Recreational Vehicle Parks and Campgrounds, instead of the STR regulations. This is not changing with the new limitation on STRs. One RV could be used as STR, but if a second RV is added, then the RV Park regulations need to be met.
- (6) Commercial events include such things as a wedding venue or to host sales of goods such as cookware or party supplies.

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**17.105.010 Purpose.**

The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that short-term rentals are not having a significant impact on residential housing supply in Lewis County and are operated in a manner that protects public health and safety, while also encouraging the economic benefits of tourism.

**17.105.020 Applicability.**

This chapter applies to dwelling units or portions thereof that meet the definition of "short-term rental" in section 17.10.190.

**17.105.030 Allowance of short-term rentals.**

Short-term rentals are allowed as described in Chapter 17.42 with the following limitations:

- (1) Within Urban Growth Area – Small Towns, pursuant to Chapter 17.17 LLC, and Type I LAMIRDS, which is land designated Small Town Mixed Use (STMU), Rural Residential Center (RRC) or Commercial Crossroads (CC) on the official zoning map, no more than 25% of the total existing dwelling units within each separate urban growth area or Type I LAMIRD may be provided as short term rental. Existing dwelling units are determined by land use categories, as updated annually by March 1 by the Lewis County Office of the Assessor.
- (2) Where there are up to two (2) dwelling units on a single parcel, no more than one (1) dwelling may be provided as short-term rental. Where there are up to three (3) dwelling units on a single parcel, no more than two (2) dwellings may be provided as short-term rental. For the purposes of this subsection, a detached bedroom shall be considered a dwelling unit.
- (3) Where there are four (4) or more dwelling units on a single parcel, no dwelling units may be provided as short-term rental, except if the requirements of 17.17.210(1) have been met. For the purposes of this subsection, a detached bedroom shall be considered a dwelling unit.
- (4) Short-term rentals shall not be operated outdoors, such as a tent or treehouse, except as allowed in an RV park or campground.
- (5) Recreational vehicles or yurts shall not be provided as short-term rentals except those that are permitted as a residence or as allowed in a RV park or campground.
- (6) Short-term rentals shall not be used for commercial events, such as a wedding venue.

## **Commentary**

### **17.105.040**

Short-term rentals are dwelling units and as such are required to be legal permitted with Lewis County as a residence. Lewis County does allow RVs to be used as residences as long as all local, state and federal requirements are met.

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**17.105.040 Standards.**

- (1) The owner or legal representative shall obtain a short-term rental permit from Lewis County Department of Community Development. Permits shall be renewed annually.
- (2) The short-term rental shall obtain a building permit as a residence, pursuant to Title 15 LCC.
- (3) The maximum occupancy shall be no more than two (2) guests per bedroom plus three (3) additional guests. The number of bedrooms is determined by the approved building permit for the structure. A guest is a person over two (2) years of age.
- (4) A minimum of one on-site parking space per bedroom shall be provided.
- (5) The property address shall be posted so it is clearly visible from the road.
- (6) The name and phone number of the local property representative, who can be reached 24 hours per day, shall be posted so it is clearly visible from the road. Local means within Lewis County.
- (7) Solid waste shall be stored in completely enclosed and secured receptacles and shall be stored indoors.
- (8) A sign shall be posted conspicuously inside the short-term rental with the following information:
  - (a) The unified business identification number and the Lewis County short-term rental permit number.
  - (b) Name, address and phone number of the property owner and agent(s) authorized to act on the property owner's behalf.
  - (c) A map of the property boundary, indicating access points, adjacent private property or common areas, and any easements, including access easements to shorelines.
  - (d) A floor plan indicating location of fire extinguishers and all exits.
  - (e) Instructions regarding waste collection and removal.
  - (f) Posted quiet times starting no later than 10:00PM and ending no earlier than 7:00AM.
  - (g) The statement "Occupants shall follow all local burn restrictions."

## Commentary

### 17.105.050

The permit application will be available on the Lewis County Department of Community Development webpage. All short-term rentals operating in Lewis County will be required to obtain a permit, even if the short-term rental has been in operation prior to adoption of this code section. Owners and operators of short-term rentals shall be given a six (6) grace period following adoption of this code section to apply for a permit without a fee. Following the grace period, there will be a fee associated with short-term rental permits, as adopted by the fee schedule. Failure to obtain a permit shall result in code enforcement, which may include monetary penalties or additional enforcement actions.

(2) The goal is ensure that the short-term rental is safe for occupants and neighbors. Short-term rental occupants are required to follow all local and state laws, including burn restrictions. A local contact is necessary in case of emergency.

(3) The short-term rental permit does not ride with the property. When a property is sold or inherited, the new property owner shall obtain a new short-term rental permit. The reason is that the County can verify that safe equipment and posted information is within the premises.

(4) If a property owner no long wishes to offer their dwelling as a short term rental, they may request that the permit be revoked. The County will revoke the permit and provide documentation to the property owner which they may use for tax purposes.



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**17.105.050 Permit issuance.**

- (1) The short-term rental permit shall be processed as a Type I application.
  - (a) All short-term rental owners that obtain a permit prior to December 31, 2025 shall be vested and not subject to the limitations of 17.105.030(1), unless the permit is revoked or relinquished.
  - (b) After January 1, 2026, new short term rental permits shall be issued on a first come, first served basis.
- (2) To obtain a permit, the property owner or agent authorized to act on the property owner's behalf shall demonstrate that all of the following are met:
  - (a) The standards listed subsection 17.105.040.
  - (a) There are working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and properly maintained and charged fire extinguisher on the premises.
  - (b) There is a permitted and properly functioning septic system, sewer connection or other legally permitted wastewater treatment system (e.g., incinerator toilet).
  - (c) There is an approved water source that meets minimum potable water standards.
  - (d) There is solid waste collection during all months the dwelling unit or portion thereof is provided as short-term rental.
  - (e) Proof of paid taxes and fees associated with the property.
  - (f) Valid liability insurance of one million dollars or more that covers the use of the short-term rental unit as required by RCW 64.37.050.
- (3) Any short-term rental permit shall be renewed annually based on the permit issuance date. Failure to renew a permit within six (6) months of the permit renewal deadline shall result in automatic revocation of the permit.
- (3) Any permit issued pursuant to this section is non-transferable; transfer of property to a different owner shall require application for a new short-term rental permit.
- (4) A property owner may voluntarily relinquish a short-term rental permit upon written 30-day notice to the Lewis County Department of Community Development and shall cease all short-term rental operations on the subject property following affirmation of the permit revocation from the County.

## **Commentary**

(5) Chapter 1.20 of the Lewis County Code states the code enforcement processes and actions the County may take if any portion of 17.105 or other Lewis County Code is violated. Code enforcement is complaint based, meaning a complaint must be made to Lewis County before the Code Enforcement Officer will investigate. However, if the Lewis County Assessor provides information that a property is operating as a short-term rental and is not paying the associated taxes, that is considered a complaint that will be investigated.

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- (5) Failure to obtain and maintain a short-term rental permit, including meeting the standards of subsection 17.105.040 and 17.105.050, shall be processed as a code violation pursuant to Chapter 1.20.

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