



What is a Homestay?

A "homestay" provides lodging and rooms to guests for less than 30 days, is accessory to a full-time residence, and may offer no more than five guest bedrooms for lodging. Homestays are also known as "short term rentals," "Airbnb," "VRBO," or "transient lodging," and were previously known in Albemarle County Zoning as "Bed and Breakfasts" or "Accessory Tourist Lodging."

Homestays are **NOT** permitted in attached dwellings (e.g., Townhomes, Condos, Duplexes, Apartments, etc.). The regulations for Homestays are listed in [Section 5.1.48 of the Zoning Ordinance](#).

Homestay Clearances usually take about 3-4 weeks to be approved, but this timeline is not guaranteed.

Are you eligible to have homestays? Have you already rented out your homestay prior to obtaining a permit? [Learn about Homestays](#) before starting your application.

Before you apply

Look up your location using the [Zoning Map of the County GIS](#).

- Is your parcel in a Residential District zone or the Rural Area zone?
- How many acres does your parcel have?
- Does your parcel have the required amount of on-site parking? (1 spot per guest room plus 2 per dwelling unit)

You MUST include the following with your application

- Contact information for your Responsible Agent
- A Floor Plan Sketch showing:
 - all structures used for the homestay.
 - owner-occupied bedrooms
 - guest bedrooms and guest spaces
 - entrance to the parcel, on-site parking, any outdoor lighting or signage for the homestay, and setbacks

Do you have well water?

- If yes, the [Virginia Department of Health](#) strongly recommends water sample testing for coliform bacteria.

Safety Installation Requirements

Safety installation of items listed below **MUST** be completed within 30 days of submission of application.

- The address of the property must be posted at the driveway so emergency vehicles can find the property. If more than two structures are located on the property, the addresses must also be located on the individual structures. Each structure used for a homestay must have its own unique address.
- A 2A:10BC fire extinguisher must be installed in the kitchen area, preferably on a wall and not in a cabinet.

- An emergency evacuation floor plan must be displayed. The plan must show directions to the exterior and the 911 address of the property in each habitable room. This is like the diagram you see on the back of your hotel room door showing where to go in an emergency.
- Each bedroom must have an operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Windows must be operable and not painted shut and in compliance with the Building Code.
- No extension cords may be used in lieu of permanent wiring. Power strips are allowed if sized properly and contain overcurrent protection built into the strip.
- Access to the electrical panel box must be always available to the tenant.
- Interconnected smoke alarms must be installed in each sleeping room, outside of each sleeping room in the vicinity of the bedrooms, on each additional story of the dwelling, including basements and habitable attics, as required by the Building Code.

Neighborhood Notice and Inspections

Once your Zoning Clearance application is received, County staff will send you a list of abutting parcel owners. You will mail a letter to the parcel owners on this list noting that you are applying for a Homestay Zoning Clearance, providing your name, phone number, and emergency contact information, as well as the name, telephone number, and emergency contact number of your Responsible Agent. Send a copy of this letter to us at the address below:

Albemarle County Community Development
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Fire and Building Safety Inspection

Homestay Compliance Officer: Keith Bradshaw
kbradshaw@albemarle.org
434-296-5832 ext. 3228

The costs of your first inspection are included in your homestay zoning clearance application fee. If your first inspection fails, you may need to pay additional inspection fees. Review the building and fire safety checklist in your application packet before your inspection to ensure passing the first inspection.

Annual Fire Safety Inspection

On the one-year anniversary of your homestay approval and every year following, your homestay must pass an annual Fire Safety Inspection to remain in good standing. Albemarle County Zoning staff will contact you to alert you when your inspection is due. To arrange your inspection, contact the [Fire Marshal](#) at 434-296-5833.

Business License and Taxes

Following approval of your zoning clearance, [apply for a business license](#) and collect and pay taxes on your homestay.

If you are bringing an existing, previously unpermitted homestay into compliance, you will obtain your Business License prior to your zoning clearance. Read more about [Bringing Your Existing Homestay Into Compliance](#).

Pay the following to the Albemarle County Finance Department:

- Business License Application Filing based on annual gross Homestay receipts.
- Business Tangible Personal Property Return based on property used for the Homestay.

Read more about license and taxes required on the [Finances Homestay page](#).

Maintaining your Homestay

Every year after your approval, Zoning staff will contact you when it is time to renew your enrollment on the Short-Term Rental Registry. Renew your enrollment by doing the following:

- Submit an updated [Short-Term Rental Registry Annual Application](#) (\$27 fee for re-enrollment)
- Pass a Fire Safety Inspection (\$50 fee)

Contact the [Fire Marshal's](#) office at 434-296-5833 to schedule your inspection.

Have Questions?

Homestay Hotline: 434-972-4017

Email Contacts:

- Lea Brumfield, Senior Planner II | lbrumfield@albemarle.org
- Keith Bradshaw, Manager of Application Services | kbradshaw@albemarle.org
- Matt Chao, Code Compliance Officer I | mchao@albemarle.org

Frequently Asked Questions: [Homestay FAQs](#)

DETACHED DWELLINGS

ZONING	BEDROOMS	ACRES	REQUIREMENTS NEEDED
Rural Areas (RA)	5 or less	5 or more	Application, Fees, Documents
Rural Areas (RA)	2 or less	5 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
Rural Areas (RA)	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	5 or less	2 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Planning Residential Development (PRD)	5 or less	2 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
Planning Residential Development (PRD)	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
R1 Residential	2 or less	2 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
R1 Residential	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents

R2 Residential	5 or less	2 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
R2 Residential	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
R4 Residential	5 or less	2 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
R4 Residential	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Village of Rivanna (VR)	5 or less	2 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
Village of Rivanna (VR)	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Planned Development Mixed Commercial (PDMC)	5 or less	2 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
Planned Development Mixed Commercial (PDMC)	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Neighborhood Model District (NMD)	5 or less	2 or less	Application, Fees, Documents
Neighborhood Model District (NMD)	3 to 5	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents

ACCESSORY STRUCTURE

ZONING	BEDROOMS	ACRES	REQUIREMENTS NEEDED
Rural Areas (RA) <i>built before 2019</i>	5 or less	5 or more	Application, Fees, Documents
Rural Areas (RA)	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Rural Areas (RA)	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Rural Areas (RA) <i>built after 2019</i>	5 or less	5 or more	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Planning Residential Development (PRD)	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
R1 Residential	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
R2 Residential	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
R4 Residential	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Village of Rivanna (VR)	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Planned Development Mixed Commercial (PDMC)	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents
Neighborhood Model District (NMD)	2 or less	5 or less	Special Exception approval needed, Application, Fees, Documents

ATTACHED DWELINGS

ZONING	BEDROOMS	ACRES	REQUIREMENTS NEEDED
NOT PERMITTED			