



Vacation Rental Ordinance Update

Coastal Zone: Recap and Next Steps (March 2023)

For more info PermitSonoma.org/VacationRentals or contact gary.helfrich@sonoma-county.org or (707) 565-2404

Vacation Rentals in the Coastal Zone

Vacation rentals play an important role in Sonoma County's tourism economy. However, they also have potential to cause detrimental impacts and pose a risk to the public safety, health and welfare, as well as impacting housing stock by conversion of full time housing.

For Sonoma County's coast, regulation of vacation rentals must be consistent California Coastal Act. The California Coastal Commission has determined that vacation rentals are an important component of coastal access in areas with limited visitor lodging, such as Sonoma County. However, the Coastal Commission does support applying performance standards to Vacation Rentals when necessary to regulate nuisance, protect public health and preserve coastal resources.

Business Licenses to Be Considered in Spring 2023

The Board of Supervisors will consider incorporating the Vacation Rental Licenses and performance standards in Local Coastal Plan for rentals in the Coastal Zone. A Business License Program to address health, safety, and quality of life issues that can be created by vacation rentals is being proposed. The Business License program will among other things:

- Set maximum occupancy cannot exceed 12 guests regardless of number of bedrooms.
- Establish stricter parking requirements.
- Require providing and posting written evacuation instructions and that guests must leave the property when an evacuation warning is issued.
- Subject a property to periodic inspection for maintaining defensible space.
- Notify neighbors whenever a license is issued or renewed.
- Require response times for complaints: 30 minutes in the evening, 1 hour during the day.

Permit Sonoma expects to return to the Board of Supervisors on April 24, 2023, with a proposal to enact a Business License Program in the Coastal Zone through amendments to the current Local Coastal Plan and Coastal Zoning Ordinance. If approved by the Board of Supervisors, the Coastal Commission would need to review and certify that the amendments are consistent with the California Coastal Act. By amending the current Local Coastal Plan rather than waiting for the upcoming Local Coastal Plan Update, Permit Sonoma can institute the Business License Program more quickly.

Complaint Hotline Will Help Business License Enforcement

When a business license program is implemented, Permit Sonoma's new complaint hotline will improve the County's enforcement efforts. Restrictions on when noise can be made, prohibitions of amplified sound and fire pit size limits are some examples of regulation violations that can be reported with the new hotline.

If the designated property manager does not resolve the issue within one hour or 30 minutes during quiet time (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.), a complaint may be submitted by calling the vacation rental hotline.