



Division of Fire Safety
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Short Term Rental Overview -2025

Michael Desrochers, Executive Director

Landon Wheeler, Deputy Director

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- **The Division of Fire Safety is responsible for plan review and permitting for all construction and renovations of public buildings. In short- everything except your home and farms and some AG exemptions.**
- **Code enforcement/rental housing health and safety code.**
- **Fire Service Training**
- **Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)**
- **Hazardous Material Response**
- **Fire Investigation**
- **Electrical, Plumbing, Handicap Access and Elevator Safety Boards**



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- **The Division of Fire Safety has inspection and permitting authority for buildings defined in statute as “Public Buildings”.**
- **Public buildings include structures or dwellings rented for long term or short term.**
- **Farm housing provided to farm workers is public.**
- **20 V.S.A. Chapter 172 and 173 regulate housing.**



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- **The Division only responds to complaints alleging unsafe/unhealthy conditions in short term rentals.**
- **Short Term Rentals are required to comply with the Rental Housing Health and Safety Code under Chapter 173.**
- **The Division has 9 inspection agreements with local towns. Each agreement is specifically tailored to the community. Some are for existing residential only while others include plan review, electrical and plumbing.**



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- **3 major occupancy classifications prescribing what safety codes and standards apply to a particular property.**

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- **8 guests or less (single family home) least restrictive.**
 - **9-16 Guests (rooming and lodging facility).**
 - **17 or more (hotel/motel occupancy)**

The higher the occupant load the more safety considerations. 8 guests or less least restrictive.



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- **We have experienced some local towns drafting/passing ordinances requiring the Division of Fire to inspect short term rental properties.**
- **The Division of Fire Safety does not have the capacity to inspect short term rentals on a pro-active basis.**
- **20 V.S.A. 172 –Rental Housing Health and Safety Code is a complaint-based program only.**
- **Locals with active housing programs have concurrent authority to inspect.**



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- **The Division of Fire Safety encourages municipal inspection agreements.**
- **Authority for agreements can be found in 20 V.S.A. § 2736.**
- **The agreement would require fire inspector certification and would require the town to adopt an ordinance adopting our safety standards. The inspector(s) would also attend our monthly training at no cost and can access our RMS at no cost.**



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- **Since January 1, 2024, the division has received 878 housing complaints resulting in 1369 building inspections.**
- **The 1369 inspections do not reflect electrical inspections/plumbing inspections resulting from the need for the fire marshal to bring in additional resources with expertise.**



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- **Next Steps: Enhance our educational and public outreach and develop a wide range of educational material easily accessible to short term rental operators.**
- **Provide online resources and a web page with safety information to assist operators in assessing their rental properties while understanding the rules.**
- **Provide guidance to all online operators.**