



Planning and Community Development Department
City of Bellingham

**Example Scenarios for Bellingham’s Short-term Rental (STR) Regulations
Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) Section 20.10.037**

SINGLE-FAMILY ZONE:

- 1. I own a single-family home in a single-family zoning district. It is my primary residence. I want to rent the house as an STR.**
 - a. What is the process for an STR permit?** Up to 2 bedrooms, Type I permit (administrative approval). Up to 5 bedrooms, Type II permit (administrative approval).
 - b. Up to how many days may I rent it?** The whole unit may be rented for no more than 95 days per year. Individual bedrooms may be rented year round, as long as the residency requirement is met. The dwelling unit must serve as the primary residence of the applicant for no less than 270 days/year.

- 2. I own a single-family home in a single-family zoning district. It is not a primary residence for me or a long-term renter for at least 270 days/year. I want to rent the house as an STR. What is the process for an STR permit?** In residential zoning districts, STRs are not allowed in non-primary residences or primary residences that don’t serve as such for an owner or long-term renter for at least 270 days/year.

- 3. I own a single-family home in a single-family zoning district. I do not live there at all, but I rent it to a long-term renter. The long-term renter wants to rent the house as an STR.**
 - a. What is the process for an STR permit?** Up to 2 bedrooms, Type I permit (administrative approval). Up to 5 bedrooms, Type II permit (administrative approval).
 - b. Up to how many days may I rent it?** The whole unit may be rented for no more than 95 days per year. Individual bedrooms may be rented year round, as long as the residency requirement is met. The dwelling unit must serve as the primary residence of the applicant (the long-term renter, in this case) for no less than 270 days/year. The owner must sign the STR land use application and this counts as the one permitted STR in residential zones for both the long-term renter and owner.

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4. **I own a single-family home in a single-family zoning district. I live in the main house and I rent a legal, attached accessory dwelling unit (A-ADU) to a long-term renter. The long-term renter wants to rent the A-ADU as an STR.**
 - a. **What is the process for an STR permit?** Up to 2 bedrooms, Type I permit (administrative approval).
 - b. **Up to how many days may I rent it?** The whole A-ADU may be rented for no more than 95 days per year. Individual bedrooms may be rented year round, as long as the residency requirement is met. The A-ADU must serve as the primary residence of the applicant (the long-term renter, in this case) for no less than 270 days/year. The owner must sign the STR land use application and this counts as the one permitted STR in residential zones for both the long-term renter and owner.
 - c. **Can I rent out both the A-ADU and the primary residence at the same time?** No. You may rent one or the other, but not both at the same time. Only one STR permit will be issued for the site.
5. **I own a single-family home in a single-family zoning district. I live in the main house and I want to rent a legal, attached accessory dwelling unit (A-ADU) as an STR. What is the process for an STR permit?** To be eligible for an STR, the A-ADU must serve as the primary residence of the applicant (the owner, in this case) for no less than 270 days/year. As the owner lives in the main house, the A-ADU cannot serve as an STR. See example #4 above for an STR option for the A-ADU.
6. **I own a single-family home in a single-family zoning district. I live in the main house and I rent a legal, detached accessory dwelling unit (D-ADU) to a long-term renter. The long-term renter wants to rent the D-ADU as an STR. What is the process for an STR permit?** STRs are not permitted in D-ADUs in single-family residential zoning districts.
7. **How many STRs may I operate?** No more than 1 STR per operator (primary residence only) is permitted in residential zoning districts. If a long-term renter applies for an STR permit, the owner must sign the STR land use application and this counts as the one permitted STR in residential zones for both the long-term renter and owner.

MULTI-FAMILY ZONE:

1. **I own a single-family home in a multi-family zoning district. I live in the main house and I rent a legal, attached accessory dwelling unit (A-ADU) to a long-term renter. The long-term renter wants to rent the A-ADU as an STR. What is the process for an STR permit?**
 - a. **What is the process for an STR permit?** Up to 2 bedrooms, Type I permit (administrative approval).
 - b. **Up to how many days may I rent it?** The whole A-ADU may be rented for no more than 95 days per year. Individual bedrooms may be rented year round, as long as the residency requirement is met. The A-ADU must serve as the primary residence of the applicant (the

long-term renter, in this case) for no less than 270 days/year. The owner must sign the STR land use application and this counts as the one permitted STR in residential zones for both the long-term renter and owner.

- c. Can I rent out both the A-ADU and the primary residence at the same time?** No. You may rent one or the other, but not both at the same time. Only one STR permit will be issued for the site.
- 2. I own a single-family home in a multi-family zoning district. I live in the main house and I rent a legal, detached accessory dwelling unit (D-ADU) to a long-term renter. The long-term renter wants to rent the D-ADU as an STR. What is the process for an STR permit?**

 - a. What is the process for an STR permit?** Up to 2 bedrooms, Type I permit (administrative approval).
 - a. Up to how many days may I rent it?** The whole D-ADU may be rented for no more than 95 days per year. Individual bedrooms may be rented year round, as long as the residency requirement is met. The D-ADU must serve as the primary residence of the applicant (the long-term renter, in this case) for no less than 270 days/year. The owner must sign the STR land use application and this counts as the one permitted STR in residential zones for both the long-term renter and owner.
 - b. Can I rent out both the D-ADU and the primary residence at the same time?** No. You may rent one or the other, but not both at the same time. Only one STR permit will be issued for the site.
- 3. I own a condominium unit (multi-family unit) in a multi-family zoning district. It is my primary residence. I want to rent the unit as a STR.**

 - a. What is the process for a STR permit?** All STR permits are administratively approved (either Type I or Type II), except for those that exceed the maximum of 1 unit or 25% of the units, whichever is greater, in a condominium building in residential zoning districts. In this case, the applicant must get the condominium association's approval to exceed the limit and a Type III-A permit is required.
 - b. Up to how many days may I rent it?** The whole unit may be rented for no more than 95 days per year. Individual bedrooms may be rented year round, as long as the residency requirement is met. The dwelling unit must serve as the primary residence of the applicant for no less than 270 days/year.
- 4. I own a condominium unit (multi-family unit) in a multi-family zoning district. It is not a primary residence for me or a long-term renter for at least 270 days/year.** In residential zoning districts, STRs are not allowed in non-primary residences or primary residences that don't serve as such for an owner or long-term renter for at least 270 days/year.
- 5. How many STRs may I operate?** No more than 1 STR per operator (primary residence only) is permitted in residential zoning districts. If a long-term renter applies for an STR permit, the owner must sign the STR land use application and this counts as the one permitted STR in residential zones for both the long-term renter and owner.

COMMERCIAL OR URBAN VILLAGE ZONE:

1. **I own a condominium unit (multi-family unit) in an urban village zoning district. I do not live there at all.**
 - a. **What is the process for an STR permit?** Type I permit (administrative approval).
 - b. **Up to how many days may I rent it?** Unlimited.

2. **I own a single-family home in an urban village zoning district. It is my primary residence. I want to rent the whole house as an STR.**
 - a. **What is the process for an STR permit?** Type I permit (administrative approval).
 - b. **Up to how many days may I rent it?** Unlimited.

3. **I own a single-family home in an urban village zoning district. It is not my primary residence. I want to rent the whole house as an STR.**
 - a. **What is the process for an STR permit?** Type I permit (administrative approval).
 - b. **Up to how many days may I rent it?** Unlimited.

4. **How many STRs may I operate?** There is no limit on the number of STRs per operator in urban village or commercial zoning districts.

5. **Do all the STR standards in Chapter 20.10.037 apply in urban village or commercial zoning districts?** No. Requirements related to the number of STRs per operator (D.1.a – c), number of STR permits in condominiums (D.2), parking (D.5), and events (D.9.a – b) do not apply to STRs in these zones.

INDUSTRIAL, INSTITUTIONAL OR PUBLIC ZONE:

STRs are not permitted in these zones, including these designations within an urban village zoning district.