

City of Bellevue



Single-Family Dwelling Rental

Development Services
September 2018

The Bellevue City Council adopted Ordinance No. 6223 in April 2015, which amended the Land Use Code to implement regulations pertaining to rentals of single-family homes. This handout provides general information about these single-family dwelling rental regulations.

What is a single-family home?

A single-family home is defined as a building containing only one kitchen, designed for and occupied exclusively by one family, except where a valid accessory dwelling unit registration has been approved.

Can I rent out rooms in my single-family home?

There are four ways that homeowners can rent space in their homes to other parties:

1. Boarding House, defined as an owner-occupied house where up to two rooms may be rented for profit to individuals unrelated to the owner, and includes Transient Lodging.
2. Bed and Breakfast, defined as an owner-occupied dwelling which temporarily houses guests for profit.
3. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), defined as a subordinate dwelling unit incorporated within a single-family structure.
4. Rooming House, defined as a non-owner-occupied dwelling subject to multiple leases or in which rooms are offered for rent on an individual room basis.

What are the specific requirements for each of these rental types?

Boarding House and Bed and Breakfast:

- The single-family home must be owner-occupied.
- A maximum of two rooms may be rented.
- There may be a maximum of two renters.
- The rental may be transient in duration.
- A Home Occupation Permit approval is required.

ADU:

- Only one accessory dwelling unit is permitted as subordinate to a single-family home.
- Either the primary residence or the accessory dwelling unit must be owner-occupied.
- The total number of occupants in both the primary residence and the accessory dwelling unit combined is the same as any other single-family home.
- The ADU must meet dimensional, parking, and other development requirements in LUC 20.20.700.
- Accessory dwelling units shall not be permitted in detached structures on the property.
- A property cannot contain both an accessory dwelling unit and a business subject to the regulations in Part 20.30N LUC for a Home Occupation Permit.

Rooming House:

- The property is non-owner-occupied.
- Rooming Houses are not allowed in single-family Land Use Districts and allowed only in the following Land Use Districts: R-10, R-15, R-20, R-30, OLB, CB, F1, F2, F3, BR-OR, BR-RC, BR-R, BR-CR, BR-ORT, and EH-A (LUC 20.10.440; 20.25D.070; and 20.25F.010).
- The property must be a detached, single-family dwelling on its own parcel.

- The Rooming House cannot offer more than four rooms for rent at any one time.
- There can be no more than a total of five individual occupants of the Rooming House at any one time.
- All rooms offered for rent shall be legally-established bedrooms.
- Legal on-site parking must be provided in a quantity equal to the number of bedrooms leased or available for lease.
- The exterior of the property must be appropriately maintained.
- Refuse collection, including trash, recycling, and yard waste, must be appropriately provided.
- The Rooming House must comply with applicable City and State noise, nuisance, and health and safety codes and regulations.
- A local owner, landlord, or registered agent must be identified as the party responsible and accountable for compliance with the provisions of this section. This party must file their name and contact information with the City prior to establishing the Rooming House. This party is the person responsible for any violation of these provisions.

What is the definition of “family,” and how does that relate to rentals of single-family homes?

The Land Use Code 20.50.020 defines “family” to include not more than four adult persons, unless all are related by blood, marriage, or legal adoption, living together as a single housekeeping unit. Thus, a single-family home may accommodate only a single “family.”

More than four unrelated adults living in a single-family home may be considered the functional equivalent of a family if they live together as a single housekeeping unit, as determined by the Director. A single housekeeping unit is a household where all members have common access to and common use of all living, kitchen, and eating areas within the home, and share common responsibilities and activities such as expenses, maintenance, chores and meals. Factors that the Director would consider in determining a single housekeeping unit:

- The adults share the entire dwelling unit and do not act as separate roomers.
- There may be minor, dependent children who regularly reside in the household.
- The adults can produce proof of sharing expenses for food, rent, or ownership costs, utilities, and other household expenses.
- The adults share common ownership of furniture and appliances.
- The living arrangement is permanent, not transient.
- The residency is of stable composition from year to year.
- The occupants are not a group of students or other individuals where the common living arrangement is temporary in nature.
- The adults can demonstrate other factors reasonably related to whether the group is the functional equivalent of a family.
- If the dwelling unit is rented, the household members must jointly occupy the dwelling unit under a single lease in order to be considered a single housekeeping unit.

Where can I obtain additional information?

- The Land Use Review desk in the Development Services Department at Bellevue City Hall (450 110th Avenue NE), 425-452-4188 or landusereview@bellevuewa.gov.
- Ordinance No. 6223 http://www.bellevuewa.gov/Ordinances/Ord-6223_room_rentals.pdf.
- The Land Use Code Sections 20.20.700 (Rooming Houses); 20.50.020 (“family”); 20.50.046 (“single housekeeping unit”); 20.50.012 (“Bed and Breakfast” and “Boarding House”); and 20.30N (Home Occupation Permit).

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The Bellevue City Council adopted Ordinance No. 6223 in April 2015, which amended the Land Use Code to implement regulations pertaining to rentals in single-family homes. This handout provides key information and answers questions about Rooming House (single room rental) regulations.

What is a Rooming House?

A Rooming House is a non-owner-occupied dwelling subject to multiple leases or in which rooms are offered for rent on an individual (single) room basis.

A non-owner-occupied single-family home offered for transient rentals in its entirety or on a single room basis is considered a Rooming House because the property is subject to multiple leases at any given time or duration of time and its collective occupants do not constitute a single family.

Where can Rooming Houses be located?

Rooming Houses are not allowed in single-family Land Use Districts. Rooming Houses are allowed only in the following Land Use Districts: R-10, R-15, R-20, R-30, OLB, CB, F1, F2, F3, BR-OR, BR-RC, BR-R, BR-CR, BR-ORT, and EH-A (LUC 20.10.440; 20.25D.070; and 20.25F.010).

If allowed, what other general requirements do I have to follow to operate a Rooming House?

- The property must be a detached, single-family dwelling on its own parcel.
- The Rooming House cannot offer more than four rooms for rent at any one time.
- There can be no more than a total of five individual occupants of the Rooming House at any one time.
- All rooms offered for rent shall be legally-established bedrooms.
- Legal on-site parking must be provided in a quantity equal to the number of bedrooms leased or available for lease.
- The exterior of the property must be appropriately maintained.
- Refuse collection, including trash, recycling, and yard waste, must be appropriately provided.
- The Rooming House must comply with applicable City and State noise, nuisance, and health and safety codes and regulations.
- A local owner, landlord, or registered agent must be identified as the party responsible and accountable for compliance with the provisions of this section. This party must file their name and contact information with the City prior to establishing the Rooming House. This party is the person responsible for any violation of these provisions.

Where can I obtain additional information?

- The Land Use Review desk in the Development Services Department at Bellevue City Hall (450 110th Avenue NE), 425-452-4188 or landusereview@bellevuewa.gov.
- Ordinance No. 6223 http://www.bellevuewa.gov/Ordinances/Ord-6223_room_rentals.pdf.
- The Land Use Code Sections 20.20.700 (Rooming Houses); 20.50.044 (definition of "Rooming house").

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Transient Lodging in Multifamily Dwelling Unit (Short Term Stay Use)

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The Bellevue City Council adopted regulations affecting rentals of multifamily dwelling units through Ordinance No. 5301 in June 2001. This handout provides information regarding Short Term Stay Use, or transient lodging in multifamily dwelling units.

What is a Short Term Stay Use?

Short Term Stay Use is transient lodging (lodging provided for a fee or charge for a period of less than 30 days) provided in a Planned Unit Development or multifamily dwelling unit located in a Residential (R-1 through R-30) land use district. Boarding houses, bed and breakfasts, group homes for children, and institutions housing persons under legal restraint or requiring medical attention or care are not included within the scope of this definition.

Can I offer transient lodging or room rental in my apartment, condominium unit, or dwelling unit in a Planned Unit Development?

Yes, provided there are no more than five units in any building and no more than 20 percent of the dwelling units comprising a development are used for Short Term Stay Use at any given time, and the Short Term Stay Use meets the general requirements listed below.

Note that the City's limitations and requirements are separate from, and do not replace, any private covenants, conditions, restrictions, and rules that may apply to and potentially restrict the use of your apartment, condominium unit, or dwelling unit for Short Term Stay Use (transient lodging).

What are the specific requirements for using my apartment, condominium unit, or dwelling unit in a Planned Unit Development for Short Term Stay Use?

- Any person or company providing a Short Term Stay Use must file a Registration Notice with the City's Development Services Department and be approved by the Director.
- The Registration Notice must be in writing in a form approved by the Director and contain the following information:
 - a) The name and address of the person or company by whom it is submitted (the Registrant);
 - b) The name and address of the applicable building and development; and
 - c) The number of dwelling units where the Registrant provides Short Term Stay Uses in the referenced building and development.
- The registration notice will remain in effect until the Registrant notifies the Department in writing that the Registrant is no longer providing Short Term Stay Uses at that unit.
- Where rules of conduct have been adopted for universal application to all occupants of a development, the Registrant must provide a copy of the rules to each licensee prior to commencement of their stay and post a copy of the rules in the unit.

Where can I obtain additional information?

- The Land Use Review desk in the Development Services Department at Bellevue City Hall (450 110th Avenue NE), 425-452-4188 or landusereview@bellevuewa.gov.
- Ordinance No. 5301, <https://bellevue.municipal.codes/enactments/Ord5301/media/original.pdf>.
- The Land Use Code Sections 20.20.800 (Short term stay uses – Limitations and general requirements); 20.50.048 (Transient Lodging definition).

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Transient Lodging/Rentals in Single-Family Homes

Development Services
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The Bellevue City Council adopted Ordinance No. 6223 in April 2015, which amended the Land Use Code to implement regulations pertaining to rentals in single-family homes. This handout provides key information about transient lodging or transient single room rentals in single-family homes.

What is a transient lodging or transient single room rental?

Transient lodging or transient single room rental is lodging provided for a fee or charge in a hotel, motel, boarding house, bed and breakfast, Short Term Stay Use, or other granting of any similar license to use real property for a period of less than 30 days. Lodging or single room rental of a property booked through an online company such as Airbnb, VRBO, or similar sites for a duration of less than 30 days is considered transient lodging or transient single room rental.

Can I offer transient lodging or room rental in my single-family home?

There are three primary ways that a property owner can offer transient lodging or transient single room rentals: Boarding House, Bed and Breakfast, or Rooming House. Each of these uses must meet specific requirements of the Land Use Code for the operation of transient lodging or transient single room rentals to be lawful.

What are the specific requirements for using a single-family home for transient lodging or transient single room rental?

- A single-family home in a single-family residential land use district must be owner-occupied to provide transient lodging or transient room rentals. Such use is considered a Boarding House or Bed and Breakfast.
- A non-owner-occupied single-family home providing transient lodging or transient single room rentals is considered a Rooming House and is not allowed in single-family residential land use districts.
- Boarding Houses and Bed and Breakfasts may accommodate a maximum of two rooms for rental and a maximum of two lodgers or renters.
- A single-family home with a Boarding House or Bed and Breakfast must accommodate only a single family in total, as family is defined in the Land Use Code.
- Boarding Houses and Bed and Breakfasts require Home Occupation Permit approval.
- A Rooming House must be a detached, single-family dwelling on its own parcel.
- A Rooming House may offer no more than four legally established rooms for rent to not more than a total of five individuals at any one time.
- A Rooming House must meet additional requirements related to registration, parking, maintenance, and other regulations.

Where can I obtain additional information?

- The Land Use Review desk in the Development Services Department at Bellevue City Hall (450 110th Avenue NE), 425-452-4188 or landusereview@bellevuewa.gov.
- Ordinance No. 6223 http://www.bellevuewa.gov/Ordinances/Ord-6223_room_rentals.pdf.
- The Land Use Code Sections 20.20.140 (Boarding houses and bed and breakfasts); 20.20.700 (Rooming Houses); 20.50.020 ("family"); 20.50.046 ("single housekeeping unit"); 20.50.012 ("Bed and Breakfast" and "Boarding House"); and 20.30N (Home Occupation Permit).

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