

Operational Standards

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❖ Occupancy

How does Permit Sonoma determine overnight occupancy?

The maximum overnight occupancy for vacation rentals is a maximum of two persons per bedroom, plus two additional persons per property. Children under three years of age are excluded from this maximum. Vacation rentals with larger overnight occupancies may only be allowed subject to the granting of a Use Permit.

| # of Bedrooms in the Vacation Rental | Maximum Overnight Occupancy |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | 4 |
| 2 | 6 |
| 3 | 8 |
| 4 | 10 |
| 5 | 12 |

Exception: For homes on a conditional or non-standard septic system, or those with capacity limited by a voluntary repair, the maximum overnight occupancy for vacation rentals will be equal to the design load of the septic system, and will be listed on the Vacation Rental Permit. The property owner is responsible for ensuring that all contracts and online listings and advertisements clearly state the maximum number of overnight guests permitted on the property.

How does Permit Sonoma determine daytime occupancy?

Up to six additional guests may be permitted at the vacation rental during the day, not including children under three years of age. For example, if the overnight occupancy for a vacation rental is six people, the maximum number of guests and visitors allowed during daytime is twelve people.

Vacation rentals with larger numbers of guests and visitors may only be allowed subject to the granting of a Use Permit. The maximum daytime and overnight occupancy is listed on the Vacation Rental Permit at the time that it is approved.

Note: No changes to the maximum occupancies listed on the permit may be allowed without approval of a new permit.

❖ **Parking**

Parking shall be provided as follows: a minimum of one off-street parking space for a vacation rental with up to two bedrooms, two off-street parking spaces for a three or four-bedroom vacation rental. Larger vacation rentals must demonstrate adequate parking with a minimum of three spaces. The property owner must ensure that the maximum number of vehicles permitted for guests are clearly set forth in all rental agreements and in all online listings.

| # of Bedrooms in the Vacation Rental | # of On-site Parking Spaces |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1-2 | 1 |
| 3-4 | 2 |
| 5 | 3 |

Note: On-street parking may be considered by Permit Sonoma staff for up to one of the required parking spaces where safety access and neighborhood compatibility can be demonstrated.

❖ **Noise**

All activities associated with the vacation rental must meet the Sonoma County General Plan noise standards. Quiet hours are from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Guests should be instructed to avoid activities during quiet hours that might be heard by a neighboring property. Examples include the following: parties, dumping the recycling, slamming of car doors when guests are arriving or departing from the vacation rental, extended conversations outside, gatherings on decks or in hot tubs, etc.

| | |
|--------|------------------|
| 30 dBA | library |
| 40 dBA | rural background |
| 50 dBA | office space |
| 60 dBA | conversation |
| 70 dBA | car radio |
| 80 dBA | traffic corner |
| 90 dBA | lawnmower |

The chart above provides an example of noise levels. The vacation rental noise level may not exceed 60 dBA during quiet hours and 65 dBA during daytime hours. In other words, outside conversations could violate these standards during quiet hours, and guests playing car radios when arriving to the site would violate the standards during any hours. Amplified sound, such as from a radio, is not allowed in conjunction with a vacation rental at any time.

As stated in the *Certified Property Manager Reading Material – Section 1*, parties, music, and noise make up more than half of the reported complaints that are received. Therefore, it is very important that guests be made aware of these limitations. The property owner must ensure that the quiet hours and limits on outdoor activities are included in all rental agreements and in all online listings. Outdoor amplified sound is not allowed at any time associated with a vacation rental. Outdoor amplified sound is defined as the projection of any sound via any electronic device. Pets, if allowed by the property owner, must be secured on the property at all times. Continual nuisance barking by unattended pets is prohibited.

❖ **Trash and Recycling**

Trash and Recycling containers may not be stored within public view unless in compliance with neighborhood standards. Recycling and trash containers must be returned to screened storage areas within twenty-four hours after trash pick-up. It is the responsibility of the property manager to ensure that all trash and recycling containers are removed from public view within 24 hours of trash pickup every week.



✓ **Left:** Trash and recycling receptacles are screened from public view.

✗ **Right:** Trash and recycling is overflowing and not screened from public view.

❖ **Outdoor Fire Pits**

Outdoor fire pits, while not prohibited by state or local fire bans, may be allowed but limited to three feet in diameter, located on a non-combustible surface, covered by a fire screen, and extinguished as soon as the outdoor fire pit is no longer in use or by 10:00 p.m., whichever is earlier. No fire pit may be located within twenty-five feet of a structure or combustible material. Renters should be aware of these Sonoma County fire regulations in order to ensure safety for the renters and surrounding neighborhood.



✗ **Left:** The fire is too close to the structure and is unscreened.

✓ **Right:** The fire is screened and located further than twenty-five feet from the structure.

❖ **Advertisements and Posting**

Once a Vacation Rental Permit has been approved, a copy of the permit listing all applicable standards and limits must be posted within the vacation rental property. The owner is required to post these standards in a prominent place within six feet of the front door of the vacation rental, and include them as part of all rental agreements. Permit Sonoma staff will provide mailed notice of permit issuance to property owners and immediate neighbors within 300 ft. of the vacation rental property boundaries. All advertising handouts, flyers, internet listings, or any other information provided for vacation rentals must conform to the approved occupancy limits and standards as listed on the Vacation Rental Permit. Advertising may only be conducted for properties operating under a valid permit. Advertising for a particular property inconsistent with the approvals for that property is a violation of the Vacation Rental Code and may result in citation or penalties. Vacation Rental Permits will remain with the property until the property is sold or transferred, or unless the permit is revoked due to multiple violations of the Vacation Rental Code.