

The following information is a starting point for ways to ensure STRs enhance the Lake Gaston Community.

Short Term Rentals

Both North Carolina and Virginia consider STRs as single-family homes rented for less than thirty days.

Vacation Rental Agreement

A Vacation Rental Agreement (Short Term Lease) is a written document that officially recognizes a legally binding relationship between two parties – a landlord (the person renting out the property), and a tenant (the person renting the property) for a short time. The landlord (or broker) and the tenant should execute a vacation rental agreement for all STRs.

Number of Occupants

The maximum number of occupants for a given house is calculated by multiplying the number of bedrooms identified on the septic permit by two occupants per bedroom. In some cases, one or two additional occupants may be allowed. The maximum is calculated regardless of the number of beds inside the dwelling. For example, a 4-bedroom house should not house more than 10 occupants. Landlords are responsible for ensuring tenants are aware of the occupancy limits, and tenants are responsible for complying with those limits.

Insurance

Generally, a specific type of home insurance policy is required for STRs. Standard homeowner insurance policies do not typically cover properties used as a business venture. Homeowners should check with their home insurance policy company for rules and coverage of STRs.

Taxes/Tax Collection

Virginia and North Carolina require collecting and paying sales and occupancy taxes on STRs. The tax percentages vary by state/county.

- Register with the NC Department of Revenue to receive a sales tax and use tax ID number at: <https://www.ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/sales-and-use-tax>
- Register with the VA Department of Taxation to receive a sales tax account number and Sales Tax Certificate at: <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/businesses>
- County permits. All five counties have an occupancy tax. You must register with the county and follow their instructions for submitting the fees.

Parking

Parking in housing developments can be limited and on-street parking should be avoided unless specifically allowed. This ensures emergency vehicle access when necessary. Typically, allowing one vehicle per bedroom is an accepted practice. All visiting vehicles should be parked on the rental property.

Septic Tank Management

Landlords:

- Post instructions for the tenant on properly using the septic system.
- Pump your septic tank at least every five years.
- If equipped, clean the septic tank filter regularly – annually at a minimum.
- Don't allow parking on the drainage field.
- Don't plant trees/bushes over the drainage field.

Tenants:

- Only human waste and toilet paper go in the toilet – no other waste, paper, tissues, or other products.
- Don't put any chemicals down the drain. This includes bleach, paint, solvents, and pesticides.
- Don't put food products, including cooking oil/grease, down the drain. Avoid using the garbage disposal.

Home Safety

Landlords:

- Responsible for providing safe and healthy conditions for their tenants.
- Ensure locks on windows and doors are always functional.
- Remove hazards and mark exits.
- Provide required safety equipment. This includes working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Provide a clear and concise emergency advice sheet. It should include emergency numbers, evacuation procedures, and the location of safety equipment.

Tenants:

- Follow all safety requirements as outlined by the landlord.
- Report any safety hazards to the landlord.

Neighborhood Etiquette

The Lake Gaston Community is not like the Outer Banks. Many of the homes around Lake Gaston are permanent. A number of these homes have full-time growing families living in them. While visitors are welcome, they should respect neighbors and their property. Treat full-time residents the same as you would with your hometown neighbors.

Landlords:

- Inform tenants of neighborhood expectations for quiet times (typically after 10 p.m.).
- Provide tenants with a list of good “neighbor practices.”
- Ensure adequate trash disposal containers are provided.
- Talk with your neighbors to ensure your tenants are not abusing the privilege of staying in your STR.

Tenants:

- No loud music or fireworks after 10 p.m. Sound carries far across open water!
- Roads in most developments are narrow and are not designed for on-road parking. Park only in areas that will not block access for emergency vehicles.
- Heed the landlord’s instructions on responsible waste disposal procedures. Place trash in the covered bins at the house. You can also take it to the nearest trash convenience center. Or, take it with you when you leave.
- Pets should be on a leash when outside. You are responsible for picking up after them and properly disposing of any waste.
- Please respect the neighborhood and others' property and possessions.

Water/Boating Safety

Motorboats, personal watercraft (PWC), and other watercraft are welcomed on Lake Gaston. The rules vary slightly because the lake is bordered by both Virginia and North Carolina. However, each state honors the boating and fishing regulations of the other state.

Both states require proof of boating safety education training for motorized watercraft. Details may be found at:

- <https://dwr.virginia.gov/boating/education/requirement/>.
- <https://www.ncwildlife.org/boating/laws-safety>.

Virginia Conservation and NC Wildlife Officers are authorized to cite operators for reckless operation, speed causing unsafe conditions, or operations causing peril to others. Both states encourage operators to take boating safety education courses.

- Children 13 years old and younger must wear a USCG-approved wearable personal flotation device (PFD) while underway.
- All paddleboards (kayaks and canoes included) must have one USCG-approved PFD for each person on board.
- The Lake Gaston Water Safety Council sponsors a children’s PFD loaner program. <https://www.lakegastonwatersafetycouncil.com/safety/childs-loaner-life-jackets.html>
- Young swimmers should be directly observed by a competent adult when in the water.
- PWCs are not to be operated before sunrise or after sundown.

Disclaimer

The contents of this brochure are provided as general information to our members, and the community only as recommendations or suggestions, not legal or tax advice.

The Lake Gaston Association recommends consulting your HOA, a competent legal or tax professional to address any questions you may have.

For additional information please visit:

<http://lgancva.com>

LAKE GASTON ASSOCIATION



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHORT TERM RENTALS

The Lake Gaston Association (LGA) is a nonprofit and nonpartisan community organization that values:

- Respect for lake residents, businesses, visitors, and other stakeholders.
- Conservation of Lake Gaston’s natural environment.
- Accurate and timely communications.
- Community and stakeholder engagement. and community safety.

Our vision for Lake Gaston is a vibrant community of residents, visitors, and successful businesses. Lake Gaston is recognized as an exceptionally high-quality lake and a premier recreation destination.

The LGA recognizes the value of short-term rental (STR) properties for everyone, including landlords, tenants, and the broader community. Properly managed STRs provide economic benefits for local businesses and tax revenue for county and state governments.

Well-managed STRs can enhance neighborhoods and avoid becoming a nuisance or degrade the quality of life if all parties, including landlords and tenants, follow simple rules and common-sense guidelines.