



# VACATION RENTAL UNIT HANDBOOK

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A guide to responsibly operating a Vacation Rental Unit



## VACATION RENTAL UNIT: 101

### What is a Vacation Rental Unit?

A Vacation Rental Unit (VRU) is the commercial use of a detached dwelling or dwelling unit that is available for rent in its entirety for a period of 28 consecutive days or less, to provide temporary lodging to a single group of the travelling and vacationing public and is licensed by the City of Niagara Falls to carry on business.

### Licensing Requirements for Operators

VRU operators must register with the City in order to operate in Niagara Falls and are required to collect and remit a Municipal Accommodation Tax of \$2 per night of occupancy. HST is charged on top of tax. Operators must register prior to renting their homes as a VRU.

Learn more about the regulations for VRU operators, and how to license your VRU at [niagarafalls.ca/VRU](http://niagarafalls.ca/VRU).

VRU licenses expire on April 30th annually. A notice of renewal, along with instructions, will be mailed to you before your registration renewal date.

### Penalties and Offences

Owning and operating a VRU in Niagara Falls in a residential area is strictly prohibited.

A first offence results in a fine of up to \$50,000. A second offence, and each subsequent offence, results in a fine of up to \$100,000 each time.

*The Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls, [By-Law 2021-57](#) being a by-law to regulate and license Vacation Rental Units and to amend [By-Law 2001-31](#).*

### Know the Rules

As an operator, you must abide by the following rules:

- You must be 18 years of age
- Your dwelling must be located in a Tourist, General or Commercially designated zone in the city. Some zoning exceptions apply. **See map**
- Provide two on-site parking spaces in the accordance with 4.19.1 of 79-200
- The maximum number of bedrooms permitted in a VRU is three (3)
- That you are in accordance with the Ontario Building Code for the maximum number of travellers permitted to stay
- Homeowners must have a commercial insurance policy. You may wish to ask your insurance company about the appropriate insurance product for commercial short-term rentals



## OPERATING A VACATION RENTAL UNIT

Once you have registered your dwelling unit with the City of Niagara Falls and received your license number, you can operate your vacation rental unit. As an operator, you are required to follow certain rules to ensure that you are a responsible neighbour, maintain safe standards within your home, and meet record keeping and tax requirements.

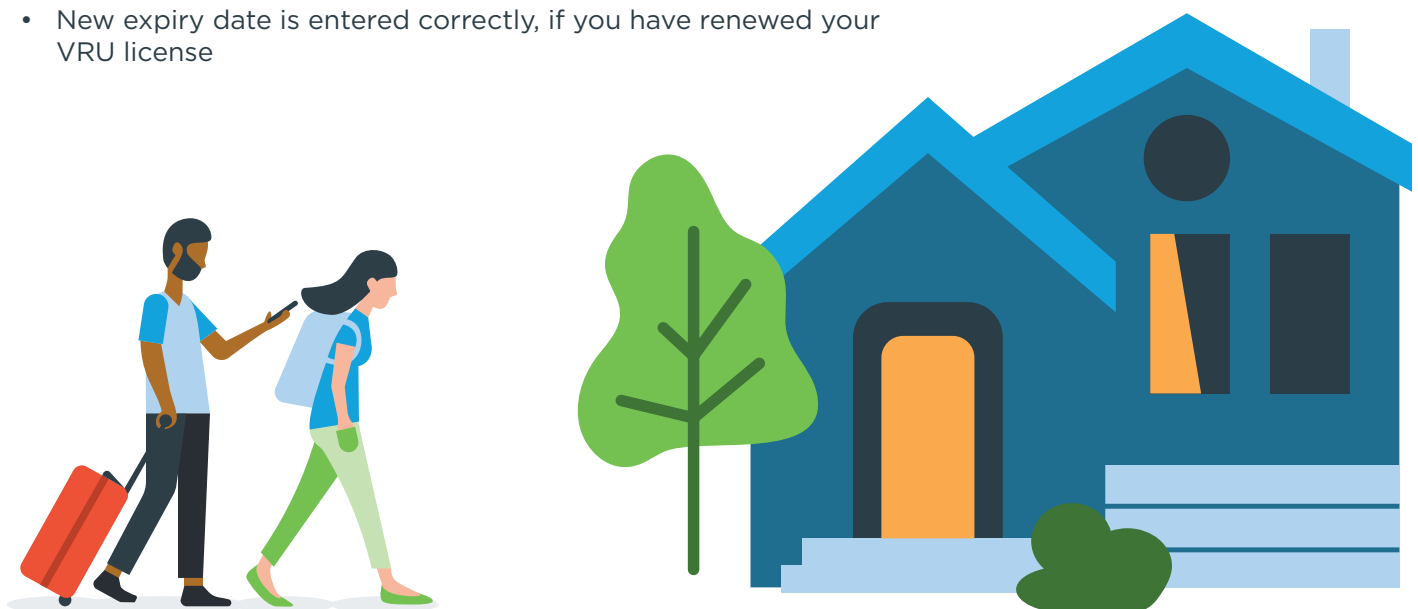
### Advertising Your Vacation Rental Unit

Upon receiving your City-issued VRU license number, you must post this number on all your advertising and listings.

Any invoice, contract, receipt, or similar document related to your VRU must include your VRU license number.

When advertising your VRU, ensure that the information in your advertisement or listing is an exact match with the information on your VRU license with the City. If the information does not match, then this could lead to your listing being removed or having your reservations cancelled. To avoid this, check that your:

- VRU license number is entered correctly
- Address is displayed in full, including the unit number (basement, upper, lower etc.) and postal code
- Name on the advertisement or listing is an exact match with your name used for registration (name as listed on your Ontario Driver's License or Ontario Photo Card)
- Expiry date is entered correctly, if you are a new registrant
- New expiry date is entered correctly, if you have renewed your VRU license



## Abiding by the Ontario Human Rights Code

As a VRU operator, you shall not discriminate against people based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability. You also cannot refuse service to any person with a disability, including persons accompanied by a service animal.

## Maintaining Guest Records

You must create and keep the following records for each transaction related to your short-term rental for two years, and provide them to the City upon request:

1. The number of nights your short-term rental was rented
2. The nightly and total price you charged for each rental
3. The rental type e.g. the entire home rental or just room rental

## Reporting and Paying the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)

The City of Niagara Falls passed **By-Law No. 2018-104** to implement a mandatory Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) calculated at a rate of two dollars (\$2.00) per night of occupancy of transient accommodation in accordance with Part XII.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001 c. 25, as amended, and the Municipal Accommodation Tax Regulation O. Reg. 435/17, effective January 1, 2019.

The Municipal Accommodation Tax will apply to the purchase of accommodations provided for a continuous period of 30 days or less.

The Municipal Accommodation Tax must be identified as a separate item on the invoice or receipt, as the case may be.

The City of Niagara Falls receives the MAT remittance and directs it to the Niagara Falls Canada Hotel Association (NFCHA). The NFCHA is a non-profit corporation created for the express purpose of promoting the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario, as a tourism destination. Visit the **Niagara Falls Canada Hotel Association's website**.

## Registration & Remittance

- [Municipal Accommodation Provider Registration Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [Municipal Accommodation Provider Remittance Form \(PDF\)](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions

- [Municipal Accommodation Guests Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- [Municipal Accommodation Provider Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

## Related Documents

- [Municipal Accommodation Tax By-Law \(PDF\)](#)
- [Municipal Accommodation Tax By-Law 2021 Amendment \(PDF\)](#)
- [Municipal Accommodation Tax Agreement \(PDF\)](#)



## SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS

### Emergency Fire Procedures

The Niagara Falls Fire Department requires that each vacation rental unit have emergency procedures posted in a conspicuous location and shall include a floor plan that indicates the exits from each floor area. The emergency procedures shall take into account any unique characteristics of the premise such as fireplaces, barbeques/grills, or anything that may constitute a safety hazard.

### Fire Exit Floor Plan

You must comply with the **Ontario Fire Code** and provide your guests with a floor plan showing the type, location and operation of the home's fire emergency arrangement and place it in a clearly visible place. Attached is a sample floor plan.

### Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms

The owner/operator is responsible for ensuring that both smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms are installed in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Fire Code. It is also the responsibility of the owner to provide a copy of the manufacturer's instructions for each alarm in the rental unit and to ensure that each alarm is tested after each vacancy.

As soon as an owner/operator is made aware that there is an issue with a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm, it is the owner/operator's responsibility to ensure that the alarm is replaced immediately.

Failure to comply with the requirements of the Ontario Fire Code may result in enforcement action.



## BEING A RESPONSIBLE OPERATOR AND NEIGHBOUR

The City of Niagara Falls has rules in place to help keep communities safe, clean, and enjoyable for residents and visitors. It is your responsibility to understand the applicable rules. You are accountable for your short-term rental and the activity that takes place during your guests' stay.



### Property Standards

**By-Law No. 2015-101** sets the standards for all properties in Niagara Falls. All property owners are required to repair and maintain their property including owners of properties that are rented out. You must ensure you are abiding by the by-law, where applicable.



### Noise

Ask your guests to keep noise to a minimum so that it does not disturb local residents. This includes music. **By-Law 2004-105** states that noisy parties or noise from people acting disorderly, such as yelling, screaming and fighting are responded to by Niagara Regional and Municipal Enforcement Officers.



### Garbage

It is your responsibility to ensure that you and your guests follow proper garbage disposal rules.

Visit [niagararegion.ca/waste/collection](http://niagararegion.ca/waste/collection) for more information.



### Parking

**By-Law No. 89-2000** states that no vehicle shall be parked on either a City or Regional Road between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. unless it is posted otherwise. This by-law is in effect 365 days a year, however, levels of enforcement change during the year. A violation of this by-law is subject to a **minimum fine of \$30.00.**



### Offences

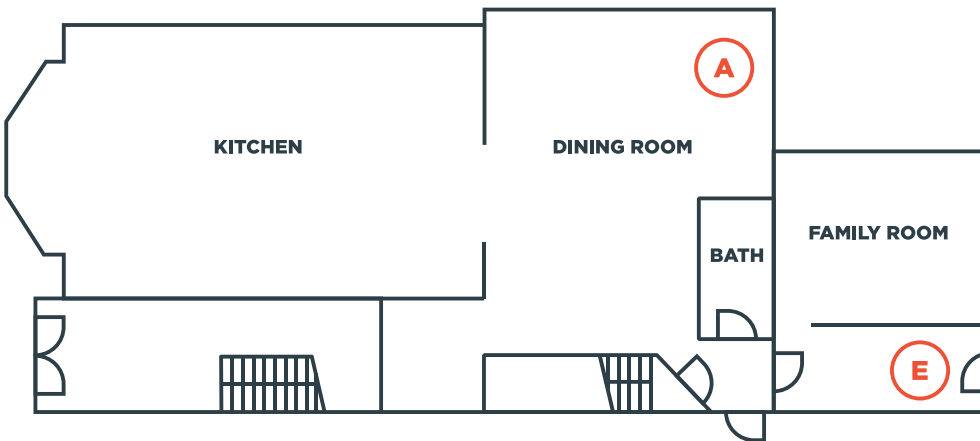
If you are charged with or convicted of offences under the by-laws referenced in this guide or other City by-laws, the City may seek to revoke your registration or deny its renewal.

# SAMPLE FIRE EXIT FLOOR PLAN

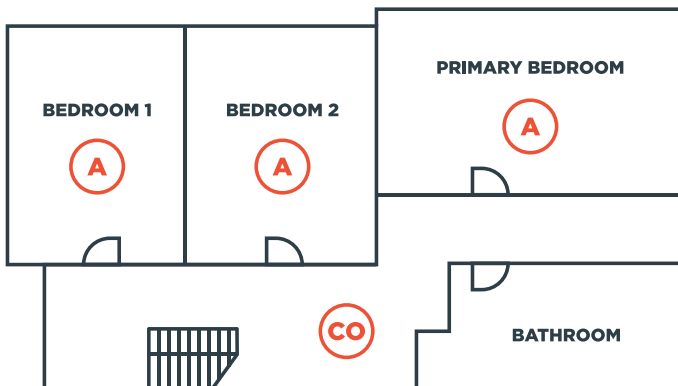
## Basement Floor








## Ground Floor



## Second Floor



**Legend**

-  Main Gas Shut Off Valve
-  Main Electrical Disconnect Switch
-  Carbon Monoxide Detector/Alarm
-  Exit
-  Smoke Alarm



For more information on Vacation Rental Unit rules, visit

[niagarafalls.ca/VRU](https://niagarafalls.ca/VRU)

