



Ordinance 2026-02

SHORT-TERM RENTAL LICENSE ORDINANCE

First Reading: 5/18/26 | **Adopted:** 6/1/26 | **Published:** 6/11/26 | **Effective:** 7/11/26

SECTION 1. PURPOSE AND INTENT

- A. The City of Harrison recognizes that short-term rentals can provide economic benefits.
- B. The City also recognizes that short-term rentals can create negative impacts in residential neighborhoods, including increased noise, traffic, parking conflicts, and nuisance conditions.
- C. The purpose of this ordinance is to:
 - a. Establish a fair licensing and inspection program for short-term rentals.
 - b. Protect public health and safety through objective, verifiable life-safety requirements.
 - c. Provide neighbors with clear information on how to report concerns.
 - d. Require a responsible owner and a local contact who can address issues.
 - e. Establish a predictable enforcement process, including license suspension and revocation for repeated or egregious violations.
- D. This ordinance is intended to regulate the operation of short-term rentals as a licensed activity. It does not replace or reduce the requirements of other City ordinances, state laws, or applicable building and fire safety codes.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this ordinance, the following words and phrases have the meanings below:

- A. **Applicant** means the person or entity applying for a Short-Term Rental License.
- B. **Bedroom** means a room intended for sleeping that meets applicable code requirements, including required emergency escape and rescue openings (egress)

where applicable. A room that does not meet egress requirements may not be counted as a bedroom for occupancy purposes.

- C. **City** means the City of Harrison, Michigan.
- D. **Complaint** means a report made to the City, law enforcement, or another authorized agency alleging conduct related to the operation of a short-term rental. A complaint by itself is not a violation unless verified and documented as provided in this ordinance.
- E. **Egregious Violation** means a violation related to the operation of a short-term rental that:
 - a. Presents an immediate threat to health, safety, or welfare; or
 - b. Involves a material misrepresentation, false statement, or material omission in an application, renewal, inspection, or enforcement process; or
 - c. Involves willful interference with inspection or enforcement; or
 - d. Reflects a severe nuisance impact, as documented by the City or law enforcement.
- F. **Guest** means a person who occupies or uses a short-term rental under a rental agreement or similar arrangement.
- G. **License** or **Short-Term Rental License** means the authorization issued by the City allowing the operation of a short-term rental, subject to this ordinance.
- H. **Local Contact** means a natural person designated by the owner who:
 - a. Can be reached by telephone at all times the short-term rental is occupied; and
 - b. Has authority to respond to issues and coordinate corrective action; and
 - c. Can be physically present at the property or otherwise able to take reasonable steps to address issues in a timely manner, as required by this ordinance.
- I. **Noise Ordinance** means City Code Section 20.581 and any successor or amended provisions.
- J. **Occupancy** means the maximum number of persons permitted to stay overnight in a short-term rental at any time.
- K. **Owner** means the person or entity holding legal title to the property.
- L. **Person** includes an individual, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, trust, association, or other legal entity.

- M. **Short-Term Rental** or **STR** means the rental of a dwelling unit, or any portion of a dwelling unit, for dwelling, lodging, or sleeping purposes for a period of less than thirty (30) consecutive days.
- N. **Zoning Administrator** means the City official(s) designated to administer and enforce this ordinance.

SECTION 3. LICENSE REQUIRED

- A. A Short-Term Rental License is required to operate an STR in the City. Only an owner shall be allowed to hold a license under this chapter.
- B. No person shall advertise, offer, lease, rent, or operate an STR without a valid license issued under this ordinance, and such activity shall constitute a violation subject to Section 14.
- C. A license is required regardless of the platform used to advertise or rent, including but not limited to online platforms and social media.
- D. Issuance of a Short-Term Rental License does not authorize a use that is otherwise prohibited by the City's zoning ordinance or other applicable laws.

SECTION 4. LICENSE TERM, NON-TRANSFERABILITY, AND RENEWAL

- A. **Rolling Term.** A Short-Term Rental License is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issuance, unless suspended or revoked.
- B. **Non-Transferable.** A license is not transferable. A license automatically terminates upon sale, transfer, or other change in ownership of the property. A new owner must apply for a new license and pass inspection before operating an STR.
- C. **Renewal.** The owner shall apply for renewal before the license expires. Operation after expiration is prohibited.
- D. **Late Renewal and Expired License.** A renewal application submitted after the license expiration date but within sixty (60) days after expiration may be accepted as a late renewal and may be subject to a late renewal fee as established by resolution of the City Council. A license that is not renewed within sixty (60) days after expiration shall be deemed expired and closed. After that time, the owner must submit a new application, pay all applicable initial license and inspection fees, and pass inspection before operating an STR. Payment of a late renewal fee or new application fee does not authorize operation of an STR after license expiration and does not waive any enforcement action for operation without a valid license.

SECTION 5. FEES

- A. License fees, initial license fees, renewal fees, late renewal fees, inspection fees, reinspection fees, missed inspection fees, complaint inspection fees, and appeal fees shall be established by resolution of the City Council.
- B. The appeal fee shall be non-refundable.
- C. Fees may differ for initial licensing and annual renewal.

SECTION 6. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

An application for a Short-Term Rental License shall be submitted on a City form and shall include at minimum:

- A. Owner name, mailing address, email, and telephone number.
- B. Property address and parcel identification number.
- C. Proof of ownership or legal authority to operate.
- D. The name and contact information for the Local Contact.
- E. A statement identifying whether a property manager or management company is involved, and contact information if applicable.
- F. The number of bedrooms and a basic floor plan or description sufficient for occupancy determination.
- G. Acknowledgment signed by the owner that:
 - a. The owner is responsible for the conduct of guests and occupants.
 - b. The STR will comply with this ordinance and all applicable laws and ordinances.
 - c. The license may be suspended or revoked for violations.
- H. Proof of liability insurance covering the short-term rental use.
- I. Any additional information reasonably necessary to administer and enforce this ordinance.

SECTION 7. INSPECTIONS

- A. **Initial Inspection Required.** Before a license is issued, the STR shall pass an inspection by the Zoning Administrator or the City's authorized inspector using the City STR checklist.
- B. **Annual Inspection Required.** Each licensed STR shall be inspected at least once during each 12-month license term as part of renewal.
- C. **Entry and Cooperation.** The owner or Local Contact shall provide access to the STR for inspection at reasonable times and shall cooperate with the inspection process.
- D. **Missed Inspection.** If the City appears for a scheduled inspection and is unable to complete it due to no access, no-show, or refusal, a missed inspection fee may be charged and the inspection must be rescheduled.
- E. **Reinspection.** If an STR fails inspection, a reinspection is required. A reinspection fee may be charged as set by resolution.
- F. **Scope and Limitation of Inspections.** Inspections conducted under this ordinance are limited to verifying compliance with the City's Short-Term Rental inspection checklist based on conditions observed at the time of inspection.

Issuance of a Short-Term Rental License does not constitute a warranty, guarantee, or certification that the dwelling complies with all applicable building, fire, or safety codes at all times.

The owner remains solely responsible for maintaining ongoing compliance with this ordinance and all applicable laws and codes. The City assumes no duty to continuously monitor conditions after an inspection is completed.

SECTION 8. INSPECTION CHECKLIST, CRITICAL ITEMS, AND CURE PERIOD

- A. The City shall maintain an STR inspection checklist. The checklist shall identify objective items that are verified as Yes or No.
- B. Inspection items shall be classified as either Critical Life-Safety Items or Non-Critical Compliance Items as established in the checklist and administrative policy.
- C. **Critical Life-Safety Items.** Failure of any Critical Life-Safety Item results in a failed inspection and requires reinspection before licensing or continued operation. Critical items include at minimum:
 - a. Required smoke alarms present and functional per applicable Michigan Residential Code requirements.

- b. At least one functioning carbon monoxide alarm installed within the dwelling unit.
 - c. Bedrooms used for sleeping purposes shall meet applicable emergency escape and rescue opening requirements of the Michigan Residential Code. Rooms that do not meet these requirements shall not be used or advertised as sleeping rooms for occupancy purposes.
 - d. Exits and egress routes are not blocked and are operable.
- D. **Non-Critical Compliance Items.** If only Non-Critical Compliance Items are deficient, the City may allow a cure period without requiring a reinspection, provided the owner submits acceptable verification within the time allowed by administrative policy.
- E. The ordinance does not require the City to review or approve a rental agreement. Posting and onsite requirements are verified by inspection.

SECTION 9. REQUIRED SAFETY FEATURES AND POSTING INSIDE THE STR

- A. The STR shall have smoke alarms and carbon monoxide devices installed and maintained as required by applicable codes and laws.
- B. The following information shall be posted in a visible location inside the STR in a format approved by the City:
 - a. The maximum approved occupancy.
 - b. Parking rules for the property, including that street parking must comply with City rules and may not block traffic.
 - c. A simple fire evacuation and exit plan.
 - d. Emergency contact information, including the Local Contact.
 - e. A plain-language statement that guests must comply with the City Noise Ordinance and nuisance rules, along with a posted copy or summary of the City Noise Ordinance, including any applicable quiet hours.
 - f. "All exits are clearly listed" shall be satisfied by the posted evacuation and exit plan and by ensuring exits and egress routes are clear and operable at the time of inspection. The City is not requiring commercial-style exit signage for single-family dwellings unless required by applicable code.

SECTION 10. OCCUPANCY LIMITS

- A. **General Rule.** Maximum overnight occupancy shall be two (2) persons per bedroom, plus two (2) additional persons per dwelling.

B. Children Under 2. Children under two (2) years of age are excluded from the occupancy count, provided that all life-safety requirements are met, including required egress and required smoke and carbon monoxide devices.

C. Posting and Approval. The maximum approved occupancy shall be determined during inspection based on the bedroom count and shall be posted inside the STR as required by Section 9.

D. No Sleeping Rooms Without Egress. A room lacking required egress shall not be used or advertised as a sleeping room for purposes of occupancy.

SECTION 11. PARKING AND TRAFFIC

- A. STR owners and guests shall comply with all City parking and traffic regulations.
- B. The STR shall provide off-street parking as required by applicable ordinances.
- C. Guests shall be informed that vehicles may not block traffic, driveways, fire access, or emergency access.

SECTION 12. LOCAL CONTACT, RESPONSE, AND OWNER RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The owner shall designate a Local Contact and keep Local Contact information current with the City at all times.
- B. The Local Contact shall maintain a current telephone number and make reasonable efforts to be reachable while the STR is occupied.
- C. Upon receipt of a written notice from the City related to the operation of a short-term rental, including notice of a documented complaint, inspection issue, or compliance request, the owner or Local Contact shall respond within forty-eight (48) hours, unless a different timeframe is specified in the notice. The response shall be documented by the City, which may include written correspondence, electronic communication, or staff notes memorializing verbal communication.
- D. The owner is responsible for the conduct of guests and occupants, and for ensuring compliance with this ordinance.

SECTION 13. NEIGHBOR NOTIFICATION

- A. **Notice Only.** Neighbor notification is for information purposes only. It does not create an approval process and does not grant neighbors the right to deny a license.

- B. **Method of Notice.** Upon issuance of an initial license, the City shall provide notice in a format determined by the City, which may include mailed notice, electronic notice, or publication on the City website.
- C. **Area of Notice.** Notice shall be provided to:
 - a. Properties sharing a property line with the STR; and
 - b. Properties directly across a public street or alley from the STR.
- D. **Notice Content.** The notice shall include:
 - a. The STR property address.
 - b. A statement that the property is licensed as an STR.
 - c. A summary of key rules, including noise, parking, and occupancy.
 - d. Instructions on how to submit a complaint to the City and law enforcement, as applicable.
 - e. The City's contact information for STR administration.

SECTION 14. VIOLATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

- A. **General.** A violation of this ordinance is a municipal civil infraction and may also result in license action, including suspension or revocation. Civil fines may be ordered by the court up to \$500 per violation, plus costs, consistent with City penalty provisions and applicable law. Each day a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.
- B. **Documented Violations Required.** For purposes of suspension or revocation, violations must be documented by City staff, law enforcement, or other authorized agencies. Complaints alone do not count as strikes unless verified and documented.
- C. **Covered Categories.** Violations include:
 - a. Violations of this ordinance.
 - b. Documented violations of the City Noise Ordinance attributable to STR occupants or guests.
 - c. Documented blight or nuisance conditions related to STR operation, including trash accumulation, debris, and property conditions attributable to STR use.
 - d. Documented parking or traffic violations attributable to STR occupants or guests.
 - e. Failure to maintain required life-safety items.
 - f. Failure to post required information.

- g. Failure of the owner or Local Contact to respond as required.
 - h. Material misrepresentations, false statements, or material omissions.
 - i. Interference with inspections or enforcement.
 - j. Failure to maintain required insurance coverage as required by this ordinance.
- D. **Three-Strike Rule.** Unless an Egregious Violation applies:
- a. First documented violation within a rolling 12-month period: written notice of violation.
 - b. Second documented violation within a rolling 12-month period: written notice and municipal civil infraction.
 - c. Third documented violation within a rolling 12-month period: license suspension or revocation, as determined by the City based on the record.
- E. **Egregious Violations.** Upon a documented Egregious Violation, the City may issue a final warning, suspend, or revoke a license without applying the three-strike sequence, subject to the notice and appeal rights in this ordinance. Egregious Violations include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. Failure to maintain required life-safety equipment, including missing or nonfunctional smoke alarms, missing or nonfunctional carbon monoxide alarms, or blocked or noncompliant means of egress;
 - b. Use of rooms for sleeping that do not meet required egress standards;
 - c. Material misrepresentation, false statements, or material omissions in an application, renewal, inspection, or enforcement process;
 - d. Denial of access for inspection, repeated missed inspections, or interference with City enforcement;
 - e. Repeated or severe nuisance impacts, including documented noise, parking, or disorderly conduct incidents attributable to short-term rental occupants or guests;
 - f. Conduct demonstrating willful disregard of City requirements after prior written notice.
- F. **Effect of Suspension.** While suspended, the STR shall not be offered, advertised, rented, or occupied as an STR.
- G. **Reinstatement After Revocation.** A Short-Term Rental License that has been revoked may not be reapplied for until Twelve (12) months have elapsed from the effective date of revocation. As a condition of reinstatement, the City Council may impose reasonable conditions related to inspection, monitoring, or compliance to ensure continued adherence to this ordinance.
- H. **Reapplication After Revocation.** Reapplication after the waiting period is not automatic approval and shall be subject to full compliance with this ordinance,

including inspection and payment of all required fees.

- I. **Operation Without a License.** Any person who advertises, offers, rents, or operates a short-term rental without a valid license is in violation of this ordinance and shall be subject to a municipal civil infraction:
 - a. Each day of operation without a valid license shall constitute a separate violation.
 - b. Violations under this subsection shall not be subject to the three-strike process.
 - c. The City may pursue all available remedies, including issuance of citations and seeking injunctive relief to prohibit continued operation.

SECTION 15. NOTICE OF LICENSE ACTION

- A. If the City denies an application, suspends a license, or revokes a license, the City shall provide written notice to the owner and/or the designated Local Contact. Service of notice to either shall be sufficient for purposes of this ordinance.
- B. The notice shall include:
 - a. The action taken.
 - b. The reason for the action, stated in plain language.
 - c. The documented basis for the action.
 - d. Instructions for appeal, including the deadline and required fee.
- C. Any notice required under this ordinance may be provided by first-class mail, electronic mail, personal delivery, or any other method reasonably calculated to provide actual notice, using the contact information provided to the City. Notice shall be deemed given when sent.

SECTION 16. APPEALS TO CITY COUNCIL

- A. **Right to Appeal.** The owner may appeal a denial, suspension, or revocation to the City Council.
- B. **Deadline.** An appeal must be filed in writing within the number of days established by administrative policy, not less than seven (7) days from the date of notice.
- C. **Fee.** The appeal must include the appeal fee set by resolution. The fee is non-refundable.
- D. **Council Review.** The City Council shall review the record and may affirm, modify, or reverse the City's action. The Council may impose conditions for reinstatement that

are reasonably related to compliance. The City Council's review shall be limited to the record established by the City and the appellant and shall determine whether the City's action was supported by competent, material, and substantial evidence.

- E. **Meeting Placement.** Appeals shall be scheduled for City Council consideration within a reasonable time, using a regular or special meeting, as determined by the City.
- F. **Immediate Suspension for Safety.** If the City determines an immediate threat to health or safety exists, a suspension may remain in effect during appeal unless the Council reinstates the license.
- G. Any decision of the City Council under this chapter may be appealed to a court of competent jurisdiction.

SECTION 17. ADMINISTRATION, RECORDS, AND FORMS

- A. The Zoning Administrator shall administer this ordinance, including applications, inspections, notices, and enforcement coordination.
- B. The City may adopt forms, checklists, and administrative policies consistent with this ordinance.
- C. The City shall maintain a record of licensed STRs and the status of each license.

SECTION 18. TRANSITION PERIOD FOR EXISTING SHORT-TERM RENTALS

- A. Existing STR operators shall apply for a license within ninety (90) days after the effective date of this ordinance.
- B. After the 90-day period, operating an STR without a license is a violation of this ordinance.
- C. The City may conduct outreach to encourage compliance and may monitor publicly available advertising.

SECTION 19. SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is held invalid, the remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 20. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect after publication as required by law.

SECTION 21. NO VESTED RIGHTS

Short-Term Rental License issued under this ordinance does not create a vested right to continue the use. Licenses may be denied, conditioned, suspended, or revoked in accordance with this ordinance and applicable law.

I hereby certify that the foregoing was duly adopted by the CITY COUNCIL of the CITY OF HARRISON, Michigan, at its regular meeting on the _____ day of _____, 2026, that of _____ members of the City Council, _____ were in attendance, and _____ voted for the adoption of the Ordinance. I further certify that the above and foregoing Ordinance is recorded in the Ordinance Book for the CITY OF HARRISON.

Effective Date: _____

This Ordinance shall take effect Thirty (30) days after publication thereof.

Certified by: _____
Kathy Maharas, City Clerk