



## Short Term Rental Program Frequently Asked Questions

### About Rentalscape

#### **Why did the Park Board update the collections and registration platform?**

With over 4,400 rental properties under Park Board management, efficient strategies are required to manage the significant increase in registered properties since 2020. Rentalscape, the updated program, ensures valid licenses, accurate tax payments, and enables the tracking of occupancy for analysis of visitation patterns.

#### **What does Rentalscape do that is different from the previous program?**

Rentalscape employs advanced technology to identify registered and unregistered STR properties by scrubbing thousands of websites daily and cross-referencing data with our current registration database. For rental owners, Rentalscape user accounts offer a simplified system to manage rental registrations and make Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) payments.

### Registration

#### **Will my registration appear automatically in the new Rentalscape portal?**

If your vacation rental is already registered, your registration will seamlessly transition to the new Rentalscape platform. This automatic transition saves you time and provides access to enhanced features and services.

#### **How do I keep my account current?**

By maintaining a valid registration with the Galveston Park Board.

#### **When is registration renewal?**

Registration renewals for the calendar year will begin on December 1st and are due by December 31st. At that time, you can visit [galvestonparkboard.org/rentals](http://galvestonparkboard.org/rentals) to renew your registration.

#### **What happens if I do not renew my registration by December 31st?**

The invalid GVR number and property address will be sent to the platforms, and your listing will be removed. If this occurs, you will be responsible for contacting the platforms and having your property reinstated.

#### **I am a new short-term rental owner. How do I register?**

You can register your property on the Galveston Park Board website at [galvestonparkboard.org/rentals](http://galvestonparkboard.org/rentals).

## **What is a GVR #?**

GVR stands for Galveston Vacation Rental number. All properties being used as a short-term rental in the City of Galveston must have one. A GVR # is required for all listings.

## **How do I get a GVR #?**

When you register your short-term rental property, you are assigned a GVR number.

## **Do I have to have a registration number for each unit, or can I just register them all under one number?**

You must have a unique registration number for each rentable unit.

## **What information do I need to have on hand when I go online to register my property?**

You will need your property address or GCAD number (found at [www.galvestoncad.org](http://www.galvestoncad.org)), number of bedrooms, sleeping capacity, the name and telephone number of a 24-hour local contact for the property, and a bank account (ACH) or credit card for the registration fee. A small convenience fee will be added to all online payments.

## **Can a property management company register on behalf of the properties it manages and pay in one payment?**

Yes, a property management company can register and pay on behalf of the properties it manages.

## **What happens if I sell my house? Will the GVR # stay with the property?**

No. When a property changes ownership, a new registration is required, which will generate a new GVR number.

## **If I stop renting my property as a short-term rental, do I need to notify the Park Board or do anything?**

Yes. You should notify the Park Board by email at [STRR@GALVESTONPARKBOARD.ORG](mailto:STRR@GALVESTONPARKBOARD.ORG) that the property is no longer being used as a short-term rental.

## **Hotel and Occupancy Tax Payments**

### **How do I pay Hotel and Occupancy Tax (HOT)?**

Rentalscape simplifies the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) payment process. To remit HOT payments, visit [galvestonparkboard.org/rentals](http://galvestonparkboard.org/rentals) where you can file your HOT report and submit payment.

### **When are HOT payments due?**

Tax-remitters must file their tax reports by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month following the reporting period. Properties that do not generate more than \$500.00 per month in taxes or \$1,500.00 per quarter can be reported on a quarterly basis. If your HOT report is more than \$1500.00 in a quarter, you are required to file monthly reports. Quarterly due dates are April 20<sup>th</sup>, July 20<sup>th</sup>, October 20<sup>th</sup> and January 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Will booking websites collect and remit the Galveston HOT (Hotel Occupancy Tax)?**

At this time, only Airbnb, VRBO, and some property management companies will be collecting and remitting the local hotel and occupancy tax. In August 2021, the Galveston city council approved an ordinance requiring AirBnb and VRBO to collect and pay hotel occupancy tax for transactions that occur on their platforms. VRBO does not collect or remit tax for Integrated Property Managers, which are property managers that use their own payment source.

### **Will the Galveston Park Board record payments made by the platforms to my online account?**

No. The platforms will be reporting and remitting the local hotel tax in one lump sum. No payments will be posted to individual accounts.

### **How can I ensure Airbnb and VRBO are paying my taxes?**

To verify the proper amount is being paid on your behalf, we recommend contacting Airbnb and/or VRBO. You may try looking at the detailed charges on any of your reservations. You should see two tax lines: one for the state and one for Galveston. If this is not happening, please contact the platform immediately and ask them to correct the error. Note: If you previously requested a custom tax, be sure to update your listing and opt in for all taxes to be withheld.

### **Do I still need to file a zero report once the platforms start paying all my taxes?**

Yes. You do have to file zero reports. The new system requires you to file returns, even when no HOT is due or has been paid on your behalf by Airbnb or Verbo. You will be asked to provide information on the rental activity that occurred on the Airbnb and Vrbo platforms. Be sure to retain all transaction reports and other pertinent information provided to you by Airbnb and VRBO.”

### **Additional Information**

#### **How can I report a noncompliant property or submit a complaint about a rental?**

Residents and visitors can call a 24/7 monitored hotline at 409-247-8160 to report complaints about STR properties.

#### **Why was there an increase in the registration fee?**

The city council voted to increase the fee in October 2022.

#### **How will the STR registration fee funds be spent?**

The annual \$250 registration fee paid by short-term rental owners is collected by the Park Board on behalf of the City of Galveston. In addition to covering expenses for administering Hotel Occupancy Tax collections, tracking and compliance, these fees support a 24-hour STR call center that allows residents to report potential issues with STRs in their neighborhoods. For information on how the remaining funds will be spent by the City of Galveston, please contact your City Council representative directly.

*You can access your account 24/7. Need assistance accessing your account? Please contact Dawn Robinson at 409-797-5195. Phone and web support is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.*