

Vacation Dwelling Unit Guide

What is a Vacation Dwelling Unit/Accessory Vacation Dwelling Unit?

Rental of an entire dwelling unit without the property owner present during the guest stay is defined by the Duluth Unified Development Code as a Vacation Dwelling Unit. An Accessory Vacation Dwelling Unit is a VDU in a unit that is not the primary dwelling on a property. Guest totals and parking requirements are determined by number of bedrooms. There is a maximum of total of 60 Vacation Dwelling Units and Accessory Vacation Dwelling Units permitted in the city (except in Form districts, where the cap does not apply).

Duluth Contacts for Vacation Dwelling Units

- Planning and Development Division, for Interim Use Permit
Website - [Short-term Rentals \(duluthmn.gov\)](http://Short-term Rentals (duluthmn.gov))
Email - planning@duluthmn.gov
Phone - 218-730-5580
- Construction Services & Inspections Division, for Building Permit & Inspections
Website - [Construction Services & Inspections \(duluthmn.gov/csi\)](http://Construction Services & Inspections (duluthmn.gov/csi))
Email - permittingservices@duluthmn.gov
Phone - 218-730-5240
- Life Safety Division, for Fire Operational Permit & Inspections
Website - [Fire Department \(duluthmn.gov\)](http://Fire Department (duluthmn.gov))
Phone - 218-730-4380

Other Agencies – Contact these agencies directly about Vacation Dwelling Units.

- Lodging License - State Department of Health
Website - <https://www.health.state.mn.us>
Phone - 651-201-5000
- State Tax ID Number - MN Department of Revenue
Website - <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us>
Phone - 651-282-5225
- Tourism Tax – Duluth City Clerk
Website - www.duluthmn.gov/finance/tourism-taxes/
Phone - 218-730-5350

Step by Step Process - Planning & Development Division

1. Visit the Short Term Rentals web page [here](#). Be sure to review the FAQ [here](#), and video on Vacation Dwelling Units [here](#).
2. If eligible for a VDU, call or email the Planning Division to schedule a pre-application meeting.
3. Submit a complete Interim Use Permit Application and payment to Construction Services & Inspections. The application and instructions on how to submit Planning Applications can be found [here](#). Be sure to follow all steps listed on the Short-Term Rentals web page and Interim Use Application Packet. Planning staff will guide you through the Planning Commission and City Council processes.

Step by Step Process - Construction Services & Inspections Division (CSI)/ Life Safety Division

1. If you wish to discuss your project with a Plans Examiner prior to submitting your building permit application feel free to apply for a Preliminary Code Review Meeting [here](#). This gives you a chance to introduce the project to reviewers, to ask questions related to codes or submittal requirements, and gives city staff a chance to share knowledge about a particular building or applicable code issues.
2. Once you receive your Development Agreement from Planning for the Interim Use Permit. You will need to submit a building permit application and plans to CSI for MN Building Code compliance and have an inspection by a Life Safety / Fire Code inspector.
3. Use the [Short Term Rentals MN Building Code](#) for a summary of compliance requirements for your VDU.
4. Refer to the [VDU Submittal Checklist Table](#) below to determine what must be submitted with your building permit application to Construction Services.
5. In addition to building permit submittal requirements, you must submit the [Life Safety Request Inspect Form and the Life Safety Inspection Fee](#).
6. Life Safety staff will reach out to you directly to schedule an inspection.
7. After all reviews are complete, the building permit will be issued.
8. Once the building permit is issued, you (the permit holder) will schedule required inspections with the inspector assigned to your project. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to schedule inspections directly with the inspector.
9. When all associated permits are inspected and approved the assigned construction inspector will issue you a Certificate of Occupancy or Letter of Completion.
10. Once the Certificate of Occupancy or Letter of Completion is issued, the Life Safety Division will issue the Operational Permit.
11. Once the Operational Permit is issued, the building may be used as a Vacation Dwelling Unit.

Renewal

- The interim use permit will terminate upon change in ownership of the property or as determined by City Council, usually six years after the date of issuance, whichever occurs first (note that City Council may choose a shorter time period than 6 years).
- Upon termination, contact the Planning & Development Division to discuss the Interim Use Permit.
- Operational Permits with the Life Safety Division will need to be renewed every three years.
- A building permit will not be required for renewals unless you are doing work that requires permits or the number of guests changes to more than 10.

VDU Submittal Checklist Table

Convert 1 or 2 Family Dwelling to a Vacation Dwelling Unit up to 10 Guests per Unit	Convert 1 or 2 Family Dwelling to a Vacation Dwelling Unit more than 10 Guests per Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Building Permit Application <input type="checkbox"/> Life Safety Inspection Form & fee <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a site plan showing all buildings, & parking location(s) if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide floor plans indicating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The use of each room ● The number of sleeping spaces in each room, not to exceed a total of 10 for the entire unit. ● The emergency escape and rescue window(s) in each room used for sleeping <input type="checkbox"/> If any construction is taking place in conjunction with the conversion to a VDU, use the Residential Plan Review Checklist and submit the plans indicated for the work proposed. You may obtain a separate permit for the construction work, if you wish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Building Permit Application <input type="checkbox"/> Life Safety Inspection Form & fee <input type="checkbox"/> Plans and a code summary must be prepared by a MN licensed architect showing compliance with the MN Conservation Code for Existing Buildings, and the MN Accessibility Code for an R-1 occupancy. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a site plan based on a boundary survey showing all buildings, & parking locations if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> The architect must use the Commercial Plan Review Checklist to provide a code summary and plans indicated showing compliance for a change of occupancy to an R-1 use (transient residential).
Convert any Building or Space, other than a 1 or 2 Family Dwelling, to a Vacation Dwelling Unit with Any Number of Guests per Unit	New Buildings Constructed as Vacation Dwelling Units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Building Permit Application <input type="checkbox"/> Life Safety Inspection Form & fee <input type="checkbox"/> Plans and a code summary must be prepared by a MN licensed architect showing compliance with the MN Conservation Code for Existing Buildings, and the MN Accessibility Code for an R-3 (up to 10) or R-1 (more than 10) occupancy, (transient residential). <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a site plan based on a boundary survey showing all buildings, & parking locations if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> The architect must use the Commercial Plan Review Checklist to provide a code summary and plans indicated showing compliance for a change of occupancy to an R-3 or R-1 use (transient residential). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Building Permit Application <input type="checkbox"/> Life Safety Inspection Form & fee <input type="checkbox"/> Plans and a code summary must be prepared by a MN licensed architect showing compliance with the MN Building Code (Ch 1305) for new buildings. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a site plan based on a boundary survey showing all buildings, & parking locations if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> The architect must use the Commercial Plan Review Checklist to provide all of the items indicated.