



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 Chapter 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. The rental period is 2 to 29 nights. The maximum number of bedrooms that may be rented is 4, and maximum guests is 9. There is a cap on 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://duluthmn.gov/short-term-rentals)
Email - planning@duluthmn.gov
Phone - 218-730-5580
- Construction Services & Inspections Division, **for Building Permit & Inspections**
Website - [Construction Services & Inspections \(duluthmn.gov/csi\)](http://duluthmn.gov/csi)
Email - permittingservices@duluthmn.gov
Phone - 218-730-5250
- Life Safety Division, **for Fire Operational Permit & Inspections**
Website - [Fire Department \(duluthmn.gov\)](http://duluthmn.gov/fire-department)
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](#).
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. 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. Once you have submitted the Interim Use Permit Application, you may submit your building permit application.
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. Alterations and some repairs require separate submittal of application, plan and permit for the construction work.
8. Once all reviews and inspections associated with the proposed VDU are approved, Construction Services will send you the following: Development Agreement (Planning Division), Certificate of Occupancy or Letter of Completion (Construction Services & Inspections Division), and Operational Permit (Life Safety Division).
9. Once you receive the Development Agreement, Certificate of Occupancy or Letter of Completion, and Operational Permit, 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 with Construction Services & Inspections will not be required, unless you are doing work that requires permit(s).

VDU Submittal Checklist Table

Convert 1 or 2 Family Dwelling to a Vacation Dwelling 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 9 guests and 4 bedrooms 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 will need to obtain a separate permit for the construction work. 	
Convert any Building or Space, other than a 1 or 2 Family Dwelling, to a Vacation Dwelling 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. <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.