



# Township of Georgian Bay Short-Term Rental Guidebook

August 2022 Draft



# 1. Introduction and Background

## What is the objective of this guidebook?

The Township of Georgian Bay is in the process of introducing a Short-Term Rental By-Law in preparation for the 2023 season. In the meantime, staff are releasing this guidebook to promote and educate best practices for Short-Term Rentals.

There are three main areas this guidebook will focus on:

**The Host:** Should be using a reputable company or person that verifies the identity of the guests and has appropriate channels for conflict resolution between the host, the community and the guest.

**The Guest:** Should be renting a facility that is safe, has the capacity to host the number of guests and has provided consumer protection to their facility such as: smoke alarms, CO<sub>2</sub> monitors, fire extinguishers, safe appliances and Building Code approved structures throughout the facility.

**The Community:** Should be protected from damages to the character, amenities, and overall quality of the community where the Short-Term Rental is located.

## What is a Short-Term Rental?

A Short-Term Rental is an occupancy of a guest in all or part of a dwelling unit where a rental charge is collected. This can include Bed and Breakfasts (B&B's), but excludes hotels and motels. This also excludes family members renting from family, or accommodations where there is no payment.

Short-Term Rentals are stays less than 28 consecutive days in the same location with the same paid tenants and guests.

The qualifier of a Short-Term Rental being determined as a "rental" is the exchange of money, or services to offset the rental fees.

## Are Short Term Rentals only online?

No, a rental can occur between two parties in an agreement. Any time a rental takes place for less than 28 days, this is considered a Short-Term Rental.

## What is an Online Travel Agency (OTA)

Bookings.com, VRBO, Airbnb, Jayne's cottages, Home-to-go, Cottages in Canada, Ontario Cottage Rentals, etc. are Online Travel Agencies (OTA). These OTA's market, solicit, book and receive payment on behalf of the home owner who has listed their property for rent. Short-Term and Long-Term Rentals can happen in an OTA.

## What are Short Term Rental Operators?

These are people/agencies renting their homes or rooms on a short-term basis for a period less than 28 consecutive days. These operators often pay a fee to the OTA

to have their listing accessible for view on platforms like Bookings.com, VRBO, Airbnb, Jayne's cottages, etc.

### **What is Airbnb.org.**

This is a secondary company to Airbnb that works with communities impacted by disaster. During COVID-19, and again during the Ukraine crisis, Airbnb encouraged hosts to open their homes for free or for a reduced cost to those who were in need.

This guidebook identifies that communities want to help others, and when there is an opportunity to host a family in crisis or in need, the Township offers their heartfelt gratitude and encourages hosts to communicate with their community on how collectively they can assist during natural disasters or other emergencies.

In 2020 and again in 2021 there were periods of time where Short-Term Rentals were forbidden due to COVID-19, and hosts were able to make their homes available at often no cost to front line workers or those who needed accommodations to serve communities affected by COVID-19. This occurred again in 2022 with the crisis in Ukraine. Hosts on Airbnb can also identify themselves as an Airbnb.org host if they choose and qualify.

### **Are Short-Term Rentals a problem in the Township of Georgian Bay?**

The Township of Georgian Bay conducted a survey in 2021. There were 121 participants and the survey was open to respondents for 2 months for June and July 2021

In general, Georgian Bay Township residents do not have issue with Short-Term Rentals, as it has been determined through public consultation, that renting for a portion of the high season (May to October) can make cottage ownership affordable and can help offset costs.

However, there are some concerns where occupancy and load of use for present septic systems have been reported to the Township. Neighbours have complained about rude behaviour, noise, lack of education for the guests of the environment they are renting in, as well as excessive campfires, drinking and occupancy.

The Township By-Law program, like the vast majority of By-Law programs across Canada, is complaint based, and in circumstances where complaints have been received, , be it about a failing septic system, or noise, By-Law department staff have visited properties and spoken to homeowners.

### **What is happening to Short-term rentals in 2022 and 2023?**

Staff are reviewing options to support all who are engaged with and affected by Short-Term Rentals in the Township of Georgian Bay.

A By-Law that will mitigate issues specific to Georgian Bay Township associated with Short-Term Rentals will be implemented. This would be enforceable on a complaint-based system.

## In the interim, what can residents do?

If a neighbour is participating in a short-term rental arrangement, and you have concerns, an opportunity to report a concern can be submitted on the Township website [here](#).

## 10 things to know about Short-Term Rentals in Georgian Bay Township

1. Short-Term Rentals are allowed in Georgian Bay. There is no municipal licence that must be obtained from the Township to operate a Short-Term Rental.
2. Condominium boards and Home Owner Associations (HOA's) may restrict rentals less than 30 days, and owners of condo properties MUST contact their HOA or Condominium board for approval, regardless of licensing conditions in the Township.
3. People who operate Short-Term Rentals shall not discriminate against people based on race, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability.
4. People who are Short-Term renting their homes cannot refuse service to any person with a disability. This includes a person accompanied by a service animal.
5. Your host must always provide you with the contact information of a person available during your rental period in the event of an emergency.
6. An exit plan with a diagram of all exits from the building where a Short-Term Rental is located should be clearly posted inside the rental unit.
7. Be a good neighbour and respect rules around noise, parking, garbage, and recycling. This should be clearly outlined in the hosts documents.
8. Hosts should clearly communicate that any community complaints due to poor behaviour of the renters will result in forfeiture of the security deposit.
9. Hosts who are on a septic system, must review original approvals from when the septic bed was installed. Host must confirm septic load and have a clear understanding of the occupancy of their rental in relation to what the septic can handle.
10. Call 911 only for emergencies such as reporting a fire, reporting a crime or for emergency medical assistance.

## 2. By-Laws that are already in place.

You are not alone in your concerns about STR's. There are many By-Laws in place that can assist you in formalizing a concern if you cannot find resolution with your neighbour. A full list is available [here](#), and a few below are highlighted

Method	Timing	What does it cover?
<b>By-Laws</b>		
<a href="#">Fireworks By-Law</a> 2022-09	On-going	Speaks to two types of fireworks, Display (licensed professional) and Consumer (average citizen). Consumer fireworks are permitted on Holidays listed within the by-law and two days before and one day after. Display fireworks must obtain a permit and permission from the Fire department.
<a href="#">Animal Control By-Law</a> 2017-26	On-going	Provides for maintaining land in a clean and clear condition. This by-law addresses concerns such as long grass, unsafe or hazardous conditions, litter/debris, waste disposal, compost, and derelict vehicles.
<a href="#">Clean Yards By-Law</a> 2018-91	On-going	Provides for maintaining land in a clean and clear condition. This by-law addresses concerns such as long grass, unsafe or hazardous conditions, litter/debris, waste disposal, compost, and derelict vehicles.
<a href="#">Feeding Wildlife By-Law</a> 2020-05	On-going	Prohibits the intentional feeding or providing attractants to wildlife within the Township.
<a href="#">Noise By-Law</a> 2018-18	On-going	To provides for the regulation and prohibition of noise that may or is likely to disturb the public peace and for the prevention of public nuisances in the Township. Within this by-law there are general prohibitions that prohibit certain types of noise, and limitations by time where certain type of noise (construction, music, etc) is permitted during certain hours.
<a href="#">Parking By-Law</a> 2017-25	On-going	Regulates and controls parking within the Township. This by-law addresses such offences and concerns such as parked where prohibited, parking in a fire route or accessible space and parked obstructing traffic along with several others. Officers have the authority to ticket and tow vehicles parked in contravention of this by-law.  Consolidated in 2021.

Township of Georgian Bay  
Proposed Short-Term Rental  
Code of Conduct

The Township of Georgian Bay is comprised of three urban areas, these being MacTier, Honey Harbour and Port Severn, as well as smaller communities that can be found around inland lakes or along the waterways of Georgian Bay. You are presently located in the world's largest Freshwater Archipelago, the Mnídoo Gamii (Spirit of the Water), Georgian Bay Biosphere. Our Township neighbours the Moose Deer Point First Nation and the Wahta First Nation, and we have many Metis members in all of our communities.

Our community is based on the principle of sustainable communities, economies, lifestyles, heritage and tourism and we have so many attributes for you to explore. We respect and honour the history of the lands we are on and who the original inhabitants were. We strive to ensure that our children's children will be able to enjoy this space as we all do today.

You are in a rental facility in our community, and we welcome you. Please accept our respect and thanks for visiting us. To ensure you are safe, our hosts are safe and our communities around you are safe, we ask you to be mindful of the following:

- Please do not exceed the occupancy limits set out by your host.
- Be mindful of where you park and the signs and rules to guide you to safe and appropriate parking.
- Be sustainable in your thoughts, conserve where you can, turn off lights and water taps.
- Be considerate of your neighbours – please no excessive noise or disturbances at any time. As well, be mindful of our Noise By-Law, where all noise must cease by 11:00 p.m.
- Actively participate in waste diversion programs provided for you by your host.
- Get to know and explore our communities and support locally.
- Clean up after your pet on all private and public properties.
- Fireworks are not permitted on this property.

While you are here, we encourage you to visit the Georgian Bay Island National Park, the National Historic site of Lock 45 along the Trent Severn Waterway, visit Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, explore the McCrae Lake Conservation area, and enjoy our many beaches like Stewart Lake in MacTier, or Port Severn Park in Port Severn. We also recommend a visit to Honey Harbour to shop, eat, dip your toes in the water and enjoy the scenery.

As your hosts, we encourage you to reach out to us at any time so we can help make your visit to Township of Georgian Bay the best it can be. We hope you enjoy your visit and that you will be back again.