

Responsibilities and Enforcement

Am I qualified to serve as the property manager of a vacation rental?

Property managers must be certified; must be located within a thirty-mile radius of the vacation rental; and must be available to respond to complaints at all times during the rental period.

What is the process to change property manager information for a vacation rental?

Any requested change to the certified property manager for a vacation rental property must be made through submittal of a new Supplemental Application and Affidavit and Vacation Rental Affidavit form (PJR-096) provided by Permit Sonoma staff, and must include the signature, address, and contact information of the certified property manager and the effective date of the change in representation. In order to change the certified property manager information, an \$85 fee is required for Permit Sonoma staff to notify the surrounding neighbors of the new contact information for any problems or issues associated with the vacation rental.

In no case may a vacation rental operate without a current certified property manager. Updated certified property manager information is essential to ensure the neighbors have access to the current contact information.

In the case that a property manager is no longer representing a vacation rental, they should contact Permit Sonoma staff via the vacation rental email at PRMD-VacationRentals@sonoma-county.org to ensure that staff is aware that they no longer represent the property. If internet access is not available, the property manager may call the vacation rental hotline at (707) 565-1932.

What is the property manager response responsibility?

The property manager must be available during all times when the property is rented. Should a problem arise and be reported to the property manager, the property manager is responsible for contacting the renters to correct the problem within sixty minutes, or within thirty minutes during quiet hours, including visiting the site as necessary to ensure that the issue has been corrected.

Important: A property manager should never put himself or herself at risk in order to try to resolve a situation at a vacation rental. If the property manager arrives to the site and feels that it is not safe to intervene in a situation with renters or neighbors, they should call the sheriff and remain in contact until the situation has been resolved.

Do property managers need to report complaints to Permit Sonoma staff?

When a complaint is received by a property manager, the property manager is responsible for reporting to Permit Sonoma staff within 24 hours of the occurrence. The “Reporting Form for Property Managers” may be used to report any such complaints, and their resolution or attempted resolution, to Permit Sonoma staff within twenty-four hours of the occurrence. The complaint reporting form can be found on the Permit Sonoma Vacation Rental website at: www.SonomaCounty.ca.gov/VacationRentals.

What details must the complaint reports include?

These reports should include the following details:

- The nature of the complaint
- When it was received
- How and when it was resolved
- Whether or not there was further communication from neighbors after contact was made with the renters

If internet access is not available to the property manager, the complaint and resolution may be reported to Permit Sonoma staff via the vacation rental email at: PRMD-VacationRentals@sonoma-county.org or the vacation rental hotline at (707) 565-1932.

Important Note: Failure to respond to complaints or to report complaints to Permit Sonoma staff is considered a violation of the Vacation Rental Code, and may be cause for revocation of certification status.

How does Permit Sonoma enforce vacation rentals?

The Vacation Rental Code includes a “three strikes” provision for all vacation rentals. If an agent of the County witnesses or verifies a violation of the Vacation Rental Code, a “strike” may occur. An agent of the County could be the Sheriff, Permit Sonoma Staff, or an on call enforcement company contracted through the County to issue administrative citations.

A neighbor complaint on its own is not a strike. A strike may only be assigned to a property by an agent of the County. A strike may be assigned to a property through issuance of an administrative citation, or through a verified violation of the Vacation Rental Code. If a property receives three strikes within a two-year period, the Vacation Rental Permit may be summarily revoked. Any such revocation would be appealable to an administrative hearing officer.

Examples of violations of the Vacation Rental Code that could result in strikes against a property are set forth in the code, and include the following:

1. Conduct of a cultural event, special event, party, wedding or other similar activity exceeding the allowable maximum occupancy;
2. Exceeding the maximum permitted occupancy, not including children under 3 years of age;
3. Noise violations, including the use of outdoor amplified sound;
4. Violations of quiet hours (10:00 PM – 7:00 AM);
5. Exceeding maximum number of vehicles;
6. Exceeding fire limits, including lighting fires during bans;
7. Unsecured pets and/or nuisance barking;
8. Operation of a vacation rental without a certified property manager;
9. Failure of the property owner to include the specified limits in rental agreements and online listings or advertisements;
10. Failure to include the individual property's Transient Occupancy Tax Certificate number in all contracts, advertising and online listings;
11. Failure of the property owner to maintain current Transient Occupancy Tax status.