

Frequently Asked Questions About the Transient Occupancy Tax, or TOT, on Short-term Rentals in Los Angeles County

The Los Angeles County (County) Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTC) has developed the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and answers about Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) requirements for renting property in the County's unincorporated areas on a short-term basis through Airbnb, VRBO and other online hosting platforms.

1. What is the Transient Occupancy Tax?

The TOT is commonly known as a "hotel tax" or "bed tax" and is authorized under [Title 4 of the Code Chapter 4.72-TOT](#). Under this code, hotel and motel operators—including property owners who use online hosting platforms to rent lodging space in unincorporated areas of the County—are required to charge a TOT of 12% on rent paid by "transient" guests. Transient guests are those who stay 30 days or less. For guests who stay longer, please see question 11 below.

If you rent your property (e.g. home, condo, or co-op) in its entirety, or a portion of your property such as a bedroom and the property is in the unincorporated area of the County, you are responsible for collecting and remitting the TOT to the TTC.

2. What are online hosting platforms?

Online hosting platforms are web or application-based platforms that facilitate rentals and payments for lodging space that includes personal residences, bed-and-breakfasts or entire homes or apartments. Examples of these online platforms are Airbnb, Flipkey, Homeaway, Onefinestay and VRBO.

3. Who is an Operator and Host?

Under [Code Section 4.72.020\(F\)](#), an operator is proprietor of the hotel or lodging space, whether as the owner, lessee, sub-lessee, mortgagee in possession, licensee or any other capacity. When the operator performs these functions through a managing agent, that agent is legally deemed an operator with the same duties and liabilities as his or her principal.

Host is a phrase used by online hosting platforms and has the same or similar role as an Operator in [Code Chapter 4.72-TOT](#). A Host is the person or authorized agent who handles the listing with the online hosting platforms and manages the lodging space. For example, the property owner who rents out a bedroom through Airbnb is considered a Host. Therefore, a Host meets the definition of an Operator per the Code Chapter 4.72-TOT. The term Host is used in these FAQs.

4. What do I need to know if I am a Host?

The Host is responsible for complying with the [Code Chapter 4.72–TOT](#) and potentially [Code Chapter 7.50](#) – Housing, which includes:

- Checking if you need a Business License. Please see Question 5.
- Filing a [TOT Registration Application](#) for rental property in the unincorporated area of the County with the TTC within 30 calendar days after commencing business.
- Collecting 12% of the rent charged to the guest for short-term stays of 30 calendar days or less without an agreement. For guests who plan to stay for 31 days or more with an agreement, see Question 11.
- Submitting the [TOT Monthly Computation Form](#) with associated payment to the TTC. Please see Question 9.
- Visit our website at <http://ttc.lacounty.gov/Othertaxes/TOT.htm> to reference all the TOT requirements, associated forms and FAQs.

For more information, refer to the [TOT Steps](#).

5. Is the Host required to obtain a business license?

[Title 7 of the Code Chapter 7.50-Housing](#) governs the issuance of a business license. The issuance of a business license includes a review of zoning regulations to ensure that you may operate at your location.

County ordinances also include the following conditions that apply to those properties located within the unincorporated area of the County:

For Hosts renting to four people or less:

- a) You are not required to obtain a business license.
- b) If your property is a single-family residence, zoning regulations allow you to rent to a maximum of four people.
- c) If your property is not a single-family residence, you should contact the Department of Regional Planning to ensure that zoning regulations allow you to rent your property. You may contact the Department of Regional Planning at (213) 974-6411 or zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov.

For Hosts renting to five people or more:

- a) If your property is a single-family residence, zoning regulations do not allow you to rent to five people or more.
- b) If your property is intended to accommodate five or more persons, you must obtain a business license as a Hotel, Motel, or Boarding House and the property must be zoned for this activity. For more information, please contact the TTC's Business License Unit at (213) 974-2011 or businesslicense@ttc.lacounty.gov.

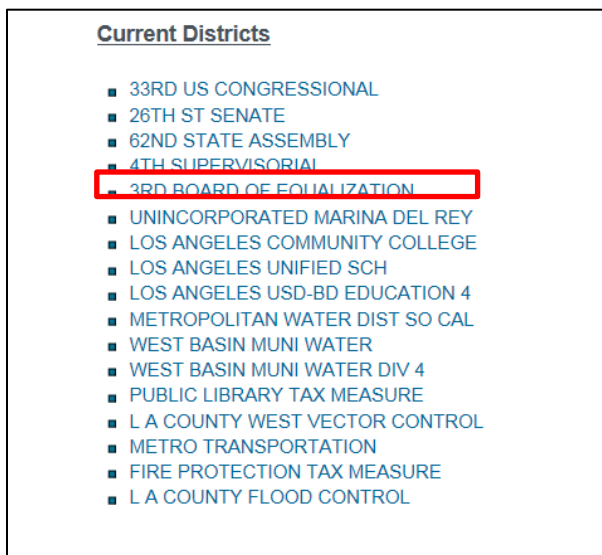
6. Do I need to pay both County and city TOT?

No, you do not need to pay both County and city TOT. The County's TOT applies only to properties located within the unincorporated areas of the County. Cities may have their own TOT ordinance and rates. If the property is not located in the unincorporated area, you should consult with the Finance Office of the city in which your property is located. For information on determining the local government jurisdiction, please see Question 7.

7. How do I determine if the lodging space is located within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County or a city?

You should visit the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk website at <http://rrcc.lacounty.gov/OnlineDistrictmapApp/> and type the number and street name of the lodging space. You will be presented with a list of possible matching addresses; select the appropriate address. The results will display the various districts to which the address belongs. The sixth bullet from the top will indicate if the lodging space belongs to a city or is in the unincorporated area of the County.

- If it says “Unincorporated ...” the property is located within the unincorporated area of the County.



If it says “city of ...” the property is located within an incorporated city and is not under the jurisdiction of the County.

- Current Districts**
- 39TH US CONGRESSIONAL
 - 29TH ST SENATE
 - 55TH STATE ASSEMBLY
 - 1ST SUPERVISORIAL
 - 3RD BOARD OF EQUALIZATION
 - CITY OF WALNUT
 - MT SAN ANTONIO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - MT SAN ANTONIO COMMUNITY COLL TA6
 - ROWLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL
 - METROPOLITAN WATER DIST SO CAL
 - THREE VALLEYS MUNI WATER
 - THREE VALLEYS MUNI WATER DIV 2
 - CITIES-SPECIAL LIBRARY TAX DIST
 - SAN GABRIEL VLY MOSQUITO ABATE
 - METRO TRANSPORTATION
 - FIRE PROTECTION TAX MEASURE
 - L A COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL

8. When should the Host submit the TOT Registration Application?

The Host must determine if a business license is required, prior to renting his/her property. If zoning requirements allow you to rent your property to five or more renters, a business license is required. To determine zoning requirements for your location, contact the Department of Regional Planning at (213) 974-6411. Please see Question 5.

The Host must submit the TOT Registration Application within 30 calendar days after commencing business. Upon registration, the TTC will issue to the Host a "Transient Occupancy Tax Registration Certificate." (Code Section 4.72.100 Operator-registration required)

9. When is payment of the TOT due to the TTC?

Payment is due on or before the last day of the month for the prior month's collection of TOT. The Host should submit to the TTC a completed TOT Monthly Computation Form, with the associated payment. (Code Section 4.72.130 Tax return required monthly)

10. Are there any exemptions from TOT?

Any guest who meets eligibility requirements for exemption pursuant to Code Section 4.72.060 Exemptions-Designated is not subject to the TOT. A guest is required to submit a completed TOT Designated Exemption Application Form to the Host. The Host is required to keep the TOT Designated Exemption Application Form on file. Below are examples of allowable exemptions:

1. Any Federal or State of California officer or employee, when on official business.
2. Any officer or employee of a foreign government who is exempt by a provision of Federal law or international treaty.

3. Any Red Cross, Amtrak, US Postal Service, Federal Credit Union or Insurance Company employee on official government business.

Persons who are employees of non-profit agencies (e.g., 501c(3) organizations, and religious institutions) are **not** exempt from the TOT.

11. Are guests who stay 31 days or longer exempt from the County's TOT?

Any person who has a written agreement with the Operator or Host, entered into within the first 30 days of the person's occupancy, which states the person will stay longer than 30 consecutive days, is exempt from the TOT for the first 30 days of the stay. To be entitled to the exemption, anyone who meets the above eligibility requirement is required to submit the completed Transient Occupancy Tax Over Thirty Day Stay Exemption Application Form to the Operator or Host.

12. How can a Host request a refund of the TOT he/she previously paid to the TTC?

The Host can request a refund of TOT that has been overpaid, paid more than once, or erroneously or illegally collected or received. The Host shall file a Transient Occupancy Tax Refund Claim Form with the TTC, stating the specific grounds and facts of the refund claim, within three years of the overpayment, double payment, or erroneous collection of the TOT. (Code Section 4.72.310 Refunds-Claim filing requirements)

If the TTC approves the Transient Occupancy Tax Refund Claim Form, the Host may apply the refund as a credit to subsequent TOT remittances to the TTC. The Host will receive a paid refund if it can be shown that the Host is no longer operating. (Code Section 4.72.330 Refunds-Paid to operator when)

13. Can a Host enter into an agreement with the online hosting platform to handle all the TOT responsibilities?

The Host should direct this question to the online hosting platform.

14. I wasn't aware of the TOT requirements, but I have been renting out my place. What should I do?

If you rented your property in the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County to a guest(s) who stayed 30 days or less, you are liable for past taxes. Not being aware of the TOT requirements does not relieve the Host from the obligation to collect and remit TOT. Please complete and submit the TOT Registration Application and TOT Monthly Computation Form with the associated payment to TTC.

15. Can I rent all or a portion of my space, such as a bedroom, through an online hosting platform if I am renting my apartment?

If you are not the owner of the property, you should consult the landlord, lessor, property manager, or the owner of the property to ensure you are in compliance with your rental agreement.

16. Whom can I call if I think there is unlicensed rental activity in my neighborhood?

You can report the activity to the TTC's Revenue and Enforcement Division Business License Unit at (213) 974-2011, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PT, or submit an email to businesslicense@ttc.lacounty.gov.

17. What if I still have questions?

For more information regarding TOT and Business License, please visit our website at <http://ttc.lacounty.gov/Othertaxes/TOT.htm> for TOT information and http://ttc.lacounty.gov/Proptax/BusLic_Need_BusLi.c.htm for Business License information.

You may also call the TTC's TOT Unit at (213) 893-7984 and/or the Revenue and Enforcement Division Business License Unit at (213) 974-2011, Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PT, or submit an email to tot@ttc.lacounty.gov or businesslicense@ttc.lacounty.gov.

Si desea obtener información adicional sobre este aviso o si necesita la información traducida en español, por favor llame al 1 (213) 893-7984