



Jefferson County

Department of Emergency Management

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vacation Rentals Reminded to Remain Closed During Stay Home, Stay Safe Order

To comply with the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order during the COVID-19 pandemic, owners of vacation rentals and Short-Term Rentals like Airbnb (rentals of 29 days or less) in Jefferson County are reminded they should not be renting to people traveling from outside the County, unless the traveler is supporting medical-related services at a nearby hospital or medical facility, or are traveling due to "essential" work in Jefferson County.

"Now is not the time for people from outside our area to be traveling to Port Townsend or Jefferson County to stay at a vacation rental," said Dr. Tom Locke, Jefferson County's Public Health Officer. "To avoid spreading the coronavirus, owners of vacation rentals in Jefferson County should not be renting to people from outside the area," he said. Many communities in WA are addressing Short Term Rentals in a response to the Governor's order, either temporarily prohibiting them entirely or limiting bookings during this time to protect individual communities from the spread of the coronavirus.

Dr. Tom Locke, in cooperation with the City of Port Townsend and Jefferson County Department of Emergency Management, is asking all home owners to remain at their primary residences and to cease booking Short Term Rental units to any out of town travelers at this time, unless those travelers are supporting medical related services at a nearby hospital or medical facility, or are traveling due to "essential" work in Jefferson County. Violations of this order may be reported to the Governor's office. Within the City of Port Townsend, where the City regulates Short Term Rentals, any violations of this temporary directive may result in the revocation of City permits.

Vacation rental platforms such as Airbnb.com and VRBO.com are implementing temporary policies addressing traveling concerns for both property owners and their travelers regarding COVID-19. You may find additional resources available to you at your specific vacation rental platform/website(s).

Dr. Locke asks owners of vacation rentals for their cooperation and understanding as the entire community teams together to create the safest and healthiest environment for all.

Governor Inslee's recent proclamation provided a link for Washingtonians who may be financially impacted by COVID-19. You may find more information and resources at: <https://coronavirus.wa.gov>.

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