

SSVR Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How many SSVR permits can City of Arcata issue?

- a. The City Council established a cap of 100 non-exempt permits that can be issued under Ordinance 1559. You can find a copy of the ordinance at the top of the SSVR page or under “Background.” We can issue an unlimited number of exempt permits that are not subject to the cap.

2. Has the City reached the cap? Is there a waitlist?

- a. We are currently below the cap and are accepting new non-exempt applications. We do not have a waitlist. If we reach the cap, this answer will be updated.

3. If I apply for a non-exempt permit while the City is under the cap, does that mean I’ll be issued a permit?

- a. There are a few factors that could affect whether you’ll be issued a non-exempt permit while we are under the cap. If you submit an incomplete application and/or do not pay the application fee, then you will not be issued a permit until the application is complete and has been approved by the Building and Planning Divisions. Also, if we receive enough complete applications and reach the cap before you complete your application, then you will be notified that we have reached the cap and what your options are at that point. Other potential issues could be the unit being located in a zone that does not allow for a short-term rental, the unit not receiving the required Building permits when it was built and/or the unit not being approved for occupancy, or the unit having active code complaints. There could be other factors that affect whether we are able to issue a permit for the unit you want to rent. Please reach out to the Planning and/or Building Divisions prior to applying if you have questions about potential issues with your unit.

4. What is the process for the waitlist if the City reaches the cap for non-exempt permits?

- a. When a waitlist is established, the OpenGov application will direct you to the waitlist when you select “None/Not Applicable” on step 4 of 11 “SSVR Cap Exemption Information.” You will need to complete the application and pay the current waitlist application fee. A notice that you have been added to the waitlist will be issued in the portal once the requirements have been met. Applicants are contacted based on when they were added to the waitlist. If you are contacted because we fall below the cap and you are next in line, you will have 72 hours to submit a complete application and pay the application fee. If the application is not completed within 72 hours, then you will be

placed at the bottom of the waitlist and we will contact the next person in line.

5. What are the exemptions?

- a. There are three (3) SSVR exemptions which are occasional use, owner occupied, and historic landmark. The occasional use exemption applies when the owner agrees that they will not rent for more than 29 nights within a fiscal year by electronically signing to the statement on the application. The owner occupied exemption applies when the owner's primary residence is on the same parcel as the short-term rental. This will need to be shown with either a copy of your driver's license showing the primary residence address OR homeowner's insurance showing owner occupied OR property tax showing homeowner's exemption. The historic landmark exemption applies when the short-term rental is in a historic landmark combining zone. This will be verified with internal records. If you have questions about the exemptions, you can email comdev@cityofarcata.org or call (707) 822-5955.

6. What is a short-term rental?

- a. Short-term is considered up to 29 consecutive nights at a time. 30 or more consecutive nights is considered long-term.

7. I have multiple units that I was to rent short-term on the same parcel. Do I only need one SSVR permit?

- a. No, you will need SSVR permits for each unit that you want to rent even if they are all on the same parcel. However, we only charge one application fee per parcel.

8. I have an active SSVR permit and now I want to rent another unit on the parcel. What do I need to do?

- a. You will need to apply for a new SSVR permit to rent another unit on the parcel. You will need to pay a new application fee even though you already have an active permit on the parcel. If you want to rent multiple units on the same parcel and you apply for the units at the same time, then you are only charged one fee. If your application for another unit on the parcel is approved, then you will only be charged one renewal fee for all the units you have permits for on the same parcel. The expiration date of your existing permit will be changed to the expiration date of your new permit so the expiration dates match.

9. I want to rent short-term, but I'm also thinking about renting long-term. What do I need to do?

- a. If you want to rent a unit short-term and long-term, then you will need to apply for a SSVR permit for the short-term renting and enroll in the

Residential Rental Inspection Program through the Building Division for the long-term renting. Please contact the Building Division for any long-term rental questions at (707) 822-5956. You can find more information about the program on the Residential Rental Inspection Program page on the City website located here: [Residential Rental Inspection Program | Arcata, CA](#).

10. Can I rent an ADU on my property as a short-term rental?

- a. There are restrictions for renting ADUs short-term within City limits depending on the year they were built and what standards they conform to. If you have questions, please email comdev@cityofarcata.org or call (707) 822-5955.

11. I've submitted a new SSVR application. What happens now?

- a. Once the application is reviewed, it will either be approved or a change request will be issued on the OpenGov record. If you received a change request, you can review the "How to Complete a SSVR Change Request in OpenGov" guide on the SSVR page on the City website located here: [Short-Stay and Vacation Rentals | Arcata, CA](#) under "OpenGov Guides." If the application has been approved, you will need to pay the new application fee. If you do not pay the fee within 30 days, a late fee of 20% of the new application fee will be added to the fee step in OpenGov. If you are applying for a new non-exempt permit because we are under the cap, please keep in mind that your spot is not secured until your application is complete and the fee has been paid.
- b. After the fee has been paid, the Building and Planning Divisions have 10 business days to approve or deny the application. If the divisions do not respond within 10 business days, the permit will be issued. If there are any concerns, either a reviewer from the division or the Community Development Administrative Specialist will contact you to request additional information.
- c. If the permit has been issued, you will be able to access it in the portal and print it out. You are not required to post the permit.
- d. If you have not done so already, please turn in the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) registration form that you uploaded with the SSVR application to the Finance Department. You can email it to finance@cityofarcata.org, bring it in person to City Hall, or mail it to 736 F St., Arcata CA 95521.

12. I submitted a new SSVR application, but it was denied. What do I do now?

- a. If your new SSVR application was denied, it is because your application was incomplete and/or you didn't pay the fee by the 30-day deadline. If you did not meet this deadline, then a late fee will be added to the fee step on the record. You will need to complete your application and/or pay the new

application fee and late fee before your application can be reviewed and approved. If you are applying for a non-exempt permit, your spot under the cap is not secured until you have completed all requirements and paid the fee.

13. How do I pay for my SSVR?

- a. You can pay with a credit card, e-check, physical check, or cash. Credit card and e-check payments can be made through the portal. Both options will include processing charges. The credit card charge is a percentage of the application fee and the e-check charge is a flat fee. You can also make a card payment over the phone or in person. E-check payments can only be made through the portal. Physical checks can be brought in person to City Hall or mailed to 736 F St., Arcata CA 95521. Cash payments need to be made at the Finance window and you will need to bring the form provided by the Community Development Department with you. If you would like to pay in cash, please reach out prior to coming in person by emailing comdev@cityofarcata.org, calling (707) 822-5955, or leaving a message on the fee step in OpenGov so we can provide you with the form to take to the Finance Department.

14. How do I pay for TOT?

- a. Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) needs to be paid quarterly to the Finance Department. Please reach out to the Finance Department with any questions related to paying for and submitting TOT returns. The return form can be found on the SSVR page and the Finance page on the City website located here: [Transient Occupancy Tax | Arcata, CA](#).
- b. There are instructions specifically for filling out the top section of the form on the SSVR page under “How to Fill Out Transient Occupancy Tax Return Forms for Short-Stay Vacation Rentals.” Please review this information prior to submitting TOT returns for your SSVR(s). Please also keep copies of the returns for your records.

15. Do I need to renew my SSVR permit?

- a. Yes, you are required to renew your permit annually. You can review the “How to Submit SSVR Renewals in OpenGov” guide on the SSVR page under “OpenGov Guides” if you have questions. You will need your current business license and your TOT records for renewal. It is highly recommended that you keep all your TOT returns for your renewal. However, there are other options if you did not keep the return forms. You can review common types of documentation on the SSVR Checklist on the SSVR page or you can start the renewal in OpenGov and you will see common types of proof in the

requirement descriptions at the end of the application. You will also need to pay a renewal fee.

16. I want to pay for my SSVR renewal, but I don't see the option in OpenGov. What do I do?

- a. If you do not see the option to pay for your SSVR in OpenGov, it could mean that you have not submitted your renewal or it has not been approved. Please make sure that your renewal has been submitted and that there is not an active change request on the record.

17. I've had the same SSVR permit number for years, but I noticed that I got a new permit number after it was in OpenGov. Do I have a new permit number now?

- a. Your permit number is the same as it was prior to the City transitioning to OpenGov. However, you do have an OpenGov record number that is different than the permit number. The original permit number will still appear on any documents that are issued in the portal. OpenGov automatically assigns record numbers to each record and the City cannot control that which is why you are seeing a different number. You can contact the Community Development Department at comdev@cityofarcata.org or (707) 822-5955 if you have questions about the difference between your permit number and your OpenGov record number.

18. How do I change the information on my renewal application?

- a. If any information has changed since your last renewal or original application, you will need to contact the Community Development Department at comdev@cityofarcata.org or (707) 822-5955.

19. I have a non-exempt permit and the renewal application says I need to provide proof of 30-night stays. How do I do that?

- a. The easiest way to show proof of 30-night stays is with your TOT returns from the previous fiscal year (July 1 – June 30, Quarters 1-4 on the forms). If you have one return from the previous fiscal year that lists at least 30 on line item B, then you only need to provide that one form. If you don't have any returns that have at least 30 on line item B, then you can use up to all four (4) forms to meet the requirement (Ex.: If each return has 10 on line item B, you could use three (3) forms to meet the requirement).
- b. Using your TOT return(s) meets the proof of 30-night stays requirement as well as the proof of TOT payment requirement. If you do not keep your TOT returns, you will need to submit different documentation for both requirements. You can find other examples of common forms of proof on the SSVR Checklist on the SSVR page or in the requirement descriptions at the end of the application.

20. I have an exempt permit and the renewal application is asking me for proof of rental history. What is that?

- a. If you have an exempt permit, you are not required to show proof of 30-night stays which is why the attachment says, “proof of rental history.” This is optional and you are not required to provide it. You only need to upload your business license and proof of TOT payment within the previous fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). If an attachment is required, it will end in “-REQUIRED.”

21. I have a SSVR permit, but I only rented the unit long-term within the previous fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Can I still renew my permit?

- a. Only short-term night stays (up to 29 consecutive nights at a time) count towards the 30-night stays requirement. If you have an exempt permit, you are not required to show proof of 30-night stays so you would be able to renew the permit. If you have a non-exempt permit, then you are required to show proof of 30-night stays so you would not be eligible for renewal. If you would like to keep your permit instead of reapplying, you could request to change the exemption status of your permit at the time of renewal. You could change the permit to an occasional use permit if you are not able to show proof of 30-night stays, but this would mean that you would only be allowed to rent for up to 29 short-term nights within the fiscal year. You can request to change your exemption status by starting your renewal and clicking the box that says, “I am requesting to change the exemption status of my permit” on step 4 of 11 “SSVR Cap Exemption Information.”

22. I changed my exemption status from non-exempt to exempt at the time of my last renewal, but now I want a non-exempt permit again. What do I need to do?

- a. If we are under the cap for non-exempt SSVRs, then you can request to change your exemption status back to non-exempt by starting your renewal and clicking the box that says, “I am requesting to change the exemption status of my permit” on step 4 of 11 “SSVR Cap Exemption Information.” If we have reached the cap of non-exempt permits, your request will be denied.

23. I submitted my renewal application without the requirements. What do I do now?

- a. You can review the “How to Add Attachments to a SSVR Record in OpenGov After Submission” guide on the SSVR page under “OpenGov Guides” to upload the requirements. If the application has been reviewed and a change request has been issued on the record, you can review the “How to Complete a SSVR Change Request in OpenGov” guide. All requirements will need to be met before payment can be made. Once the application has been approved, the option to pay will become available.

24. I have a family member or new property manager that I would like to complete my SSVR renewals. What do I need to do?

- a. You will need to fill out the Agent Authorization form on the SSVR page and email it to comdev@cityofarcata.org, bring it in person to City Hall, or mail it to 736 F St., Arcata CA 95521. Once the form is received, the person you have authorized will be added as the new applicant on the OpenGov record. If you would like to still have access to the record, you can ask the person you have authorized to add you as a guest account. They can review the “How to Add a Guest Account to a SSVR Record in OpenGov” guide on the SSVR page under “OpenGov Guides” to complete this.

25. I received an email about my SSVR renewal and the expiration date in the email from OpenGov is different than the expiration date on my permit. When does my permit expire?

- a. The SSVR permit expires on the date on the permit. The expiration date on the record is changed to 30 days prior to the expiration date on the permit that was issued. This is done because OpenGov sends out the final renewal notice on the day the permit expires. Changing the record expiration date to 30 days prior to the permit expiration date allows you to have time to renew the record after receiving the final notice. If the record is not renewed 30 days prior to the permit expiration date, then the record expiration date will be changed to the permit expiration date to allow you to still renew the record up until the expiration date. If you have any questions, you can leave a comment on the Update Renewal Notice Date step in OpenGov. You can also reach out by phone at (707) 822-5955 or email at comdev@cityofarcata.org.

26. I received a notice in OpenGov that my SSVR permit expired. What do I do now?

- a. If you did not renew your permit by your expiration date, then you can pay a late fee of 20% of the renewal fee which will give you a 30-day extension. If you do not submit the renewal and complete all the requirements within 30 days, you will not be allowed to renew the permit.
- b. If you wish to continue renting but you did not complete all the requirements within 30 days of your expiration date, then you will need to apply for a new permit. If you would like a non-exempt permit and we are below the cap, you are welcome to re-apply. If we have reached the cap, you can apply for the waitlist. If you qualify for an exemption, you can apply for an exempt permit even if we have reached the non-exempt cap. If you have questions about whether you qualify for an exemption, you can email comdev@cityofarcata.org or call (707) 822-5955.

- c. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please send an email to comdev@cityofarcata.org and your situation will be discussed with the Community Development Director. The Community Development Administrative Specialist will respond with a determination and to discuss possible solutions.

27. I'm selling my property that has a SSVR permit. Can the permit be transferred to the new owner?

- a. No, SSVR permits cannot transfer to new owners. The owner with an active permit who is selling the property will need to withdraw their permit by notifying the Community Development Department when their property is sold. If the new owner would like a SSVR permit, they will need to submit a new application.

28. I have a SSVR permit, but I'm thinking about renting another unit on the parcel or a unit on a different parcel that I own. Can the permit be transferred to another address?

- a. No, permits cannot be transferred to a different address. If you no longer want to rent a unit that you have a SSVR for, you will need to withdraw the permit or it will expire if you don't renew it by the expiration date. If you would like to rent a different unit, even if it's on the same parcel, then you will need to apply for a new permit.