

Circular regarding the New Tourism Accommodation Regulations, 2026

(Private)

Introduction

New regulations were announced with the intention to improve the quality of all types of tourism accommodation, including hotels, guest houses and short-term rental properties. These regulations are replacing and consolidating four existing subsidiary legislations targeting different types of tourist accommodations.

Public consultation was carried out in November 2025 with hundreds of submissions collected from various entities and the general public. The Tourism Accommodation Regulations, 2026, were published under the Malta Travel and Tourism Services Act (Cap. 409) with the reference Legal Notice 92 of 2026 (Subsidiary Legislation 409.24) on the 15th April 2026. The regulations shall come into effect on the 15th June 2026.

Short-let Rented Accommodation

Holiday Furnished Premises are now referred to as Short-Let Rented Accommodation and the conditions for their approval have seen drastic changes. The primary concern is again, the improvement of quality and the achievement of a better balance between the operators and the surrounding community.

In order to qualify for a license, a property is required to be finished to high standards. Only two persons per bedroom shall be allowed and no sofa beds shall be allowed in other parts of the property. The maximum number of beds shall not exceed 10 in apartments whilst properties with an independent entrance shall be allowed to host persons according to the number of bedrooms, as long as they are permitted by the Planning Authority. Underground or bedrooms at basement level shall not be acceptable. For the first time, minimum bedroom sizes have been introduced for double or single rooms. Properties are also expected to be air conditioned. But both these conditions are being introduced gradually. Existing properties have two years to adapt with air conditioning whilst bedroom sizes shall be introduced for properties that have been purchased after the coming into force of these regulations.

Properties shall also be required to submit a waste management plan, either with their new application or with their renewal of the license.

New licensees shall be required to inform the administrator of the condominium (if applicable) and such notification shall be sent to the MTA.

A sign shall also be fixed on the exterior on the property. MTA shall be issuing further information on the sign, especially on existing properties. The MTA wishes to keep these signs as uniform as possible and therefore shall be issuing specific instructions accordingly.

It is important to note that the new regulations stipulate that any person found operating a short-let rented accommodation without a valid license issued by the MTA shall be disqualified

to apply for three (3) years. The property found being operated shall also be disqualified from having a short-let license for the same period.

Resident Host

Host Family licenses are now known as Resident Hosts although the former name may be still used for marketing purposes. The legislation has not changed dramatically but an emphasis is being made on the use of properly permitted bedrooms.

STR Regulation

The two categories of Private Accommodation Short-let Rented Accommodation and Resident Hosts are also subject to the new Regulation (EU) 2024/1028 on Data Collection and Sharing relating to Short-term Accommodation Rental Services.

This EU Regulation is intended to facilitate the exchange of information and data between on-line booking platforms and member states. In Malta, the competent authority for collecting this information is the MTA. Booking data shall be exchanged on a regular basis and this will facilitate the collection of information of properties being used for short-term rentals.

This Regulation has introduced the requirement that every operator shall have a new Registration Number, which is different from the current License Number. This Number must be displayed on all advertisements, listings and promotional material relating to the licensed accommodation, including listings published on online short-term rental platforms. Licence holders are required to ensure that their Registration Number is correctly displayed and used at all times in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations.

This Registration Number shall also be displayed on the external sign that is intended to be fixed on the external side of the property.

Further information shall be provided on how one may obtain this Registration Number. Furthermore, an accompanying legal notice Data Collection and Sharing relating to Short-Term Accommodation Rental Services Regulations, 2026, is being drafted for approval and publication.

Processing of New Applications

In order to allow enough time to adapt to the new legislation and to allow for a proper distinction the MTA will not accept new applications from the 15th June until the 19th June.

The requirements to license short-let accommodation establishments are also being revised to reflect the new legislation and applicants are encouraged to follow the corporate website of the MTA (<https://mta.com.mt/>) to seek information. Applications shall be available on the website until a new system shall be able to provide a digital application gateway.

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