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**BREAKING**

## Ashe County takes additional steps to protect the public by restricting short term rentals

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File photo

In a preventive measure to slow the spread of the Novel Coronavirus and lessen its impact on our community, short-term rentals in Ashe County will be restricted, effective Thursday, March 26 at 5 p.m.

This new amendment to Ashe County's State of Emergency Declaration, announced last Sunday, was added in an effort to reduce non-essential travel to Ashe County by non-residents. The goal of the reduction in travel by non-residents to Ashe is to ultimately slow the speed of transmission locally and to reduce stress on our medical facilities, emergency services and other local resources.

"We want the community to know that we took great care in coming to this decision. We understand fully that this decision will impact some of our property owners financially, however this decision was made here in Ashe, by the people of Ashe, and with the best interest of our community at heart. Limiting short term rentals to protect our citizens from this pandemic is the right call for the moment and we will constantly evaluate the situation in order to lift this restriction the moment we can do so safely and responsibly," Ashe County Board of Commissioners Chairman Todd McNeill said.

These new restrictions include the towns of West Jefferson and Lansing and are applicable to hotels, motels, resorts, inns, guest houses, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, RV parks, vacation cabins and home rentals. Applicable to the amendment are rentals or leases by services like, Air-BNB, Homeaway, VRBO and other rental programs where leases are for less than 60 days in duration. These emergency measures, made in the interest of public health, supersede any previously-made reservations.

It is important to note that these closure do not apply if a lease or extended overnight accommodation is rented due to work here in Ashe County for business, medical, construction, emergency services or other related services. In this situation, the employee staying at the lodging facility should have their employer provide their work-related identification badge or a letter from the employer stating the purpose of the work to be performed in Ashe County and the expected duration of the stay.

"We know there is great community concern about this pandemic, but we also know that the citizens of Ashe care about their neighbors and will do anything to protect each other. Making these sacrifices now is how we protect our friends and neighbors going forward," Ashe County Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill said.

"These additional actions by our local government officials are one additional tool towards

lessening the impact of this virus on our community, especially now that NC has had its first recorded death attributed to COVID-19. We are grateful for their support of public health,” AppHealthCare Director Jennifer Greene added.

A copy of the original State of Emergency Declaration with the amended language including the restrictions on short-term rentals can be found [HERE](#).