Excerpt from the Aitkin County Zoning Ordinance:

[SECTION 17]

17.0 Vacation/Private Home Rental

The following standards apply to vacation/private homes renting for thirty (30) days or less except those located within Planned Unit Developments whose legal documents regulate unit rentals.

(1) The owner of a vacation/private home rental must apply for and receive an Interim Use Permit from the County. The initial Interim Use Permit will be valid for five (5) years in order to determine the compliance level of the owner with the conditions of approval. Subsequent renewals shall be for five (5) years or less. The County will establish fees for the application and renewal.

(2) The application for an Interim Use Permit shall include:

   a. All information required for a conditional use permit,
   b. Floor plan of the structure, including the number of bedrooms with dimensions and all other sleeping accommodations,
   c. A to-scale site plan which shows locations and dimensions of property lines, the structure intended for licensing, accessory structures, parking areas, shore recreational facilities (docking plan, fire pit area, swim beach, etc) and sewage treatment systems.
   d. Emergency contact information (police, fire, hospital, septic tank pumper) be posted in the home.
   e. Current compliance inspection on the septic system.
   f. Current water test from an accredited laboratory with test results for nitrate-nitrogen and coliform bacteria.
   g. Plan for garbage disposal.
   h. Applicant must submit a pet policy.
   i. In each bedroom and any room used for sleeping, show the dimensions of egress windows on the drawing and the style (double hung, sliding or casement).

(3) The occupancy of a vacation/private home rental shall be limited to no more than two (2) persons per bedroom plus two (2) additional persons per building, or no more than one (1) person for every seventy-five (75) gallons of water per day that the building subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) is designed to handle, whichever is less.

(4) The vacation/private home rental shall be connected to an approved SSTS. The SSTS shall be designed and constructed with a design flow of seventy-five (75) gallons of
water per person per day to handle the maximum number of guests for which the facility is permitted. The SSTS shall include a flow measuring device. Flow measurement readings and monitoring of the SSTS shall be recorded monthly and records shall be made available to the Department upon request. The use of holding tanks for vacation/private home rental units shall be prohibited.

(5) On-site parking shall be provided which is sufficient to accommodate the occupants of the vacation/private home rental. Public streets and septic systems may not be used for calculating parking by renters or guests. Parking areas must be setback a minimum distance of five (5) feet from the property lines.

(6) Attempting to obtain additional occupancy by use of recreational vehicles, tents, accessory structures or fish houses is prohibited.

(7) Rooms used for sleeping shall be provided with egress windows and smoke detectors in locations that comply with the Minnesota State Building Code or the requirements of the Department, whichever is stricter. Every room occupied for sleeping purposes by one person shall contain at least 70 square feet of usable floor space, and every room occupied for sleeping purposes by more than one person shall contain not less than 60 square feet of usable floor space for each occupant thereof.

(8) On premise advertising signs are prohibited.

(9) The owner shall provide a visual demarcation of the property lines.

(10) The owner shall keep a report, detailing use of the home by recording the full name, address, phone number and vehicle license number of guests using the property. A copy of the report shall be provided to the Department upon request.

(11) No more than two (2) vacation/private home rentals will be allowed on a parcel. More than two (2) vacation/private home rentals on the same parcel or on contiguous parcels under common ownership shall constitute a resort and must meet the standards set forth in Section 15 and/or 16 of this ordinance and Section 7 of the Aitkin County Shoreland Management Ordinance.

(12) The Planning Commission may impose conditions that will reduce the impacts of the proposed use on neighboring properties, public services, and nearby water bodies as well as other concerns including, but not limited to, public safety, and safety of guests. Said conditions may include but not be limited to – fencing or vegetative screening, native buffer along the shoreline, noise standards, duration of permit, restrictions as to the docking of watercraft, and number of guests.
(13) A vacation/private home rental shall be licensed by the County and shall meet the requirements of all statutes, rules, regulations, and ordinances including, but not limited to, Aitkin County’s Lodging Ordinance, if applicable.

(14) The Planning Commission may impose noise standards in order to assist in reducing potential impacts on neighboring properties.

(15) All vacation/private home rentals, operating prior to the effective date of these standards, shall be in compliance with this section by April 1, 2014.

17.01 Water Supply and Sewage Treatment:

Water Supply- Any public or private supply of water for domestic purposes must meet or exceed standards for water quality of the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Sewage Treatment- Any premises used for human occupancy must be provided with an adequate method of sewage treatment, as follows:

A. Publicly owned sewer system must be used where available.

B. All private sewage treatment systems must meet or exceed the Aitkin County Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Ordinance and subsequent amendments. A copy of which is hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this ordinance.
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Complete applications are due on or before the Application Deadline Day!

MEETINGS START AT 4:00 P.M.
Frequently Asked Questions: Online Permitting

Why did Aitkin County decide to go to online permitting? Aitkin County moved their permitting online in April of 2016. Online permitting gives applicant the flexibility of completing, paying, and submitting permits online. The online permit option allows an application to be submitted outside of regular business days/hours. The applicant is able to view the status of their permit and receive automatic email notifications when it has been reviewed and/or approved. This may expedite the process, as the applicant will not have to wait for their hard card permit to arrive in the mail.

Is it required to use the online permitting process? Yes, all permits are required to be submitted in this form. However, the Zoning Office is able to assist you either over the phone or in person at our office. This application process allows for faster and more accurate reporting to the State of MN and other government agencies, among other advantages.

How can I pay for my application? The online permitting system allows an applicant to pay online with a minimal convenience fee. If you are not interested in paying online, you still have the option of sending in or dropping off a check/cash. Check should be made payable to: Aitkin County Zoning. Please note, applications will not be considered complete until the full payment has been received. Incomplete applications are returned to the applicant.

What if I don't have a computer or a scanner? The online permitting program requires the applicant to create an account (email address required) in order to access the site and view the status of their application. Applicants are notified via email during each step of the application process. If you do not have a computer you will be required to use a public computer (i.e. the public library, etc.) If you are in need of assistance by the Zoning Office, please come prepared with an active email address, a site plan, and all other required information pertaining to your project.

How do I get started? Aitkin County's online permitting system link can be found on our Environmental Services department page on the Aitkin County website www.co.aitkin.mn.us and/or by entering the website directly at: https://pzpermit.co.aitkin.mn.us/index.php

How does the process work?

1. “Sign up” to create a login and password or “login” to use an existing account. Check your email to authorize the setup prior to starting your first application.
2. You will select the application type from the list of options. The applications are built to walk you through every step. Some have external links, examples, and detailed descriptions of what is required. Once an application is started it is placed in “incomplete” status. This status is viewable to the Zoning Staff; therefore, if you have questions at any point during your application you may call or come into the Office for assistance.
3. You will complete the required sections of the application, agree to the terms and conditions, and either make an online payment or set your payment method. The fees will be calculated within the application process. If you have questions on the fees, please call the Zoning office prior to “Finishing” the application.
4. Once the application is complete and you have clicked “finish” on the application, the application is sent to the Zoning staff. You will receive an email notification when the Zoning Office receives your application.
5. The Zoning Office will review your application and perform any necessary site visits prior to approving your application. You can view the status of the application at any time by scrolling to the bottom of the application online. Please note, MN Statute states an agency must approve or deny a request within 60 days, however; our office goal is 2 weeks from the date of receiving a completed application.
6. You will receive an email notification with the results of your permit application. The email will include a link to the permit card, which can be printed and posted at the project site until your hard card permit arrives in the mail. Permits are valid for one year from the date of issuance.

Questions?

Contact us at (218) 927-7342 or aitkinpz@co.aitkin.mn.us

This document is intended to assist in answering frequently asked questions about land use requirements in Aitkin County. Please note this guide is only a summary and not intended as a legal authority on specific land use requirements.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Contact Information

This section is gathering information for our office to use to contact the applicant and determine if the applicant is the property owner. Because the application is for a public hearing we require the landowner’s contact information; therefore, we ask if the applicant is the property owner.

This should be the name of the person that is completing the application and will be attending the public hearing.

This is the number we will call if we have questions.

This is the email that will receive all correspondence regarding the application.

This is the address that will be published on the Notice of Hearing and where all mail regarding the application will be sent.

If you are the property owner you will not be required to complete the Authorized Agent Form; however, if you are not the property owner you will be required to complete an authorization form.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Authorized Agent Form
If you selected “No” to the question “Are you the property owner?” (See Contact Information on the previous screen), then you will be required to complete the authorized agent form.
Step 1: click on the link to the Authorized Agent Form
Step 2: print the form and complete
Step 3: scan and save the form to your computer
Step 4: “choose file” to be attached
Step 5: enter the property owner’s email address
Step 6: proceed to next section

This is the link to print the form and complete it.

Once the form is completed and saved to your computer, you can attach the form by selecting “Choose file” here.

The property owner email address is required to ensure they receive all correspondences regarding the public hearing and application.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Project Location Search

This section is used to gather the property information and directions to the site. You are able to add multiple parcels to one application by using the blue (+) sign.

The driving directions are used by the Zoning Staff Inspector that will visit the site prior to the hearing, along with the Board Members. Unfortunately, using a GPS is not always accurate in our area; therefore specific driving directions are required.

Begin typing identifying parcel information in this box.

Once the parcel is shown select the blue (+) sign to add to application.

Enter specific driving directions here. (Include road names, distances, unique lot descriptions, etc.)
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Brief Narrative

This section is used to explain in detail your proposed use. You have the option to type out your brief narrative or attach a document if you have already prepared one. An example of a brief narrative would be:

*We are requesting an Interim Use Permit to operate a vacation rental at our lake home on Big Sandy. The capacity is 8 guests (4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms). Rentals will be occasional (2-4 times per year), seasonal, and for not less than one week in duration. We will offer a detailed guest information book which will be placed on the kitchen island prior to guests arriving. The guest information book will include emergency contact numbers, a copy of any conditions placed on the approved Interim Use Permit, local services and businesses, rental agreement, etc. Quiet hours will be from 10:00pm to 8:00am. We will advertise through VRBO.com. Our property care manager (who resides within 5 miles of the rental property) will perform a walk-through inspection before and after the rental with the guests.*
**Vacation/Private Home Rental: Floor Plan of Structure**

This section is used to show the floor plan of the structure to be used for rental, including dimensions of rooms, egress window style, location and dimensions, location of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. If the structure is multi-level, please include a floor plan for each level.

A link is provided with additional information on the MN Fire Code.

Select “Choose files” here to attach your floor plan. Select “Add another attachment” to add additional files.

This is the link to print the window worksheets. *(One sheet per bedroom)*

A link is provided with additional information on Carbon Monoxide Alarms.

Select “Choose files” here to attach your window worksheet. Select “Add another attachment” to add additional files.


**Vacation/Private Home Rental: Scaled Site Plan**
This section is used to show the to-scale site plan which shows locations and dimensions of property lines, the structure intended for licensing, accessory structures, parking areas, shore recreational facilities (docking plan, fire pit area, swim beach, etc.), well, and sewage treatment systems.

Select “Choose files” here to attach your already prepared site plan.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Emergency Contact Info

The Aitkin County Zoning Ordinance requires emergency contact information (police, fire, hospital, septic tank pumper) be posted in the home.

You are required as per the Zoning Ordinance to provide all emergency contact phone numbers with your application and post them in the home.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Septic Compliance Inspection

This section is used to show your septic system is in compliance and is sized appropriately for the proposed number of occupants. Occupancy is calculated based on One (1) person for every seventy-five (75) gallons of water per day that the building subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) is designed to handle. A certificate of installation for a new septic system is valid for five (5) years and a certificate of compliance on an existing septic system is valid for three (3) years. If you are in need of a compliance inspection, please contact a licensed SSTS provider.

Select “Choose file” here to attach your current compliance inspection.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Water Test Results

This section is used to provide a current (completed within the last 12 months) water test from an accredited laboratory with test results for nitrate-nitrogen and coliform bacteria. Aitkin County has a water testing laboratory. Please visit the Aitkin County Environmental Services website [www.co.aitkin.mn.us/departments/enviro-svcs/enviromentalSvcs.html](http://www.co.aitkin.mn.us/departments/enviro-svcs/enviromentalSvcs.html) for further information on water testing or contact (218) 927-7266 for inquiries on the sampling process.

Select “Choose file” here to attach your current water test.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Garbage Disposal Plan

This section is used to gather information regarding the garbage generated during the rental stay. An example would be:

Garbage within the unit is taken to the garage and sorted into garbage vs. recycling. The garbage and recycling containers are 30 gallon containers with tight fitting lids. The licensed hauler is Garrison Disposal and they collect the garbage on a weekly basis and recyclable materials are brought to the Aitkin County Recycling Facility after each rental stay.

Enter your text here – explain your garbage disposal plan in detail.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Pet Policy
This section is used to gather information regarding the pet policy.

Enter pet policy here. If you have already prepared one say “see attached” and attach below.

Select “Choose files” here to attach your already prepared pet policy.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Property Deed
This section is used to collect the property deed showing the legal description and owner of the property. If you are in need of a copy of your property deed, please contact the Aitkin County Recorder’s Office at (218) 927-7336 as we do not have access to their records.

Select “Choose files” here to attach your deed.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: “Other” Information
This section can be used to share any other information pertaining to your application. You have the option to type your information or attach other documents.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Terms and Conditions
This section shows the terms and conditions of the application. After you have thoroughly read them, you will check the box “I have read and agree to these Terms and Conditions”.

Check this box once you have read and agreed to the Terms and Conditions.
**Vacation/Private Home Rental: Invoice**
This section shows your fees and gives you an option for payment method:

- **Check to be mailed** - Please note, our Office will not review your application until payment is received. Please include your application number with your mailed check to ensure it is applied to the correct application.
- **Credit Card or Electronic Check** – minimal convenience fees will apply.

If you choose to pay online (credit/debit or electronic check) you will be directed to Value Payment System’s (VPS) website to enter your online payment information. The Zoning Office does not have access to the VPS website, so please contact them directly if you experience problems with your payment.
Vacation/Private Home Rental: Review
This section allows you to review your application prior to final submittal.

You may click on the link to view your application.

Once you are satisfied with your application you will select “Finish”.

Note: Once “Finish” is selected your application is placed in a locked status. If you have further changes to be made you must contact the Zoning Office in order to have your application placed back in “incomplete” status to allow changes.
SITE PLAN - LOT DIMENSIONS - EXAMPLE
For 209 Second St. NW, Aitkin, MN (Big Sandy Lake)

Area of Next Page is Scale 1 inch = 20 feet

Second Street NW

Wetland area

Building site detail next page

Driveway & parking
SITE PLAN – Enlarged Building Area - EXAMPLE
For 209 Second St. NW, Aitkin, MN (Big Sandy Lake)

- North property line
- 30 x 45 house with an 8x45 covered porch
- septic drainfield
- tank
- 24 x 36 Parking area
- 22 x 20 garage
- Deep well
- Ordinary High Water Level
- Big Sandy Lake
- South property line
- Vacant Lot to the South
MAIN LEVEL FLOOR PLAN
For 209 Second St. NW, Aitkin, MN (Big Sandy Lake)
- Overall building dimensions are 30 ft x 45 ft
- Total 1,350 sq ft with two bedrooms
- Bedrooms are each 12 ft x 17 ft (see window worksheet for window style and sizing)
- Each bedroom has one queen bed
- 4 hard-wired and interconnected combination smoke/carbon monoxide alarms
When you open your window, ONLY measure the OPEN area.

1) Check Window Height and Width

DOUBLE HUNG

SLIDING

CASEMENT

Is the clear openable height, \[ H \] at least 20 inches?
Yes \( X \) No

Is the clear openable width, \[ W \] at least 20 inches?
Yes \( X \) No

2) Check Window Opening Area (fill in the three blanks)

\[ H \times W = A \]

\[ 44 \times 48 = 1,920 \]

Is the clear openable area, \[ A \] at least 648 square inches?
Yes \( X \) No

3) Check the distance from the floor to the bottom of opening

Is the distance, \[ S \] from the floor to the finished sill (bottom of opening) 48 inches or less?
Yes \( X \) No

If you answered yes to all questions then the window should comply with the 2007 Minnesota State Fire Code.
For assistance: Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division (651) 201-7200; TTY: (651) 282-6555; firecode@state.mn.us

My example worksheet applies to both bedroom #1 and bedroom #2 windows, as they are all the same size and type of windows.
Effective March 1, 2018: Aitkin County will no longer invoice water test payments.

The water lab will be closed July 3rd and December 24th due to the 2018 holiday schedule.

Samples accepted **Mondays** and **Tuesdays** **between the hours of 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM**

**Daycare and Foster care samples only accepted on pre-scheduled drop off dates**

Samples must be in the sterile Whirl-Pak bag that is provided by Aitkin County and **delivered on ice**

Bacteria must be tested within **30** hours of sampling and Nitrates within **48** hours of sampling

Please note: If a personal check is written to pay for the test, results will not be released until the check clears, this may take up to 3 weeks or longer. Results will be released within 2-3 days for payments made online with a credit card, debit card, eCheck or cash. Minimal convenience fees will apply for online payments. Online payments can be made at the Planning and Zoning desk when sample is dropped off.

Collect sample the same day you are bringing it in. Please follow instructions on the back for collecting the water sample. Fill out the following information and return this sheet with the water sample.

Date sample was taken ____________________ Time Taken ______ AM / PM

Sample collected by __________________________ Sample Source ___________________________________________(ex. kitchen faucet, outdoor tap)

Analysis requested: ____ Coliform Bacteria/E. coli ____ Nitrate Nitrogen

Is this water test for a real estate transaction or bank loan? **Yes** or **No** Please Specify

Property Owner ___________________________ Phone __________________________

Property Address ____________________________________________

City ____________________________, MN Zip Code ____________________________

Email Address ____________________________________________ (Optional)

Mailing Address ____________________________________________ (if different)

Results to: ____ Property Address ____ Mailing Address ____ Realtor ____ Email Address

____ Financial Institution

Realtor or Financial Institution Name and Email or Fax number: ____________________________

__________________________

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY Date received: ______________ Time received: ______________ AM/PM

Receiving temperature: _____ °F On ice (circle): ____ YES or ____ NO Receiving Initials ______________

Analysis fee: ___________ Sampling fee: ___________ Paid: ___________ Internal Sample No ___________

NOTE: If sample DOES NOT meet acceptance criteria then document reason(s) based on conversation with customer or attach documentation.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTING DRINKING WATER SAMPLES

Use only the Whirlpack bag Aitkin County provides for collecting sample

- **$25** Bacteria water analysis fee (Coliform and E. coli)
- **$25** Nitrate water analysis fee
- **$50** minimum collection charge if Aitkin County collects the sample for you, then $50 per hour beyond 60 minutes travel time to and from the courthouse in Aitkin.

Daycare & Foster care samples – makes checks payable directly to AW Research, 2017 rate $38.

- **Nitrite** FHA and some lenders may require H2O testing for nitrite and lead.
- **Lead** Special sampling methods required. Call A.W. Research at 218-829-7974

1. Try to sample from primary drinking water tap or sampling point closest to the well. Remove aerator and o-rings on faucet if present. Turn on just the cold water and let run for 10 – 15 minutes before collecting sample.

2. Sterilize faucet. Many faucets have plastic parts; heat sterilizing can ruin these types of faucets. Isopropyl rubbing alcohol or a bleach and water solution (approximately one tablespoon bleach per gallon of water) can be used to sterilize the faucet. Immerse end of faucet for about one minute or spray sanitizing solution onto faucet spigot. Pre-packaged sterile isopropyl alcohol wipes can also be used.

3. If flaming to sterilize faucet, make sure it is metal. If using a candle (don’t use matches) then hold the flame under the end of the faucet for about one minute. If using a larger fire source such as a butane torch then sterilize for just a few seconds

4. **Tear off the top of the bag along the score line when the water is ready to be collected.** Once opened, handle the bag only by the white tabs or the ends of the wire twists. The bag lip should not be touched. Catch the water sample, being careful not to touch the bag to the faucet.

   
   **A. Opening:** Tear the top off at the scored line.
   
   **B. Separate the wires by pulling the tabs outward.**
   
   **C. Separate wires further by pulling the ends toward the center of bag.**
   
   **D. Filling and Closing:** Fill bag 2/3 to 3/4 full as shown.
   
   **E. Straighten wires by pulling on the ends of the wire.**
   
   **F. Whirl the bag 5 complete revolutions and twist the ends of the wire together 2-3 times.**

Bring H2O sample in the same day it is collected. **Once collected, sample should be immediately refrigerated or placed on ice for transporting.** Sample temperatures greater than 46°F will result in “estimated” value for nitrate. Warmer water temperatures may allow organisms to grow in the water giving a possible inaccurate reading. Sample temps < 28°F will not be accepted.