

A Centralized VRD Complaint Registry is Necessary

The current ordinance regarding short term rentals employs a “complaint driven” approach for enforcement of VRD regulations. Yet, there are no reliable data to permit understanding of either the number or nature of complaints about VRDs. At present, complaints may be directed to at least seven destinations: Newport Police, County Sheriff, Newport Fire Department, 911 Emergency, Newport Community Services, VRD owners and property managers. Owners and managers often do not acknowledge, let alone respond to, complaints and they may not keep records of complaints or their resolutions. Until recently, complaints could not be reported to the Newport Community Services Office because it was non-functional. The only available records ever publically made available were from Newport Police call-ins for noise and parking infractions, and many who have called the police to report a complaint, and later reviewed these records, consider these records inaccurate.

There is no communication or cross talk between complaint destinations. There are no records summarized and integrated. There is no evaluation and no feedback. A centralized, City-operated complaint registry should be put in place, preferably at a functional Community Services website, where complaints can be filed and acknowledged. Such a registry should include call-outs by law enforcement agencies as well as those legitimate complaints, about which many homeowners are reluctant to call the authorities but which nevertheless diminish residential quality of life; problems such as over-occupancy, unattended garbage, stray dogs, trespass, littering, landscape issues, and many forms of obnoxious behavior by intoxicated transient VRD renters. Only in this way can the City gain an assessment of substantiated and testimonial complaints to build a reliable database upon which to understand the issue and to devise enforcement measures. Support for such a registry, and for enforcement costs, should be provided, at least in part, by fees generated by VRD businesses.