

Warning to Airbnb Hosts: Renting During Pandemic Could Lead to Enforcement Action

Articles, COVID 19: Answers to Business Challenges April 9, 2020

Some Airbnb hosts have continued to offer accommodations for rent through the Airbnb website platform, despite the current coronavirus pandemic and stay-at-home orders. Many listings are advertising clean and disinfected quarters for those fleeing from larger metro areas and seeking a place to bunker down until stay-at-home orders are lifted. Pennsylvania officials responded with a letter stating that any Pennsylvania-based Airbnb host that continues to operate could be subject to enforcement actions.

The letter, attached here, is addressed to Airbnb, Inc.'s Senior Vice President for Global Policy and Communications. The letter states that Airbnb's are considered "non-life sustaining businesses" and therefore should be shut down pursuant to Governor Wolf's executive order. The letter requests that Airbnb advise its hosts to "cease all rental activity until further notice."

Pennsylvania-based Airbnb hosts should heed this warning and understand that they are risking being subject to an enforcement action if they continue to operate during this time.

For additional information on Airbnb, please contact Katherine Janocsko. Katherine's writing on regulation of Airbnb's has been cited by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. As part of her practice, she advises both Airbnb hosts and municipalities regarding the legal issues surrounding short term rentals and Airbnb's.