

CITY OF SASKATOON
COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
GUIDELINES FOR NEW SECONDARY SUITES

JULY 2010

These guidelines apply:

- when upgrading is required to legalize an existing suite that was built after **January 1, 1999**
- when developing a new secondary suite in an existing one unit dwelling
- when developing a new secondary suite in a new one unit dwelling

NOTE 1: Contact Zoning Standards Branch for information related to “Secondary Suites” under Zoning Bylaw #8770).

NOTE 2: One set of drawings will be required upon application for a building permit. The drawings must be complete, with a site plan as well as floor plans for **all levels** in the building. The drawings must identify the use of all rooms, and show the location of all cupboards, stoves, refrigerators, and all plumbing fixtures. Type and location of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms must be identified.

In regard to the **proposed suite**, dimensioned drawings are required showing the size of all rooms, stair dimensions, and location and size of new and existing windows. A cross section showing room heights and stair headroom must be included. Please specify other information required by this guideline.

These guidelines reflect and summarize some of the key requirements from the 2005 National Building Code.

1. A minimum room height of 2.1m is required (9.5.3., Table 9.5.3.1).
2. At least one window in each bedroom shall provide unobstructed openings with areas not less than 0.35m² and with no dimension less than 380mm (9.7.1.2. and 9.7.1.3).
3. Combustion air is required into the furnace room as required for the appliances. Fire dampers may be required depending on the number of furnaces used and the location of the ducts.
4. One dwelling unit must be separated from another (vertically and horizontally) by a ¾ hour fire separation.
5. Each unit shall be separated from other spaces with a minimum sound transmission class rating of 50 (9.11.2).
6. a) Each dwelling unit must have one of the following:
 - i) one separate exit at grade level;
 - ii) one separate and one common exit; or,
 - iii) two common exits (9.9.8.).
- b) Any common exit must be separated from the dwelling units by a ¾ hour fire separation. An example would be a minimum 13mm fireguard drywall on both sides of the wall (9.9.4.2.).

- c) Any stairway to a basement that requires a door at the bottom must also have a landing with its dimensions no less than the width of the stairs (9.8.6.2.).

NOTE: In cases where a secondary suite is being upgraded or developed in an “existing” one unit dwelling a casement window having an unobstructed opening not less than 1100mm high by 550mm wide with a sill height of not more than 900mm above the inside floor or landing may be considered as the separate exit when the suite is sharing a common exit. (3.4.7.3)

- 7. Doors and door frames from shared exits into dwelling units shall have a 20 minute fire resistance rating and be equipped with a latch and closer.
- 8. Plastic pipe may be used for the plumbing system provided it is used in conformance with the provisions of 9.10.9.7. of the National Building Code as follows:
 - a) plastic pipe may be used on both sides of the fire separation where “Firestops” (donuts) are used on the pipe where the pipe penetrates the fire separation (9.10.9.7.(2)); or,
 - b) plastic pipe is only used on one side of a vertical or horizontal fire separation (9.10.9.7.(5)(6)).
- 9.. Bathrooms require an exhaust fan vented to the outdoors.
- 10. Hard wired smoke alarms shall be installed in each individual suite and shall be on separate electrical circuits (9.10.18.). If a suite has more than one level interconnected smoke alarms are required on each level. In the case of a basement suite, a smoke alarm is required at the top of the exit stairwell.
- 11. Carbon Monoxide Alarms shall be installed, as per NBC 9.32.3.8 and 9.32.3.9, at or near the ceiling and within 5 meters of each bedroom door.
- 12. At least one bathroom door shall be a minimum of 760mm wide (9.6.3.3).
- 13. Air cannot be vented from one dwelling unit to another (6.2.3.9). For example, if a forced air heating system is used then separate furnaces are required for each dwelling unit.
- 14. The ventilation requirements of 2005 NBC 9.32 **may** apply.

Pertinent 2005 National Building Code articles are in brackets.

5.30 Secondary Suites

- (1) Secondary suites shall conform to the following regulations:
 - (a) Secondary suites may be located only in detached one unit dwellings and shall occupy no more than 40% of the gross floor area of a dwelling, including the area of the basement;
 - (b) In order to accommodate a secondary suite, the principal building must have a gross floor area, including the area of the basement, of at least 100m²;
 - (c) The maximum size of a secondary suite shall be 65m²;
 - (d) No more than one secondary suite may be located in any detached one unit dwelling;
 - (e) The floor area occupied by a secondary suite shall be considered as part of the principal building;
 - (f) A secondary suite shall contain no more than two bedrooms;
 - (g) No more than three persons may occupy a secondary suite;
 - (h) One off-street parking space is required for a secondary suite in addition to at least one off-street parking space for the principal dwelling. The parking space for the principal dwelling may be located in a required front yard. The parking space required for the secondary suite shall not be located in a required front yard unless the subject site has no access to a rear lane, and shall be paved, sited and screened to the satisfaction of the Development Officer;
 - (i) Where a secondary suite has an entrance which is separate from that of the principal dwelling, the entrance may only be located on a side or rear wall of the principal dwelling;
 - (j) Secondary suites shall comply with all relevant requirements of the National Building Code, or equivalencies as may be established by the Development Officer, and the Property Maintenance and Nuisance Abatement Bylaw, No. 8175.