

## **NEW SECONDARY SUITES**

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### **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 Development Services for information related to “Secondary Suites” under Zoning Bylaw No. 8770. Secondary Suites information can also be viewed online under Section 5.30 of the Zoning Bylaw.

**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 2010 National Building Code (NBC).**

1. A minimum room height of 1.95 m (6'-4") [NBC 9.5.3.1.(2)] is required and 1.85 m (6') under beams and ductwork [NBC 9.5.3.1. (3)].
2. At least one window in each bedroom shall provide an unobstructed opening with an area of not less than 0.35m<sup>2</sup> (3.8 sq ft) and with no dimension less than 380 mm (15") (NBC 9.9.10.).
3. Each dwelling unit must be separated from the other (vertically and horizontally) by a smoke tight barrier of not less than 12.7mm (1/2") drywall [NBC 9.10.9.14. (4) and construction that provides a minimum sound transmission class (STC) rating of 43 (NBC 9.11.2.1.(2)(b)]. This includes the ceiling of a common furnace room [NBC 9.10.10.4(2)(b)].
4. Sound Control: An STC rating of 43 can be provided with the following construction:
  - a) The floor joist spaces must be filled with sound-absorbing material of not less than 150 mm (6") thickness.
  - b) The stud spaces must be filled with sound-absorbing material.
  - c) Resilient channels (sound bars) must be installed at 400 mm (16") or 600 mm (24") spacing on one side of each wall and on the underside of the floor joists [NBC 9.11.2.1(2)].

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5. Each secondary suite must have at least one of the following:
  - a) One separate exit, or
  - b) One common exit at grade level where the principal dwelling unit has a separate exit.
    - i. Any common exit must be separated from the dwelling units by a smoke tight barrier not less than 12.7mm (1/2") drywall [NBC 9.9.4.2.(2)].
    - ii. 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 (NBC 9.8.6.2. & 9.8.6.3).
6. Doors from shared exits into dwelling units shall be a minimum 45mm (1.8") thick solid core and be equipped with a latch and self-closing device [NBC 9.10.9.3.(2)].
7. Plastic pipe may be used for the plumbing system provided it is used in conformance with the provisions of NBC 9.10.9.2. Plastic pipe used on both sides of the smoke tight barrier must be tight fitting and sealed at all smoke tight barrier penetrations.
8. Bathrooms require an exhaust fan vented to the outdoors (See NBC 9.32 for requirements).
9. Hard wired smoke alarms shall be installed and interconnected between each individual suite (NBC 9.10.19). Interconnected smoke alarms are required on each level. Each bedroom requires a smoke alarm.
10. Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed, as per NBC 9.32.3.9, at or near the ceilings and within 5 m (15') of each bedroom door. All carbon monoxide alarms installed in the house must be interconnected.
11. At least one bathroom doorway shall be constructed to accommodate a door not less than 760 mm (30") wide [NBC 9.5.5.3. (2)].
12. Air cannot be vented from one dwelling unit to another. For example, if a forced air heating system is used then separate furnaces are required for each dwelling unit.
13. The ventilation requirements of Section 9.32 as well as the heating and air conditioning requirements of Section 9.33 shall apply (a ventilation design sheet is required).

*Pertinent 2010 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 100m<sup>2</sup>;
  - (c) The maximum size of a secondary suite shall be 65m<sup>2</sup>;
  - (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.