



Secondary Suites

What is a Secondary Suite?

It is a self-contained dwelling, built within a single detached home, providing accommodation based on rental periods of one month or more.

Can I Have a Secondary Suite?

A secondary suite is permitted in single detached homes in the RDCO's residential zones, however Joe Rich residents who wish to develop a secondary suite must apply to [amend their property's land use designation](#).

It is important to note that it may not be feasible to develop secondary suites on all properties. Owners must apply for a Building Permit to ensure adequate site servicing and building code compliance can be achieved. Site-specific constraints may mean that it will not be feasible to develop a suite on all lots.

Note:

- A suite is not permitted if an accessory home exists on the property.
- Suites may not be used for short-term rentals.
- A bed and breakfast is not permitted on properties with secondary suite.

Building Permit Requirements

Proposals to add a suite to an existing single-family dwelling, or new builds that incorporate a suite are subject to RDCO Building Permit Requirements. A \$520 Building permit application fee +1.2% of the total construction cost is required.

Other application costs may include:

- Costs associated with determining whether your onsite wastewater disposal system and water supply is suitably designed for an additional dwelling unit. Contact a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP)

Secondary Suite Design Requirements

A secondary suite must;

- Be within a single detached house and not be connected by a breezeway or carport.
- Be a self-contained unit within the primary dwelling that has its own separate kitchen, sleeping and bathing facilities.
- Have a gross floor area of less than 100m² (1,076sq.ft.) & <75% the area of the house.
- Have one dedicated parking space that is accessible via a driveway with a maximum gradient of <12%.
- Comply with BC Building Code requirements.
- Be able to meet water supply and wastewater servicing requirements as defined in section 3.26

Options for Property Owners With Unpermitted Suites...

1. Legalize the Suite

Apply for a Building Permit (it is advised that you obtain the services of an architect or contractor to determine what will be required to achieve BC Building Code compliance).

2. Decommission the Illegal Suite

Apply for a Building Permit which may require:

- The removal of the exhaust fans and applicable wiring, including any plugs, switches and breakers (Technical Safety BC confirmation of removal required).
- Additional items may need to be addressed as determined by the Building Inspector.

A decommissioned suite would ensure the entire building is free-flowing and interconnected. This means that there are to be no internal locking doors that could be used to divide the building into separate portions and that all levels of the single family dwelling area are to be interconnected by an internal free-flowing staircase.

For more information contact RDCO Inspection Services:

Phone: (250) 469-6211

Email: inspection@rdco.com



Building Permit Construction Requirements

1. A building permit is required for the creation of a secondary suite.
2. It is the owner's responsibility to contact their local water district and Fortis BC prior to construction of a secondary suite to determine if any additional utility costs may be applicable.
3. It is the owners' responsibility to obtain confirmation from a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) that the existing sewage disposal system can accommodate the suite.
4. The suite address is to be prominently displayed at the front of the premises clearly identifying where the access to the suite occurs.
5. Smoke alarms shall be hard wired for power and must be interconnected through hard-wire (or wireless) in dwelling and common space.
6. Carbon monoxide (CO) alarms conforming to CAN/CSA-6.19 are to be installed if the building contains a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage. The CO alarms shall be hard wired for power, must be interconnected through hard-wire or wireless in each unit.
7. Every bedroom shall have at least one outside window or exterior door openable from the inside. The window shall provide an unobstructed opening of not less than 0.35m² (3.75 ft²) in area with no dimension less than 380mm (15") - Unless sprinkler system installed.
8. Fire separations for exits shall conform to BCBC 2024 article 9.9.4.2
9. Heating system must be separately controlled by the dwelling unit it serves.
10. Ventilation requirements as per current edition of BCBC.
11. Fire and sound separations are required. Refer to 2024 BCBC 9.10 & 9.11
12. Refer to RDCO suite construction building code guide.

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