



CITY OF COURTENAY
Building Division
830 Cliffe Avenue
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7
Tel: 250-703-4862 Email: building@courtenay.ca

Requirements For Secondary Suites

“Secondary Suite” means a *dwelling unit* which is accessory to the principle use being made of the lot upon which the secondary suite is located:

- (a) having a total floor space of not more than 90m² in area,
- (b) having a floor space less than 40% of the habitable floor space of the building;
- (c) located within a building of residential occupancy containing only one other dwelling unit; and
- (d) located within and a part of a building that is classified as a single real estate entity.

SECONDARY SUITE CRITERIA

The following criteria must be met in order for the City of Courtenay to issue a permit for secondary suite:

- Does the property meet the requirements of *Zoning Bylaw No. 2500, 2007* to allow a secondary suite? If not, you may make an application to have the property rezoned to allow a secondary suite, see “Guide to Rezoning” below.
- Does the subject property meet schedule 7 A – Required Number of off-Street Parking Spaces of *Zoning Bylaw No. 2500, 2007*?
- Does the subject property meet the Secondary Suite Building Code Requirements? You must make an application, be issued a building permit and have passed an occupancy inspection before the suite can be considered legal and habitable.

GUIDE TO REZONING – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSIONS

Prior to submitting an application for rezoning, you are advised to discuss the proposal, including specific application requirements and required fees with both the Planning and Building Divisions. The Zoning Bylaw amendment must be adopted by Council prior to the building permit application being submitted to the City.

An application to amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for a secondary suite will require the following items:

- Zoning Amendment (Development) Application Form
- Zoning Amendment Application fee
- Written summary, including a description of the proposed amendment and the reasons/rational for the amendment
- Legal description from and copy of Certificate of Title
- Site Plan showing available parking spaces (3 required spaces a minimum of 2.75m x 5.5m each)
- Floor plan demonstrating the calculation of floor area (suite must not exceed 90m² or 40% of the habitable floor space of the building)
- Pictures of the existing single family dwelling (include front, side and rear of building)

SECONDARY SUITE APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS FOR BUILDING PERMIT

- Building Permit Application (please see the digital Building Permit Application Procedure Handout)
- Legal Description and copy of Certificate of Title (Title certificates are only valid thirty (30) days from when they are downloaded from Land Titles; City Staff are able to “pull” title for your application, a charge of \$12.00 will be applied when your application is submitted to the Building Division).
- One digital set of plans showing all the required information:
 - Site plan showing available parking spaces (3 required spaces a minimum of 2.75m x 5.5m each)
 - Floor plan demonstrating the calculation of floor area (suite must not exceed 90m² or 40% of the habitable floor space of the building)
 - Floor plan indicating fire separation, location and construction details, door fire ratings, window sizes, door sizes, ceiling heights (if under 2.0m), use of rooms, building elevations (if adding to the building) and any other aspects of construction to determine compliance with BC Building Code

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All applications for a secondary suite are reviewed by Planning and Development Engineering as well as the Building Division. Development Engineering reviews applications to assess whether there are existing services (sanitary sewer, water and storm) as well as that each building has appropriate inspection chambers and water meter setters (as required). If upgrades to services are required, those costs will be determined by the Development Engineering Technologist and will be included in the cost of the building permit.

When your permit is complete, you will need to request addressing for your secondary suite. Please forward any requests for addressing by email to building@courtenay.ca.

Electrical permits are managed by the BC Safety Authority, 1-866-566-7233. Please contact them directly for application information and to book any applicable inspections.

DECOMMISSIONING SECONDARY SUITES

The first step is to make an application to the Building Department for a permit: please see the digital Building Permit Application Procedure handout and email building@courtenay.ca with the Civic Address for an individualized upload link.

- Permanently remove cooking facilities; the stove must be removed from the dwelling unit. Gas lines must be capped or removed and/or the 220v electric outlet and cable into panel removed. No microwave, hotplate, toaster oven or similar cooking appliances are permitted.
- Complete a *Statutory Declaration* confirming that the suite has been removed from the property and will not be occupied or rented as a secondary suite.

Key BC Building Code Requirements to be Considered when Designing a Secondary Suite

Fire Separation of Residential Suites:

Revisions to the 2018 Building Code (BCBC) associate the smoke alarms type, location, and interconnection with the requirements for type of fire and sound separations required. The code references have been combined below to avoid repetition.

In a house with a secondary suite, dwelling units shall be protected from each other and from ancillary spaces and common spaces by one of the methods described below:

- 1) By a fire separation having a fire-resistance rating not less than 15 min when all smoke alarms within the house and secondary suite are of photo-electric type and interconnected so that the actuation of any one smoke alarm causes all smoke alarms within the house with a secondary suite including their common spaces to sound. Where a 15 minute fire separation is permitted, it is permitted to use
 - a) construction having:
 - i) joist spaces filled with sound-absorbing material of not less than 150mm nominal thickness,
 - ii) stud spaces filled with sound-absorbing material,
 - iii) resilient channel on one side of the separation spaced 400 or 600mm o.c., and
 - iv) not less than 12.7mm thick gypsum board on ceilings and on both sides of walls
- 2) By a fire separation having a fire-resistance rating not less than 30 min when additional smoke alarms of photo-electric type are installed in each dwelling unit and common space and are interconnected so that the actuation of one smoke alarm will cause the additional smoke alarms in the other dwelling unit and common spaces to sound. Where a minimum fire-resistance rating of 30 min is permitted, it is permitted to use construction having:
 - a) joist spaces filled with
 - i) preformed insulation of rock or slag fibres conforming to CAN/ULC-S702, "Mineral Fibre Thermal Insulation for Buildings," having a mass per unit area of not less than 1.22 kg/m² of floor surface, or
 - ii) wet-blown cellulose fibres conforming to CAN/ULC-S703, "Cellulose Fibre Insulation for Buildings," having a density of not less than 50 kg/m³ to a minimum depth of 90 mm on the underside of the subfloor and the sides of the structural members,
 - b) stud spaces of
 - i) non-loadbearing assemblies filled with preformed insulation of glass fibres conforming to CAN/ULC-S702, "Mineral Fibre Thermal Insulation for Buildings," having a mass per unit area of not less than 0.6 kg/m² of wall surface, and
 - ii) loadbearing assemblies filled with preformed insulation of rock or slag fibres conforming to CAN/ULC-S702, "Mineral Fibre Thermal Insulation for Buildings," having a mass per unit area of not less than 1.22 kg/m² of wall surface, or filled

with insulation of cellulose fibres conforming to CAN/ULC-S703, "Cellulose Fibre Insulation for Buildings," having a density of not less than 50 kg/m³,

- c) resilient channel on one side of the fire separation spaced 400 or 600 mm o.c., and
- d) not less than 12.7 mm thick gypsum board on ceilings and on both sides of walls.

- 3) By a fire separation having a fire-resistance rating not less than 45 min, when smoke alarms are not installed and interconnected as described above
- 4) By a fire separation that is not required to have a fire-resistance rating if the building is sprinklered.

Doors in fire separations:

Doors in a fire separation with a required fire-resistance rating of 45 minutes or less shall have a 20 minute fire resistance rating or be a solid core wood door at least 45mm thick. Doors in fire separations are required to be installed in a wood frame not less than 38 mm thick, be equipped with a self-closing device and have a clearance underneath the door of not more than 6mm.

Protection from Airborne Noise:

Each dwelling unit shall be separated from every other space in the house in which noise may be transmitted by construction as described above in the requirements for 15 or 30 minute fire separations or by construction providing an STC (Sound Transmission Class) rating of not less than 43, or a separating assembly and adjoining constructions, which together provide an ASTC (Apparent Sound Transmission Class) rating of not less than 40.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms:

Where a house with a secondary suite contains a storage garage or is served by a fuel-burning appliance, carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed either inside each bedroom, or if outside, within 5m of each bedroom door, measured following corridors and doorways. Where CO alarms are installed in a house with a secondary suite, including their common spaces, the CO alarms shall be interconnected so that the actuation of any one CO alarm causes all CO alarms to sound

Safe Exiting – the secondary suite must have an exit door, directly to the exterior with a protected path of travel, or a fire rated common egress area. The exit door must be of exterior quality (rated), with a deadbolt and door viewer (or tempered glazing), that swings on a vertical axis (sliding patio doors are not permitted for a primary exit).

Bedroom Windows – all bedrooms are required to have an opening window with a minimum clear, unobstructed opening area of 0.35 m² (3.77 ft²) with no dimension less than 380 mm (15") unless the building is sprinklered.

Heating Systems – the secondary suite must be equipped with an independent heating system, no shared ducting between dwellings is permitted to prevent the migration of smoke between dwellings during a fire; unless designed to prevent the circulation of smoke between dwellings.

Ventilation – an exhaust fan vented to the exterior shall be installed in each kitchen and bathroom. Each secondary suite is required to provide a principal exhaust fan that operates continuously with ducted make-up air vents in each bedroom and at least one common area.

This information is to be used as a guide only and the City of Courtenay holds no responsibility for its accuracy. Please ensure that you consult the current edition of the British Columbia Building Code (BCBC) for the most accurate and current information.