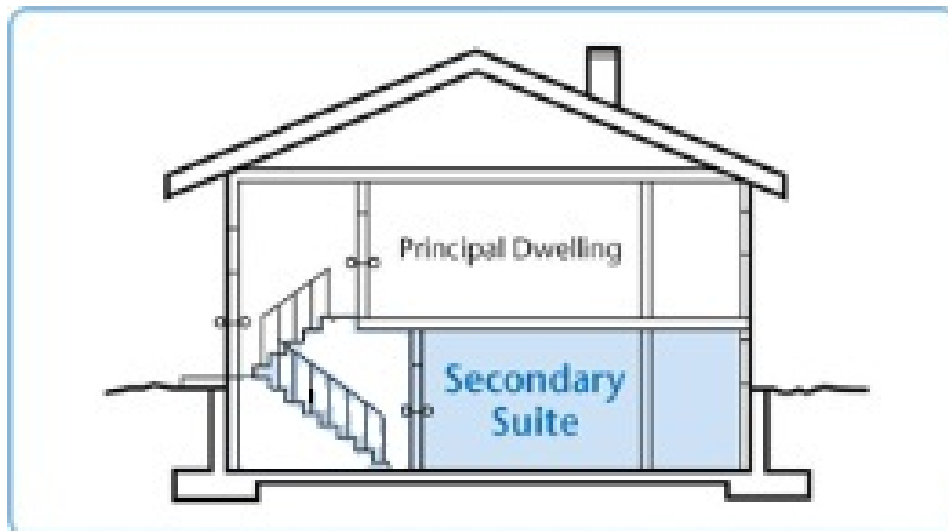




The Town of View Royal Guide to New Secondary Suites



This guide has been prepared to assist you in ensuring your secondary suite conforms to the requirements of the BC Building Code and the Town of View Royal Zoning Bylaw No. 900, 2014.

**THIS GUIDE IS FOR REFERENCE ONLY. IT DOES NOT REPLACE
BYLAWS OR OTHER LEGISLATION**

What is a Secondary Suite?

“Secondary Suite” means a secondary and subordinate *dwelling unit* that is entirely contained within, and is subordinate to, a *detached residential building* in accordance with Section 4.1 of this bylaw.

[\(View](#)

[Royal Zoning Bylaw No. 900, 2014\)](#)

What are the requirements for a Secondary Suite?

The Town of View Royal Land Use Bylaw establishes that following requirements for a property to have a suite:

- Meet the proper zoning requirements;
- The lot must be a minimum of 600 square meters;
- The suite is limited to 90 square meters or 40% of the floor area of the building, whichever is less. Measurements are taken from the midpoint of the wall that joins the suite with the principle dwelling;
- The owner must occupy either the suite or the principle dwelling;
- A Secondary Suite can only be located in the principle dwelling;
- The owner of every building wishing to use the building for a permitted secondary suite use must obtain an annual secondary suite permit in accordance with *Secondary Suite Bylaw No. 601, 2005*;
- The Building Inspector or Bylaw Enforcement Officer may conduct inspections for the purposes of this Section;
- Three **off street** parking spaces must be provided, but may not exceed 50 square meters in the front yard, and must meet the requirements set out in *Zoning Bylaw No. 900, 2014*.
- Only certain businesses can be operated in conjunction with a Secondary Suite. Please see a staff member for qualifying interests.

In addition to the requirements of the Zoning Bylaw, the suite must also meet the requirements of the British Columbia Building Code (Section 9.36 as well as clauses referred to from Section 9.36). The most common requirements of the Building Code are briefly explained below. Upon inspection, further Building Code requirements may be found. These will be explained to you at that time.

Fire Safety:

In order to restrict the spread of fire and smoke, and to ensure the occupants a safe exit from the building in an emergency situation, a Fire Separation must separate the Suite from the balance of the house. A Fire Separation is a construction assembly that acts as a barrier against the spread of fire. Wall and floor systems that are shared by both the suite and the remainder of the house must be separated by a fire separation with a fire resistance rating of 45 minutes. The fire resistance rating can be reduced to 30 minutes when additional interconnected, hard wired “photoelectric” smoke alarms are installed in addition to your existing ionization alarm system.

To achieve a 45 min. fire resistance rating for walls, one layer of 5/8" “Type X” drywall on each side of the wall is required.

To achieve a 45 min. fire resistance rating for ceilings, one layer of 5/8" “Type X” drywall is required.

To achieve a 30 min. fire resistance rating for walls, one layer of 1/2" regular drywall on each side of the wall is required.

To achieve a 30 min. fire resistance rating for ceilings, one layer of 1/2" "Type X" drywall or two layers of 1/2" regular drywall is required or one layer of 5/8" regular drywall.

Note – "Type X" is a fire resistant type of drywall, not a brand name

Doors installed in walls that require a fire resistance rating must be a 45 mm solid core wood door mounted in a wood frame not less than 38 mm in thickness, or have a fire protection rating of 20 minutes. The door must have a maximum clearance of 6mm on the bottom and 3 mm on the top and sides. All other openings in a fire separation are required to be tightly fitted.

Safe Exiting:

Doors: The Secondary Suite and the main house must each have at least one exit door that is at least 800 mm wide and 1980mm high. The door must be equipped with an approved deadbolt lock. The door must also have a door viewer unless there is transparent window in the door or in a sidelight. The doors must swing inward.

Shared Egress Facilities: Exit corridors, stairways or exterior passageways shared by the Suite and the principle dwelling, must be at least 865 mm wide. It must be possible to travel from the Suite door in opposite directions to two separate exits; a proper sized window can be included as an exit (see below). Please note that special precautions must be taken if an exit from one unit passes a window from the other unit.

Bedroom Windows: Each bedroom must have a window, which opens to the outside, to provide a second means of escape in case of fire. The window opening must be a minimum of .35 square meters in area with no dimension less than 380mm. The window must be able to open from the inside without any special tools or knowledge. Security bars are not permitted. For openings into a window well, please see 9.7.1.3 of the BC Building Code or speak with a Building Official.

Minimum Height Requirement:

9.36.2 of the British Columbia Building Code requires the minimum height of a Secondary Suite to be 2 meters.

Smoke Alarms:

Smoke alarms are required in every bedroom, in a location between the bedrooms and the remainder of the unit and within the principle dwelling. They are to be hard-wired and interconnected. Note: See Fire Safety above for possible other requirements.

Interconnected Mechanical Systems:

No forced air or ducted heating systems are permitted between the suite and the principle dwelling unless the proper fire rated dampers are in place. The most common practice is to heat the suite with electric baseboard heaters. Also to note, central vacuum systems are not allowed to be interconnected between the units.

Ventilation:

The BC Building Code requires that each bathroom and kitchen be equipped with an exhaust fan vented to the exterior. Also note that a fan must be intermittent, for two 4-hour periods daily or run continuously. Generally a bathroom that is located furthest from the bedrooms is an ideal place for it. A fresh air intake is required if the Suite contains any fuel fired appliances like a hot water tank or fireplace.

Plumbing:

Each dwelling unit is required to be provided with a kitchen sink, a bathtub or shower, a bathroom sink and a water closet. Each unit must be provided with a potable water system.

Additional plumbing fixtures installed to accommodate a Secondary Suite will affect the operation and performance of existing fixtures in other areas of the dwelling. Drainage, venting and water systems must meet Plumbing Code requirements to ensure that an acceptable level of performance is maintained throughout the dwelling.

Note: Laundry facilities or space for laundry facilities must be provided for in-suite or a common fire separated shared laundry room is to be provided for in the design.

Applying for a Secondary Suite Permit:

To apply for a Secondary suite permit, the following must be provided:

1. A completed Secondary Suite Application Form,
2. A copy of State of Title Certificate not more than 30 days old,
3. An initial fee of \$150 for the application. A yearly fee of \$100 will be required to maintain the permit.
4. A site plan/floor plan (does not need to be professionally drawn) showing property lines, building dimensions, setbacks, suite location within the dwelling and parking.

A Building Official or Bylaw Enforcement Officer may visit your home to ensure that all requirements are met prior to a permit being issued.

Are there other permits or regulations that may be required?

You may require one or more of the following:

- A building or plumbing permit. You will get these through the Town of View Royal Building Department.
- A gas or electrical permit. Your installer will get this from BC Safety Authority.

An asbestos assessment. This is a provincial requirement through Worksafe BC and applies to all homes 1990 or older. For more information on this please contact Worksafe BC at 1-888-621-SAFE(7233)**For**

**Further Information Please Contact: Building Department
45 View Royal Avenue, Victoria, BC V9B 1A6 Ph. 250-727-7903**