



Central Saanich

Secondary Suites in Single Family Dwellings

Secondary Suite

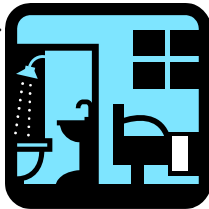
The District of Central Saanich Land Use Bylaw #1309 permit *secondary suite use* within a single family dwelling in specific zones subject to a number of conditions. A *Secondary Suite* is defined as:

"an additional Dwelling Unit that is contained within a Residential Single Family building, with no portion located in an accessory structure or building either detached from a Residential Single Family building or attached only by a passageway."

Zoning

The zones in which a secondary suite is allowed are A-1, RE-1, RE-2, RE-3, RE-4, R-1, R-1M, R-1S and R-2. (Zoning map is available for viewing on our web site at www.centralsaanich.ca)

Residential Two Family (R-2) zones currently allow duplex construction, meeting certain requirements such as lot area, frontage and distance to adjacent existing duplex buildings. Secondary suite use is not allowed in conjunction with Duplex use.



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Bylaw Regulations

The bylaw includes a number of regulations that must be met and shown on submitted plans to allow the construction of a secondary suite, such as:

❑ SUITE FLOOR AREA

The maximum suite floor area is 90 m² (969 ft²) or 40% of the floor area of the whole building, whichever is less (floor area is the total space between exterior walls, not the sum of the area of each individual room);

❑ PARKING

The site must accommodate off-street parking in accordance with the Land Use Bylaw, which includes one additional space for the occupants of the suite;

❑ BUILDING EXTERIOR

The building exterior is consistent with the form and appearance of Residential Single Family buildings in the area; and,

❑ MINIMUM TWO ROOMS

The suite contains at least two rooms including a bedroom, cooking facility and bathroom.

Building Permit

In order to authorize an existing suite or allow construction of a new secondary suite, a building permit is required to ensure adequate safety for all occupants.

Your permit application must include:

- Completed building permit application form;
- Three sets of plans showing all information from this pamphlet (complying with the building code and Land Use Bylaw) for a suite;
 - Site plan showing all buildings, structures and dimensioned parking spaces;
 - Plans of all floor levels, dimensions, rooms uses, ceiling heights and plumbing fixtures;
 - Cross section or details of all fire separations between dwelling units; and,
 - Building elevations (or photographs) showing all building wall faces.

You may also be required to obtain:

- A plumbing permit to certify any new or previously installed plumbing fixtures;
- An electrical permit, from the Provincial Electrical Safety Branch, for new or unauthorized electrical work to ensure safe (Electrical Branch @ 952-4444);
- Acceptance from VIHA (Vancouver Island Health Authority @ 475-1858) regarding any existing or new septic systems when changes are being made to a dwelling unit. A certified practitioner would be required provide details to their office;
- A professional review to confirm compliance with the building code; and/or,
- Other documentation required by the building inspector due to a specific situation.

For information on building permits for the construction of a new single family dwelling with a secondary suite, please also refer to the "Residential Building Permits" guide.

Building Code Summary

This is a brief overview of the some of the minimum health and safety requirements for secondary suites outlined in Section 9.36 of the B.C. Building Code. This information must be shown on the submitted plans.

Fire Safety and Exiting

In order to restrict the spread of fire and smoke, and to ensure that the occupants have safe egress from the building, a Fire Separation is needed to create a barrier between the Suite and the rest of the house, and between dwelling units and any common space. The Building Code requires that the structure be built so it will take 45 minutes for a fire to burn from one dwelling unit into another. If photoelectric type smoke alarms are installed in addition to the common ionization hard wired smoke alarms, the fire separation may be reduced to a 30 minute rating.

Building Code Summary continued...

- ❑ [Fire Separation](#) - An example of an acceptable separation would be:

45 min. rating	5/8" Type X drywall one layer on ceiling 5/8" Type X drywall on both sides of wall
30 min. rating	1/2" drywall two layers on ceiling 1/2" drywall on both sides of wall

Doors located within a fire separation must be labelled and rated for the fire separation, complete with automatic closure hinges.

- ❑ [Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms](#) - Interconnected hardwired smoke alarms are required for both dwellings, near bedrooms, on every level. Remember, if there is only a 30 min. rated separation, then both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms are required. In addition, if there are fuel-fired appliances or an attached garage, carbon monoxide alarms are required near bedroom areas.
- ❑ [Safe Exiting](#) - The secondary suite must have an exit door, usually directly from the suite to the exterior. This door must be an exterior door, with a deadbolt and door viewer (or glazing), that swings on a vertical axis (not a sliding patio door).
- ❑ [Bedroom Windows](#) - All bedrooms are required to have an opening window with a minimum clear opening **area of 0.35m² (3.77 ft²) with no dimension less than 380mm (15")**. This area would allow for exiting in the case of an emergency.

Mechanical Systems

- ❑ [Heating Systems](#) - The secondary suite must be equipped with a method of heating, independent of the main dwelling. In order to prevent the migration of smoke between dwelling units during a fire, **duct work is not permitted to interconnect the dwelling units**. A separate system, such as electric baseboard heating, may need to be installed in the suite.
- ❑ [Plumbing](#) - With existing homes, the water supply line may not be large enough to meet the minimum code requirements for supplying all the plumbing fixtures, including the suite. For example, if the house is serviced by a 1/2" supply pipe, it would be necessary to upgrade to a 1" water pipe, from the 3/4" meter to the house. All the fixtures in the building should be shown on the plans to complete a fixture calculation. A separate plumbing permit would be required to approve any new (or previously completed) plumbing work.
- ❑ [Ventilation](#) - An exhaust fan vented to the exterior shall be installed in each kitchen and bathroom. A ventilation checklist must be completed to ensure adequate fan size, duct size and make up air requirements are being met.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the parking requirements?

The parking requirements are outlined in the Land Use Bylaw Section 6. A single family dwelling requires a minimum of two onsite parking spaces; a single family dwelling with a secondary suite requires space onsite for three parking spaces. The two parking spaces for the dwelling unit may be parked in tandem but the suite parking must be separate and accessible at all times. If the single family dwelling was constructed after October 20, 2003, the additional parking space for the suite must be located behind the front building line.

Does the parking area need to be paved?

No. In fact, you may consider using a permeable surface for any new parking spaces, to reduce the stormwater impact on the surrounding area. Options could include gravel, block pavers, grass pavers, permeable paving or other methods which would recharge the groundwater and decrease runoff. Additional information on managing stormwater and rainwater, including a pamphlet entitled "Through the Cracks", is available on the CRD website at www.crd.bc.ca/watersheds/

Is a common laundry area included in the gross floor area of a suite?

Any possible common spaces, such as laundry areas or entry spaces are not included in the area of the suite. All common spaces must be surrounded by fire separations, equivalent to the protection of the suite to the dwelling unit.

If the suite is being upgraded to meet building code requirements, is the remainder of the house required to be upgraded as well?

Generally speaking, no. However, if the building has had construction or finishing completed without the benefit of a building permit, the owner is required to verify this work complies with the health and safety standards of the building code. In addition, those items relating to the change of use of the building, such as interconnecting smoke alarms and fire separations, may require alterations to existing areas.

Can I have two secondary suites in my single family dwelling?

Only one Secondary Suite shall be permitted within any Residential Single Family building.

Can my secondary suite be stratified and sold separately from my dwelling unit?

No Secondary Suite may be stratified, subdivided, or otherwise legally separated from the Residential Single Family building wherein it is contained.

*This pamphlet is intended for general guidance only.
Applicants should consult all of the District of Central Saanich bylaws for specific requirements and procedures.*

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