

This handout has been created as a guide to help you construct or legalize a permitted secondary suite within a detached house (single family dwelling) in the City of Prince George.

What are secondary suites?

The City of Prince George Zoning Bylaw No. 7850, 2007 defines a secondary suite as:

“an accessory, self-contained dwelling within a single detached house, exclusively used for occupancy by one household that complies with the requirements of this Bylaw”

Are secondary suites permitted in all residential zones?

NO - Secondary suites are only permitted within **Single Family Dwelling** in the following residential zones:

- AG: Greenbelt
- AF: Agriculture and Forestry
- AR1, AR2(m) and AR3(m): Rural Residential
- RS1(m), RS2(m), RS3 and RS4: Suburban and Single Residential
- RT1 and RT2: Two-Unit Residential - only within a single detached house
- C8: Commercial Conversion
- Z9: Hill Avenue
- Z14: Fraser River Bench Lands Compact Community

Is a secondary suite permitted within Two-Unit Housing (Duplex), accessory building or in Multiple Residential Housing?

NO - Secondary suites are only permitted in **Single Family Dwelling** on a lot with a minimum lot width of 12.0 m. A Single Family Dwelling is defined by Zoning Bylaw No. 7850, 2007 as: *“a building containing only 1 dwelling exclusively used for occupancy by 1 household”*.

How many secondary suites are permitted per Single Family Dwelling?

No more than **ONE** secondary suite is permitted per Single Family Dwelling.

Is there a size limit for secondary suites?

YES - The maximum floor area of a secondary suite cannot exceed 40% of the total floor area of the principal residence.

Is off-street parking required for the secondary suite?

YES - A secondary suite requires 1 parking space that is in addition to the 2 required parking spaces for the principal residence.

Is a secondary suite permitted if there are other uses at the residences?

NO - A secondary suite is not permitted in conjunction with an agri-tourist accommodation, bed & breakfast, community care facility, secondary dwelling, or boarding or lodging house.

Do I need a Building Permit for a secondary suite?

YES - You must obtain a Building Permit for a secondary suite to ensure it is constructed to the BC Building Code standards and to City bylaws for health, safety and protection of personal property.

Building Permit Process:

The process for constructing a new secondary suite or legalizing an existing one involves the following:

Constructing a Secondary Suite	Legalizing an existing Secondary Suite
Confirm Zoning: Ensure that a secondary suite is a permitted use on your property.	
BC Building Code: Review the attached BC Building Code requirements for secondary suites.	
Project Planning: Review the requirements for Building Permit submissions (i.e. drawings and engineering), fees and process.	Pre-Application: Submit a completed Pre-Application Questionnaire (see attached) along with the \$75.00 application fee to book an inspection.
Building Permit Application: Submit a Building Permit application for the secondary suite along with drawings that include the layout and dimensions of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Floor Plan• Entrance locations• Required egress• Off-Street Parking	

Note:

- A Plumbing Permit is required to install fixtures in a secondary suite if the rough-in is not already in place. The plumbing permit application and fixture installation must be completed by a licensed plumber. If the rough-in plumbing is in place and no other changes are being made to the plumbing system no Plumbing Permit is required.
- A Water Meter must be installed by a licensed plumber if one is not already installed in the home and is required in all Single Family Dwellings with a secondary suite.

For further information on the Building Permit process, please refer to the City of Prince George website at www.princegeorge.ca or talk to a Building Inspector at 250.561.7611.

This guide has been prepared to provide information only. It is neither a bylaw nor a legal document. If any contradiction between this guide and the relevant Municipal Bylaws or applicable codes is found, such bylaws or codes shall be the legal authority.

BC Building Code Requirements for a Secondary Suite

All existing or new secondary suites shall be constructed in accordance to the 2018 BC Building Code Secondary Suite Provisions.

Minimum Ceiling height	Ceiling heights to be at least 2.0 m (6'-6 ¾") high with no obstructions below this height along the path of exit travel from any area in the secondary suite.
Exit Stairs	Exit stairs to be at least 860 mm (34") wide, measured between wall faces or guards.
Landings	Landings for exterior stairs serving a secondary suite need not exceed 900 mm (35 1/2") in length.
Means of Egress	Except where a suite is completely sprinklered, every bedroom will have at least one outside door or a window with a minimum clear opening of 0.35m ² (3.77 sq.ft.) and no window dimension less than 380mm (15") clear opening in either height or width.
Fire separation	<p>Walls – require 30 minutes rating consisting of 1 layers of Type X drywall on both sides of the wall</p> <p>Ceiling – requires 30 minutes rating consisting of 1 layer of 5/8" type X drywall with 3 ½" mineral wool or 2 layers 5/8" type X drywall.</p> <p>Doors – 20 minute fire rated door or a solid core door</p> <p><i>For alterations to existing buildings, refer to 2018 BC Building Code Table 1.1.1.1.(6) Alternate Compliance Methods for Alterations to Existing Buildings to Add a Secondary Suite.</i></p>
Doors in a means of Egress	<p>Every exit door or door that opens into, or is located within a public corridor or other facility that provides an access to exit from a secondary suite will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. be at least 1980 mm (78") high, b. have a clear opening width of at least 800 mm (31 ½"), and c. be permitted to swing inward.
Air Ducts	Where a heating and/or ventilation duct system serves more than one suite, the system must include an in-duct smoke detector to prevent the circulation of smoke from one fire compartment to the other. A letter from the electrician stating that the in-duct smoke detector has been installed and tested to the requirements of the current BC Building Code is required before occupancy of the suite can be granted.
Smoke Alarms	<p>An interconnected photo-electric smoke alarm conforming to CAN/ULC-S531 "Standard for Smoke Alarms," must be installed in the main area of the secondary suite with another interconnected photo-electric smoke alarm installed in the main area of the primary residence. An interconnected smoke alarm is also required in each bedroom. An additional interconnected smoke alarm is not required to be installed in the suite provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the fire separations have a fire resistance rating of 45 minutes or greater, or b. the building is equipped with a sprinkler system.

SECONDARY SUITE

(IN EXISTING HOME)
PRE-APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

APPLICANT'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ PH: _____

OWNER'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ PH: _____

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

AGE OF HOUSE: _____ DATE SUITE WAS CONSTRUCTED: _____

SUITE CONSTRUCTED BY: _____

NUMBER OF BEDROOMS: _____ TYPE OF HEATING: _____

SEPARATE ENTRANCE: YES NO INSPECTION FEE PAID: YES NO

OWNER/APPLICANT SIGNATURE: _____

NOTE: FOR THE INSPECTOR TO DETERMINE IF THE SUITE CAN MEET THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS OF THE BUILDING CODE AND CAN BE LEGALIZED, PLEASE COMPLETE THE ABOVE INFORMATION, PAY THE \$75.00 SPECIAL INSPECTION FEE AND BOOK FOR INSPECTION.

*****OFFICE USE*****

OK TO APPLY FOR BUILDING PERMIT: YES NO

REASON:

Building Inspector Signature

Print Name