Bulletin: Secondary suite requirements

Within a single-family dwelling

City of Kelowna

Bulletin # 12-03
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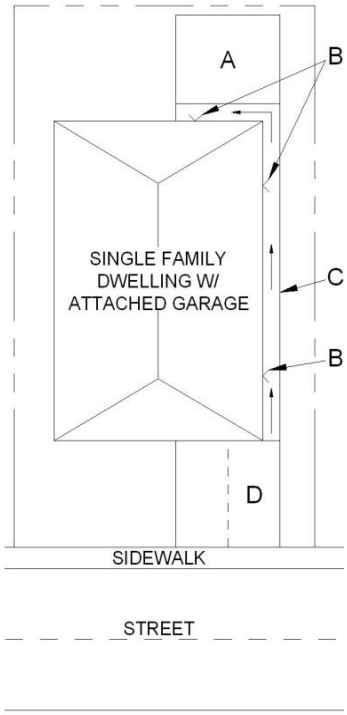
This bulletin is for informational purposes only. Please be sure to consult the relevant City of Kelowna Bylaw



A. 30m² Private Open Space
B. Lights for Pathway
C. Pathway to Suite
D. Designated Suite Parking

1. Not more than one secondary suite shall be permitted in a single family residence (strata titling shall not be permitted).
2. A building permit is required for the creation of a secondary suite. The cost of the permit is $510.00 exclusive of construction value. If the basement area was developed without approved permits, drawings are to be submitted, plumbing/heating permits may be required, and additional fees charged.
3. A $2,500 Development Cost Charge (DCC) is applicable as per the Development Cost Charges Bylaw if the construction value of developing a secondary suite within the principal residence is more than $50,000. If the suite is exempt from the DCC, a $300 sewer development fee applies. This will be verified at building permit application and collected prior to issuance.
4. 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.
5. Secondary suite parking shall be:
   i. designated as being solely for the use of the secondary suite;
   ii. accessed from a lane where a rear or side lane abuts the property;
   iii. permanent surfaces of asphalt, concrete or similar hard surfaced material;
   iv. accessed from any driveway existing at the time the secondary suite use commences in circumstances where no rear or side lane abuts the property;
   v. located on property and is permitted to be located in tandem with the two off-street parking stalls provided for the principal dwelling.
6. A lighted pathway with permanent surface of asphalt, concrete or similar hard surfaced material is required from the on-site secondary suite parking stall to the suite entrance.
7. A minimum of 30m^2 of private open space shall be provided for the secondary suite. The space shall have a direct connection to the secondary suite entrance and be defined with the use of landscaping.
8. The suite shall not exceed the lesser of 90 m^2, or 40% of the habitable floor space of the building, excluding area of the garage or carport.
9. No secondary suite will be allowed without connection to sewer for lots less than 830 m². Where lot size permits, it is the owners' responsibility to obtain confirmation from a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner that the existing sewage disposal system can accommodate the suite.
10. The suite address is to be prominently displayed on the front of the building or at the front of the premises clearly identifying where the access to the suite occurs
11. Each suite shall have hardwired, interconnected smoke alarms conforming to CAN/ULC-S531 to alert the tenant of the suite of any emergency within their own suite. Smoke alarms shall be installed in each sleeping room, and in a location between the sleeping rooms and the remainder of the storey, and if the sleeping rooms are served by a hallway, the smoke alarm shall be also located in the hallway.

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12. A 45-minute fire separation is required between suites, and between suites and common areas (eg. mechanical room, laundry, shared corridor/exit). This rating may be reduced to a 30-minute rating if an additional smoke alarm of photo-electric type conforming to CAN/ULC-S531 is installed in each suite and interconnected (if one of the alarms sounds, the additional one in the other suite will sound). This 30-minute rating can be achieved with;
    i) Standard 1/2" gypsum wall board on each side of framing for wall assemblies, and
    ii) Fire rated gypsum board for floor assemblies;
        a. 1/2" Type X,
        b. 1/2" Type C, or
        c. 5/8" Type X
13. An interconnected door between the suites is required. Lockable to secure access in both directions.
14. All doors in the fire separation shall have a minimum 20-minute fire protection rating. This can be achieved with a tested and rated door conforming to CAN/ULC-S113. A non-tested door that is a 45mm (1 3/4") thick solid core wood door with not more than a 6mm clearance beneath and not more than 3mm at the sides and top is permitted to be used. Doors shall be mounted in a wood frame of not less than 38mm (1 1/2") thick where the frame has not been tested and rated
15. 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. A CO alarm is to be installed either inside each bedroom, or if outside, within 5m of each bedroom door, measured following corridors and doorways. The CO alarms shall have no disconnect switch and be mechanically fixed at a height recommended by the manufacturer's instructions.
16. The minimum ceiling height shall be 2.0m (6'-6 3/4") for the required area of a given room type (eg. the required size of living room is 10.0m^2 {107.6ft^2}). It shall be possible to travel from the required area of one room to the required areas of all other rooms without the reduction of the room height.
17. Every bedroom shall have at least one outside window or exterior door openable from the inside without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge and without removal of sashes or hardware. The window shall provide an unobstructed opening of not less than 0.35m^2 (3.75sq.ft.) in area with no dimension less than 380mm (15") and maintain the required opening during an emergency without the need for additional support. Dimensions of windows and egress will be confirmed on site.
18. Combustible drain, waste and vent piping as well as built-in vacuum piping with outlet covers;
    i) are permitted to be located within or penetrate a fire separation required to have a fire-resistance rating provided the combustible piping;
        a. is located within an assembly protected by a membrane of minimum 1/2" gypsum board,
        b. is tight fitting or fire caulked (gypsum mud is not acceptable), and
        c. does not penetrate the gypsum membrane on the underside of a horizontal fire separation.
    ii) enclosed in an assembly or protected as per i) is permitted on both sides of a fire separation.
19. The heating systems must be separate or a duct-type smoke detector shall be installed in a heating or ventilating system that serves more than one suite. The installation shall be designed to shut down the circulation fan upon a signal from the duct-type smoke detector in order to minimize the circulation of smoke between dwelling units.
20. If the furnace room for one suite is located within the other suite, it shall be separated with a fire rating equivalent to that required between the suites. Where the ceiling or walls are unable to be drywalled, the joist or stud space may be stuffed tightly with mineral wool insulation.
21. Ventilation requirements as per 2012 BCBC are required as primary ventilation.
22. Any property with direct access to either Highway 97 or Highway 33 will require Ministry of Transportation (MOT) approval prior to issuance of a building permit for the addition or creation of a secondary suite. Direct questions to MOT Kelowna Development Approvals at (250) 712-3660.