
BULLETIN 2004-006-BU/EL

APRIL 19, 2007
(Revised August 25, 2009)

SECONDARY SUITES IN EXISTING ONE-FAMILY DWELLINGS

On March 9, 2004 Council approved changes to the Zoning and Development By-law to permit secondary suites in all RS, RM, and RT zones. On May 18, 2004 Council approved changes to the Vancouver Building By-law to reduce and simplify the building code requirements pertaining to the installation of a secondary suite in an existing building. These changes to the Vancouver Building By-law are summarized in Table 10.3.3.1 of the Vancouver Building By-law attached.

Following is information on some of the more major changes pertaining to approval of a secondary suite in an existing building constructed prior to enactment by Council, which we currently anticipate will occur on June 22, 2004:

1. Sprinklering of a secondary suite, when located in a building constructed prior to implementation of the residential sprinkler requirements on April 25th 1990, will not be required provided:
 - a) there are no major additions to the building,
 - b) the building is currently not sprinklered,
 - c) the cost of the renovations and improvements does not exceed 50% of the replacement cost of the building, and
 - d) the building is provided with interconnected smoke alarms per item 4.
2. Headroom requirements will be relaxed, provided a minimum headroom of 6 ft 6 inches (1980 mm) is provided over 80% of the suite area and all egress routes.
3. Unsafe conditions in the building must be corrected per the Vancouver Building By-law.
4. Interconnected smoke alarms must be installed throughout the building. Where the building is permitted to remain unsprinklered, these smoke alarms must be provided with a manually operated 10 minute silencing capability and battery back-up. (see Subsection 9.10.19 of the VBBL.)
5. The following circuits and receptacles shall be provided in the secondary suite:
 - a) a minimum of two kitchen counter duplex receptacles supplied by two appliance circuits. These receptacles shall be permitted to be wired on a single circuit or a split circuit for both; and
 - b) a minimum of two duplex receptacles located on different walls in each bedroom; and
 - c) a minimum of three duplex receptacles located on different walls in the living area.
6. A single existing panelboard shall be permitted to supply electrical loads in the principal dwelling and in the secondary suite. (See also Electrical and Bulletins 2000-042-EL and 2007-007-BU/EL).

Further information on the City's Secondary Suite program may be found on our website at:
<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/suites>.

Bulletins on Building By-law requirements and related issues may be found at:
<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/licandinsp/bulletins/index.htm>.

For further information on our secondary suite program or enquiries about specific buildings, please call our Secondary Suite Program office at 604-873-7945.

(original signed)
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Table 10.3.3.1. Fire Safety Requirements Forming Part of Article 10.3.3.1.	
Item	
Windows In Side Yards	Original openings may remain. New openings to conform to Part 9
Fire Compartmentation Separation between <i>Secondary Suite</i> and Principal Dwelling. Heating ducts that penetrate fire separations Plastic pipes for plumbing and sprinklers Suite entry doors in fire separations	Fire resistant combustibile construction (1) No fire dampers or fire stopping required Permitted anywhere if tightly fitted or fire-stopped Existing solid core doors and frames in good condition are acceptable if unglazed or if glazed with wired glass
Exits Egress from each suite Windows adjacent to exits	Minimum of a single conforming exit is required from both the principal dwelling and the <i>secondary suite</i> . No requirements
Flame Spread Rating of Finishes Exits Remainder of building	150 or less No requirements
Heating Systems [See Section 9.33.] Furnace room enclosures	No separation required but provide proper combustion air and required clearances from all equipment
Smoke Alarms Note: see Bulletin 2007-007-BU/EL for requirements related to installation of carbon monoxide alarms.	Smoke alarms interconnected throughout the main dwelling and the secondary suite shall be provided outside every bedroom, and at least one smoke alarm shall be provided on every storey. Smoke alarms shall be installed by permanent connections to an electrical circuit. Smoke alarms for unsprinklered suites shall be provided with battery backup and manual silencing devices which will silence the alarm for a period of 10 minutes, after which the alarm will continue to function. (see Subsection 9.10.19 of the VBBL.

Stairs	Stair treads, rise and run shall to be reconstructed or modified to conform to Subsection 9.8.3. when (a) the existing stairs are considered to present an unsafe condition as determined by the <i>Chief Building Official</i> . All existing stairs shall have at least one handrail meeting the requirements of Subsection 9.8.7.
Guardrail Protection	Guards shall be provided around all stairways, balconies, landings, decks, and porches in accordance with Subsection 9.8.8. and Article 4.1.10.1. Existing guards may remain where they are structurally sound and a minimum of 900 mm high.
Existing Headroom	May be reduced to 1980 mm over 80% of the suite area and all egress routes.
<i>Unsafe Conditions</i>	Any condition that could cause undue hazard or risk to life, limb or health of any person authorized, expected or anticipated to be on or about the premises shall be corrected as required by the <i>Chief Building Official</i> .
NOTES TO TABLE 10.3.3.1. (1) Fire resistant combustible construction shall mean existing lath and plaster in good condition, or minimum 2 inch gypsum wallboard on wood studs at maximum 600 mm on centre.	