

## SECONDARY SUITE PROGRAM

### The Process

The following steps are designed to help a homeowner through the various stages involved in either putting in a new suite in an existing house, or keeping an existing suite that has no prior permits or approval.

**STEP 1:** Apply for a Special Inspection and book an appointment for this inspection. A Special Inspection is a coordinated inspection carried out by the Building, Electrical and Plumbing Inspectors. Its purpose is to determine what upgrading work would be required to legalize a suite.

### STEP 2: Review Upgrading Letter

You will receive a letter listing the permits, plans, and upgrading requirements. Please read the letter carefully and prepare any documents that are required to obtain permits (e.g., Plans).

### STEP 3: Obtain Permits

Bring the letter to City Hall (453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the East Wing Building) with the necessary plans as indicated on the letter and apply for a Combined Development and Building Permit.

**NOTE:** A Combined Development and Building Permit can be obtained by the homeowner. However, Electrical, Plumbing and Gas Permits, if required, will only be issued to licensed contractors.

### STEP 4: Call for Inspections

Progress inspections are required during the course of the upgrading. Several inspections may be required before a job can be finalized. To book a progress inspection or final inspection for a secondary suite, you or your contractor may phone 3-1-1.

### STEP 5: Suite Approval

If the work meets all requirements, your suite will be approved. Staff in the Secondary Suite Office will send you a letter confirming this.

### STEP 6: Annual Business License

An annual Business License will be required for rental suites. Please see staff in the License Office or phone 3-1-1.

### Permits, Plans & Upgrading Requirements

The information below has been prepared as a guide to homeowners only. The relevant City By-Law and/or Code requirements will take precedence.

## **Permits**

A Development & Building Permit will be required to carry out upgrading work and to formally change the use of your house from a one-family dwelling to a one-family dwelling with a secondary suite. The homeowner or his/her representative can apply for this permit.

If the upgrading letter identifies any required trades permits (i.e., Electrical, Plumbing or Gas Permits), these permits can only be obtained by licensed contractors.

## **Plan Requirements**

Plans are required at the time you apply for a Development & Building Permit. In most cases, two sets of simple floor plans will be acceptable, showing the layout of the floor level where the suite is located.

These plans do not need to be prepared by a professional; however, they must be drawn to scale, with location and dimensions of all secondary suite rooms (bedrooms/ kitchen/bath room/living room, etc.), stairs, windows, and doors clearly labelled. Plans should also include location of electrical outlets and plumbing fixtures in the suite.

If on-site parking is required, two sets of site plans will also be required showing the location and dimensions of the on-site parking space. Building a new garage or carport will require further plans and permits.

If additions or alterations are proposed or required in other parts of the building, or if the building is raised or lowered, further plans will be required.

For information regarding the submission of drawings for new construction, please contact the Enquiry Centre at 604.873.7611.

## **Upgrading Requirements**

The following are general requirements for a secondary suite, identified through a Special Inspection of the building, where Building, Electrical and Plumbing/Gas inspectors attend the property together. The focus of the inspection is the suite area; however, any hazards throughout the building that are identified during the inspection, must be corrected whether or not a suite is retained or installed.

## **Parking**

- Houses built before April 20, 2004 - one on-site parking space will be accepted.
- Houses built on or after April 20, 2004 - require two on-site parking spaces (one for the primary dwelling unit and one for the secondary suite).
- A parking space is 8' x 18'. In some cases, a site peculiarity may allow a relaxation.
- A durable surface is required for parking spaces.

## **Ceiling Height**

A minimum existing ceiling height of 6'6" is required over 80% of the suite area and all exit routes.

## **Fire Separation**

- Existing lath and plaster in good condition, or minimum ½ inch gypsum wallboard is required on walls and/or ceilings between the primary dwelling unit and the secondary suite.
- Self-closing devices are required on any interconnecting doors between units.

## Electrical

- For sprinklered buildings, interconnected, hard-wired smoke alarms with carbon monoxide detection, installed with a permanent connection to an electrical circuit, are required outside every bedroom, and at least one smoke alarm on every storey.
- For unsprinklered suites, in addition to the above, these smoke alarms must be equipped with carbon monoxide detection, 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.
- The proper number of receptacles/appliance circuits will be required in the suite.
- The main electrical service must be sized to accommodate all electrical loads (e.g., usually two electric ranges and two electric dryers will require a minimum 100 amp service).

## Plumbing & Gas

- Existing plumbing and gas fixtures must be properly installed with approved traps and vents.
- Furnace and hot water tank vents require proper clearance from combustible materials.
- Gas appliances must be installed in an approved manner.

## Fees for a secondary suite (2012 rates)

One time inspection and permit fees as follows:

Special Inspection	\$155 (plus HST)
Combined Development & Building Permit	from \$661
Electrical Permit	from \$ 58
Plumbing Permit	from \$145
Gas Permit	from \$152

Annual fees as follows:

Annual Business License	\$ 61
*One-time fee for new applications	\$ 50

Please see staff in the License Office or phone 3-1-1.

Additional fees for Water, Sewer & Recycling Flat Rates (part of your annual property tax).  
For more information, please contact the Utility Billing Office at 3-1-1.

Water	\$182
Sewer	\$ 95
Recycling	\$ 24

For more information on secondary suites and to book inspections, please phone 3-1-1.

Note: Rates subject to change without notice.