

Looking to create a secondary suite in your home?



Long-term rentals are a great way to earn extra income while helping to provide additional housing for the people of Vancouver.

This guide provides information on how to obtain the permits you need to either create a new suite in your existing house, or ensure an existing suite that wasn't previously permitted or inspected by the City is suitable to be lived in.

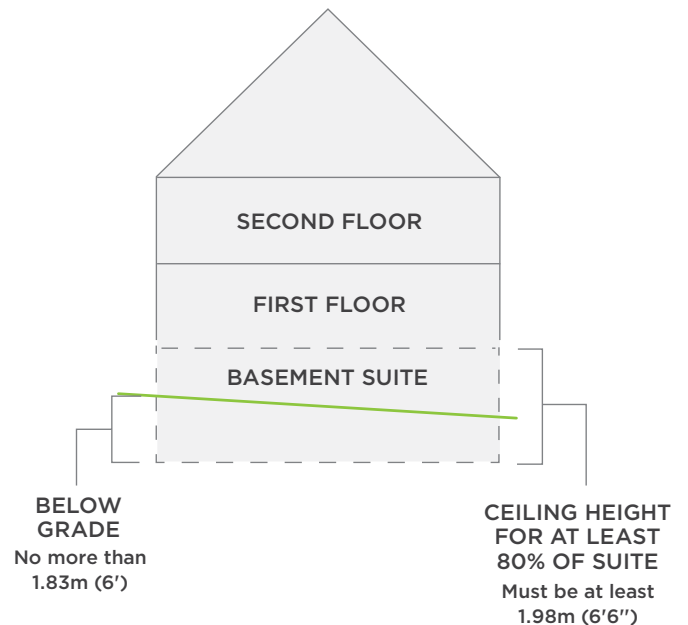


STEP 1

To either rent out or allow someone (such as family or friends) to live in your suite, it must;

- Have a floor area of at least 37m² (400ft²) (but it cannot be bigger than the main part of the house).
- Have a minimum ceiling height of 1.98m (6'6") in all exit routes and in 80% of the suite.
- Be no more than 1.83m (6') below ground.
- Have a 900mm (3') wide, hard surface, unobstructed emergency responder access path from the street to the suite entrance.

Note: Anything that sticks out over this access path (such as a bay window or a chimney) must be at least 1.98m (6'6") above it to create sufficient headroom clearance.



Note: Only one suite is allowed per primary dwelling unit.

STEP 2

In addition to the requirements in Step 1, suites are required to:

- Have interconnecting solid core doors that are unglazed or with wired glass between the main part of the house and suite.
- Have self-closing devices fitted to all interconnecting solid core doors.
- Have no exit doors (which lead to the outside or to common exit corridor) that are obstructed or locked from the outside.
- Have no bars on the windows.



- Have appropriate fire/safety systems in place. This includes:
 - a minimum of one hard-wired smoke and carbon monoxide detection alarm per bedroom (additional alarms must be installed throughout the primary dwelling unit and must be able to communicate with alarms in the suite), and
 - alarms must be installed with a permanent connection to an electrical circuit, and must have a battery back-up and silencing feature.



- Have lath and plaster in good condition, or a minimum of 13mm (1/2 in.) gypsum wallboard on walls and/or ceilings between the main part of the house and the suite.
- Have a main electrical service sized to accommodate all electrical loads (e.g., usually two electric ranges and two electric dryers will require a minimum 100 amp service). For more information see Section 7.3.5 of the Electrical Bylaw bylaws.vancouver.ca/5563c.pdf
- Have a sufficient number of electrical circuits. This includes:

- a minimum of two kitchen counter duplex receptacles (electrical outlets) supplied by two appliance circuits,
- kitchen counter duplex receptacles either individually wired on separate branch circuits or collectively wired on a multi-wire branch circuit,
- a minimum of two duplex receptacles located on different walls in each bedroom,
- a minimum of three duplex receptacles located on different walls in the living room area, and
- additional receptacles as necessary to preclude the use of extension cords.



- Receptacles (electrical outlets) installed within 1.5m of sinks, bathtubs, or shower stalls must be of the Class A ground fault circuit interrupter type.
- Have plumbing and gas fixtures that have been properly installed, with approved traps and vents, which meet current Safety Standards Act and Natural Gas and Propane Installation Code.



Note: A Gas Permit is required before new gas appliances are installed.

- Have furnace and hot water tank vents with proper clearance from combustible materials, (which can range up to 152mm (6”) depending on the manufacturer’s specifications).
- Have seismic straps fitted to any hot water tanks.
- Have onsite parking spaces for the entire property (main house and secondary suite) according to the following:
 - The minimum size for a parking space is 2.5m x 5.5m (8’2” x 18’04”),
 - However, the width shall be increased to 2.9m (9’5”) when the space is adjacent to (abutting) a wall or structure, and
 - A durable surface is required for parking spaces.

FOR HOUSES
BUILT BEFORE
APRIL 20, 2004
**1 ONSITE
PARKING SPACE**



FOR HOUSES
BUILT AFTER
APRIL 20, 2004
**2 ONSITE
PARKING SPACES**




STEP 3

If your suite is eligible to be used as accommodation you should engage with a qualified design professional and/or contractor to prepare plans for your suite.

- We will need you to provide TWO sets of floor plans and TWO sets of site plans when you apply for your Development & Building Permit. Your plans must be drawn to scale and clearly labelled.
- Your floor plans must include the location and dimensions of all rooms (bedrooms/ kitchen/bathroom/living room, etc.), stairs, windows, doors, and the location of all plumbing & gas fixtures in the suite. The suite’s ceiling height should also be noted on the plans.

Note: Plans of the main house are not required to be submitted.

- Your site plans must include:
 - the location and dimension of all on-site parking,
 - the access path from the street to the suite entry and any protrusions encroaching onto the access path,
 - the location of the lane and the street,
 - finished floor elevation (height of floor in relation to grade), and
 - grade level at the four corners of the site.
- For floor and site plan samples, please see vancouver.ca/files/cov/sample-secondary-suite-floor-plan-drawing.pdf

- You will need a Development & Building Permit to carry out upgrading work and to formally change the use of your house from a one or two-family dwelling to a one or two-family dwelling with a secondary suite. To apply, visit vancouver.ca/building-development-support and upload the necessary plans and documents.
- In most cases additional trade permits (electrical, plumbing & gas) will also be required. Only licenced contractors may apply for a trade permit. For more information on trade permits, visit vancouver.ca/permits-info.

STEP 4

- We will need to undertake progress inspections while you are building your suite. Depending on the amount of work you are doing, several inspections may be required during your project. The cost of these inspections is included in the building permit fee, however follow-ups to failed inspections may incur additional fees.
- To book an inspection, either you or your contractor can visit vancouver.ca/inspections or call us at **3-1-1** (604-873-7000 outside of Vancouver).
- Your suite will be approved for occupancy once our inspections show that all work meets the relevant bylaw requirements.



STEP 5

- If you plan to rent your secondary suite, you will need a long-term rental business licence. Please visit vancouver.ca/long-term-rentals for more information.



Note: Homeowners are not permitted to use secondary suites as a short term rental accommodation unless there is a principal resident living in the suite (not the main house).



NOTE: This guide has been prepared for information only.

The relevant City Bylaw and/or code requirements will take precedence.

vancouver.ca/secondariesuites