



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

New Secondary Suite Within a Single-Family Dwelling

Development Requirements

The purpose of this guideline is to assist the homeowner, builder and contractor with the District's Zoning Bylaw, user rates, and BC Building Code construction requirements for a Secondary Suite within the District of Kent. If you have any questions with regard to these requirements please do not hesitate to contact District staff for assistance or clarification.

“Zoning Bylaw No. 1219, 2001” has provisions for an additional dwelling unit contained within a single-family house commonly referred to as a “Secondary Suite”. In addition to the requirements of “Zoning Bylaw No. 1219, 2001”, new Secondary Suites in the District of Kent must also comply with provisions included within the *BC Building Code* and if connected to District water and/or sewer will be required to pay additional User Rate fees. **A Building Permit is required for construction of a Secondary Suite within the District of Kent.**

1. Zoning Bylaw Requirements:

A Secondary Suite must meet the following Zoning criteria (for further details on the Zoning requirements for Secondary Suites refer to “Zoning Bylaw No.1219, 2001”):

- a) Secondary Suite is defined as “*an additional dwelling unit located in a single family dwelling building and shall:*
 - i. *meet the criteria listed in the BC Building Code; and*
 - ii. *be limited to one such use per lot and to a maximum floor area of 90 m square (968.8 feet) or 40% of the principal building, whichever is less; and*
 - iii. *only be permitted where the building is occupied by the registered owner of the lot as his/her principal place of residence; and*
 - iv. *provide one off-street parking space in addition to the 2 spaces required, per dwelling unit.”.*
- b) One Secondary Suite in a single-family house is permitted. Secondary Suites are permitted within the following zones in the District: Agricultural (A), Rural Residential 1 (RR1), Rural Residential 2 (RR2), Single-Dwelling Residential 1 (RS1), Single-Dwelling Residential 2 (RS2), Lake Area Residential (RL) and Mount Woodside Single-Dwelling Residential 1 (CDMW-RS-1) where there is only one principal dwelling.
- c) Secondary Suites are not permitted in multi-family dwellings (duplexes, triplexes etc.), mobile homes or commercial/industrial buildings.

2. Construction Requirements – BC Building Code Section 9.36

The Secondary Suite regulations of the *BC Building Code* were drafted for the construction of safe, affordable accommodation within a single family house. The intent of the requirements of Section 9.36 is to provide flexibility in the construction of Secondary Suites contained within a principle dwelling while not compromising the safety of residents.

The following, outlines the more common general requirements for the construction of Secondary Suites contained within a principle dwelling:

- a) The minimum ceiling height of Secondary Suites shall not be less than 6'7" (2m) at the lowest point.
- b) Heating and ventilation systems between Suites must be separate or be designed with fire dampers to prevent the circulation of smoke upon a signal from a duct-type smoke detector.
- c) The Suites must be separated by fire separations:
 - i) having a fire-resistance rating of 45 minutes; or
 - ii) having a fire-resistance rating of 30 minutes, if interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms are installed, or
 - iii) no rating is required if suites are sprinklered.
- d) All exits, except exterior doorways, must be separated from adjacent floor areas by fire separations:
 - i) having a fire-resistance rating of 45 minutes; or
 - ii) having a fire-resistance rating of 30 minutes, if interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms are installed.
- e) Additional hard-wired, interconnected smoke alarms of a photoelectric type are required unless the suite is separated by 45-minute fire separations, or the building is sprinklered.
- f) A minimum window area may, except in bedrooms, be calculated cumulatively within the suite. Bedroom windows must be a minimum of 15" in height or width, with a minimum area of 3.8 sq. ft. located a maximum of 5'0" from the floor, and be operable from inside.
- g) Exit stairs must be a minimum of 34" wide.
- h) Landing for exterior stairs serving both suites need not exceed 36".
- i) Handrails and guardrails must meet current Building code requirements.
- j) Common corridors must not be less than 34" wide.
- k) Combustible water distribution piping may penetrate fire separations if it is fire-stopped and not in more than 1-3/16" in diameter.
- l) Combustible waste, drain and vent piping may penetrate a fire separation if:
 - i) it is protected by 1/2" drywall; or
 - ii) the penetration is no bigger than the piping, or
 - iii) the combustible piping does not penetrate the gypsum board ceiling membrane.

3. User Rate Requirements:

- a) For properties with secondary suites that are connected to the District's Sanitary Sewer System, Sanitary Sewer User Rates are charged on a Secondary Suite at the fee established in the District's "Sanitary and Storm Sewer Regulation and Rates Bylaw No. 1451, 2009".
- b) For properties with secondary suites that are connected to the District's Water System, Water User Rates are charged on a Secondary Suite at the fee established in the District's "Water Regulation and Rates Bylaw No. 1452, 2009".

Contact information:

To obtain more information regarding Secondary Suite requirements contact the District of Kent Development Services or Building Department at (604) 796-2235.