

Building Inspections

Secondary Suites in Accessory Buildings Policy and Building Permit Application Guide

Overview:

This guide outlines the Building Permit application requirements and general considerations for a secondary suite in new and existing accessory buildings. The application, forms, and guidelines mentioned below are available on our web site at www.nanaimo.ca or our Office at 238 Franklyn Street. If you require further information and/or assistance, please contact our Office at (250) 755-4429 between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

Building Permit Application Requirements:

1. **Building Permit Application** - Full legal and civic address and the value of construction is required.
2. **Appointment of Agent** form is required when the applicant is not the owner of the land. The document must be signed by the owner.
3. **Application Fee** is payable on all applications. The fee is 10 percent of estimated cost of Building Permit with a minimum application fee of \$175.00. All application fees are non-refundable and will be credited to the cost of the Permit.
4. **Site Plan - two copies to scale** 1/16" = 1' showing the dimensions of the parcel on which the building is to be situated. Include setbacks and locations of all existing and proposed buildings, with decks and cantilevers shown. Include the location and the dimension of the driveway and any right-of-ways or easements. Show location of service connections to existing on-site piping.
5. **Building Plans - two complete sets to scale** 1/4" = 1' showing the specifications of the building. Include floor plans, cross-sections, and all the elevations. Include exterior wall heights, main floor height and roof peak. Show any changes you are making (in dark blue or black ink).
6. **Truss layout** from a truss manufacturer and **manufactured floor joist and engineered beam layouts** (if used) from the suppliers with all point loads identified.
7. **Homeowner Protection Office (HPO) documents** are required for all new suites in accessory buildings. For information and documents, contact their office by telephone at 1-800-407-7757, facsimile 1-877-476-6657, by email: hpo@hpo.bc.ca, or view their web site: www.hpo.bc.ca. This applies to new construction only. Builders can only build one dwelling every 18 months. They cannot apply for both the main dwelling and the carriage house at the same time without having a registered HPO builder on for one of the buildings.
8. **Business License** valid in the City of Nanaimo is required for Builders, Contractors and Developers.
9. **A Section 219 Covenant must be registered on the property title** to prevent the second building from being stratified or subdivided off the original property as per "ZONING BYLAW 2011 NO. 4500". The City will register the Covenant prior to issuing the Building Permit.

Please be advised that no documents will be accepted prior to permit application.

Engineering & Construction Requirements:

Construction in some areas of Nanaimo is affected by abandoned coal workings, steep slopes, fill, bodies of water and other geotechnical concerns and may require geotechnical and structural engineering design and field review.

The requirements of the 2006 *BC Building Code* (BCBC) apply to this smaller Accessory Building the same as they do for a larger Single-Family Dwelling (SFD). The same exterior cladding, insulation, and underslab insulation requirements apply, as well as all other BCBC code requirements.

Zoning Bylaw Requirements:

All development must comply with the applicable zoning requirements pursuant to “ZONING BYLAW 1993 NO. 4000”. To assist in determining if your lot fits within the Zoning requirements for a secondary suite in an accessory building, see the City of Nanaimo Planning information handout, “Secondary Suites in Accessory Buildings, Guide to Zoning Regulations”.

Confirm with the Planning and Building Inspection Sections the requirements for your lot.

Charges For a Building Permit Are:

Market value of construction \$500.00 or less.....	\$40.00
Market value of construction \$501.00 to \$1000.00	\$65.00
Each additional \$1,000.00 of construction to \$100,000.00	\$10.00
Each additional \$1,000.00 of construction to \$500,000.00	\$ 7.00
Each additional \$1,000.00 of construction over \$500,000.00	\$4.50
Bond Fee: New residential construction (Refundable after occupancy approval providing there is no damage to City services, roads, sidewalks, etc)	
	\$750.00
Plumbing: First 1 – 5 fixtures	(min fee) \$40.00
Each additional fixture.....	\$ 8.00
Access	\$25.00

****Additional charges may apply***

Existing Suites in Accessory Buildings:

May be authorized in accordance with the *Secondary Suite Policy*, and are subject to the requirements of “BUILDING BYLAW 2003 NO. 5693”, “ZONING BYLAW 2011 NO. 4500” and the *BC Building Code* (BCBC) if the suite existed prior to February 2005; otherwise, the suite must comply with all BCBC requirements (i.e. remove and then legalize).

Note that the Homeowner Protection Office (HPO) has exempted certain existing accessory buildings from coverage but they should be contacted in all instances where this is the case.

Converting Existing Accessory Buildings to Residential Use:

The majority of existing accessory structures, which were built for purposes other than residential, will likely require extensive upgrades in order to meet the BCBC.

Note that the Homeowner Protection Office (HPO) has exempted certain existing accessory buildings from coverage but they should be contacted in all instances where this is the case.

In some cases, existing accessory buildings will not be and cannot be made suitable for residential use.

Note: *This guideline should not be used as a substitute for existing applicable Building Codes and other regulations. The building owner is responsible for compliance with all Codes, applicable bylaws and other regulations whether or not described in this guideline.*