

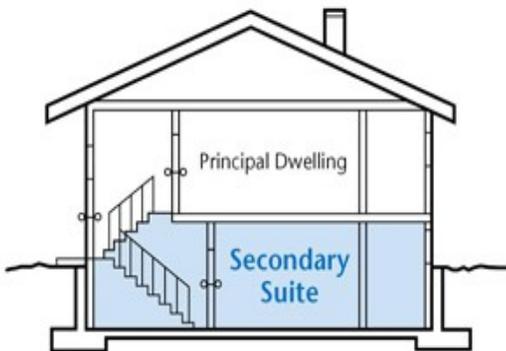
## Background

The City of Nanaimo, on 2005-FEB-07, adopted "ZONING AMENDMENT BYLAW 2005 NO. 4000.366", which permits secondary suites as an accessory use to single residential dwellings in many areas.

Since that time, additional bylaws have been passed which permit secondary suites within an accessory building, provided the lot is either a corner lot; or is accessed by a laneway; or is greater than 800m<sup>2</sup> in lot area. On 2011-AUG-08, Council adopted a new Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw 4500) which has increased the allowable height for a detached secondary suite to 7m, provided the roof pitch is 6:1 or greater.

Since the adoption of Bylaw No. 4000.366, secondary suites have become Nanaimo's most common form of new rental housing. In 2008, 42% of all newly constructed homes contained a secondary suite.

Between 2005 and 2008, 450 secondary suites have been constructed in Nanaimo, mostly through new construction. In that time period, 11.4% of all newly built single family dwellings included a secondary suite. Overall, secondary suites represent 11% of new residential unit construction within the last four years.



## Summary

- ◆ Secondary suites are permitted as an accessory use where a single family dwelling is the only use on the lot.
- ◆ A suite can be located within an accessory building, provided the lot is a corner lot, abuts a laneway or is over 800m<sup>2</sup> in size.
- ◆ The maximum permitted size of a secondary suite is 40% of the dwelling unit size, up to 90m<sup>2</sup>. If the suite is in an accessory building, the suite must meet the size and height restrictions of an accessory building.
- ◆ A secondary suite cannot have more than two bedrooms.
- ◆ One additional parking space is required for a secondary suite in addition to the two parking spaces that are required for a single family dwelling.

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## Secondary Suites

## Guide to Zoning REGULATIONS



[www.nanaimo.ca](http://www.nanaimo.ca)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1 What is a secondary suite?

A secondary suite is a self-contained unit located within a single family dwelling or an accessory building which is clearly subordinate to the single family dwelling. A secondary suite is made up of one or more habitable rooms, but cannot have more than two bedrooms and one cooking facility. A suite is intended as residential accommodation of one or more individuals who are related through marriage or common law, blood relationship, legal adoption, legal guardianship or a group of not more than two unrelated persons.

## 2 Where are secondary suites permitted?

Secondary suites are permitted in most zones as an accessory use to a single residential dwelling where one principal dwelling, and no other use, is sited on the lot. Secondary suites are not permitted within the Single Dwelling Residential—Small lot (R2) Zone.

Secondary suites are only permitted within an accessory building if the lot is a corner lot, abuts a lane or is at least 800m<sup>2</sup> in lot area.

## 3 How large can a secondary suite be?

A secondary suite located within a dwelling cannot exceed 40% of the habitable floor area of the dwelling, up to a maximum of 90m<sup>2</sup>. If the secondary suite is located within an accessory building, the total floor area of all accessory buildings on the lot, including the suite area, cannot exceed 13% of a lot size to a maximum of 90m<sup>2</sup>.

## 4 Can I have more than one secondary suite?

Not more than one secondary suite is permitted per single family dwelling on a lot. Where a suite exists within the dwelling unit, a secondary suite is not permitted within an accessory building. Within the Single Dwelling Residential (R1) or any Agriculture Rural Residential Zone where two single family dwellings legally exist, both dwelling units are permitted to have a secondary suite.



## 5 How many parking spaces are required?

One additional parking space must be provided for a secondary suite, in addition to the two parking spaces required for a single family dwelling.

## 6 My suite was constructed without a permit. How can I legalize it?

Secondary suites which were constructed prior to the adoption of the Secondary Suite Bylaw (2005-FEB-07) are permitted to remain, provided they do not exceed the maximum permitted size or the number of permitted bedrooms and they meet basic life safety requirements. While the suites are permitted to remain, a notice is placed on the title in order to identify that the suite was built without a building permit and therefore does not meet the Building Code. Suites constructed after 2005-FEB-07 are required to obtain a building permit and must meet all Building Code requirements. For more information regarding the Building Code requirements for existing or proposed suites, please contact City of Nanaimo Building Inspections at 250-755-4429.