
Basement Suites	Multi-Level	Side-by-side	Vertical Split

SECONDARY SUITES: INFORMATION GUIDE

Planning & Development Services Department



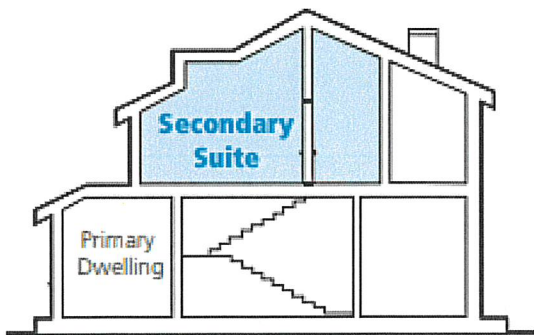
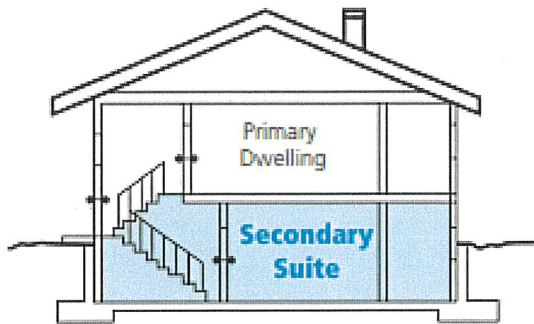
WELCOME

WHAT IS A SECONDARY SUITE?

A secondary suite is a self-contained unit within a house that has its own kitchen, bathroom facilities and separate entrance.

Secondary suites can be a viable housing option provided the units are constructed safely.

Examples of a secondary suite:



HOW TO GET A SECONDARY SUITE

Public safety is the city's highest priority. Secondary suites must comply with the Town of Aurora's Zoning By-law, Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code requirements to protect the safety and well-being of citizens.

Step 1: Review Secondary Suite Criteria

A secondary suite must comply with the requirements of Aurora's Zoning By-law. Some of the zoning requirements and restrictions for secondary suites are provided below. For the full requirements, see By-law 6000-17 as amended and contact the Building Division.

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS FOR ZONING BY-LAW COMPLIANCE

ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES:

- Secondary suites are only allowed in specific single detached, semi-detached and street townhomes.
- Only one secondary suite unit is allowed in each eligible house.

Parking

- One parking space is required for the secondary suite in addition to the residential parking space requirements in the Zoning By-law. The parking spaces must be located on a property surfaced driveway, garage or carport and cannot include parking on the street or street allowance.
- The entire front yard cannot be parking. There are maximum dimensions for driveway widths.

ENTRANCE

- A secondary suite must be accessed through a separate entrance or through a common indoor vestibule.
- An entrance to a secondary suite cannot be located on the same wall/façade as the entrance to the main dwelling.

SECONDARY SUITES ARE NOT ALLOWED:

- In an attached or detached garage.
- In another building on the property not attached to the house.
- In dwellings used for a bed and breakfast, home occupation, a private home tutor, a private home daycare or a group home.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE SECONDARY SUITE DOES NOT COMPLY WITH THE ZONING BY-LAW?

- The applicant may revise their application to comply with the By-law.
- The applicant may apply for a minor variance through the Committee of Adjustment to request relief from the Zoning By-law (fee applies).

Step 2: Contact the Town of Aurora

Before homeowners decide to renovate their homes to incorporate a new or upgrade an existing secondary suite, they should contact the Town of Aurora's Building Division to discuss their plan and obtain the necessary information regarding zoning and building permit requirements.

If you have an existing secondary suite, you will need to establish when it was built to determine if a building permit under the Ontario Building Code of an inspection under the Ontario Fire Code is required.

NEW SECONDARY SUITES OR SECONDARY SUITES BUILT AFTER JULY 14, 1994

A secondary suite built or proposed after July 14, 1994, must comply with the Ontario Building Code. Submit a building permit application to the Building Division. Include professionally prepared drawings that indicate the proposed construction details and demonstrate compliance with the Ontario Building Code. Drawings can be prepared by an architect, professional engineer or a qualified designer with an appropriate Building Code Identification Number (BCIN).

SECONDARY SUITES BUILT ON OR BEFORE JULY 14, 1994

If a secondary suite was built on or before July 14, 1994, the property owner must contact Central York Fire Services (CYFS) to arrange for a fire code inspection. CYFS will inspect the dwelling to ensure it complies with the applicable requirements of the Ontario Fire Code and identify any required upgrades.

If upgrades to the unit are required, submit a building permit application, including prepared drawings, to the Building Standards department to demonstrate compliance with the Ontario Fire Code. Once the building permit is issued and required upgrades are completed, CYFS will complete a final inspection to ensure the secondary suite is compliant with the Ontario Fire Code. In some cases, a building permit may be required where no upgrades are necessary.

REQUEST FOR PROPERTY INFORMATION

Additional property information such as past building permit inspection notes, past building permit application forms, orders to comply, etc. can be requested through the Building Division by owners or authorized agents of the property. All other requests must be made through Access and Privacy in the Office of the Town Clerk – a retrieval fee (non-refundable) is required for this service.

REQUEST FOR PROPERTY SURVEYS

A property survey is a document that outlines the property boundaries and the size of a lot.

Requests to search the Town's property records for a survey of a property may be made by owners or authorized agents of the property. It is not guaranteed that the survey for the property will be in the Town records – a retrieval fee (non-refundable) is required for this service. If the survey is found, an additional copying charge applies. The retrieval fee is non-refundable even if there is no survey on file.

A property survey may be part of the information you received when you purchased the property, or from past owners. A boundary survey may be available at the Province of Ontario, Land Registry Office.

Step 3: Building Permit Application

A building permit is required to renovate an existing house to accommodate a secondary suite. A building permit application generally includes:

- Completed application form and various other forms as may be required
- Construction drawings
- Other approvals as may be required
- Any other documents pertaining to the project

Building permit fees (including construction inspections) are the same as if you were adding construction or finishing a basement. There are no special fees for secondary suites. Construction costs vary with the complexity of the project. You are encouraged to receive multiple quotations.

DESIGNER REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS

Although the Ontario Building Code allows homeowners to design their own homes and alterations, it is strongly recommended that you employ the services of a qualified designer with an appropriate Building Code Identification Number (BCIN), engineer or architect. Unacceptable or inadequate drawings can delay obtaining a building permit.

Drawings can be prepared by various professionals licensed or registered in the Province of Ontario, such as a qualified designer with an appropriate Building Code Identification Number (BCIN), an architect or a professional engineer.

You can find professionals in a number of ways, including:

- Your own experience
- Word of mouth references from family, friends and acquaintances
- Contacts from home improvement centres and contractors
- Recommendations from persons who have constructed a secondary suite
- Professional designer's website
- Listing of qualified designers from professional organizations (e.g. AATO, ARIDO, OAA, OAAAS, OACETT, PEO)
- Internet search

The Ontario Municipality of Municipal Affairs registers qualified designers, and maintains a public search registry at iaccess.gov.on.ca/BCINSearchWeb/search.html.

Architects and other licensed and regulated by the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) can be found at oaa.on.ca.

Engineers and other licensed and regulated by Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) can be found at peo.on.ca.

ONTARIO BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

The Ontario Building Code provides minimum health and safety standards for all buildings in Ontario. Submitted construction drawings are to meet those minimum standards.

A sample Ontario Building Code checklist is attached in Appendix B. The items included are for convenience only and should be checked when preparing a building permit application for a secondary suite. Although every application is different, this list should represent the bulk of the items that are to be checked. The Ontario Building Code, current edition as amended, governs.

Step 4: Construction and Inspection

INSPECTION OF CONSTRUCTION

The person who is issued a building permit, or their agent is required to notify the Building Division when various stages of construction are ready to be inspected.

For Example:

- Excavation/footings: An inspection is required before pouring concrete.
- Backfill/foundation: An inspection is required before backfilling the foundation.
- Plumbing (inside drains): An inspection is required before covering the plumbing located below the floor slab.
- Plumbing rough-in (all interior above ground plumbing): An inspection is required before covering drains, vents and the water distribution system.
- Structural framing and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) rough-in: An inspection is required before the installation of insulation, vapour barriers and interior air barriers.
- Insulation and vapour barrier: An inspection is required before the installation of interior finishes, but after framing is passed.

- Final interior (occupancy): An inspection is required prior to occupancy when all requirements under the Ontario Building Code for occupancy are completed, such as completed kitchen, bathrooms, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, handrails, lighting, etc.
- Final exterior: At this stage, all exterior work is complete.

SCHEDULING AN INSPECTION

To book an inspection, call 905-726-4778 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.p., Monday to Friday (excluding holidays and weekends). Please keep the following in mind when booking inspections:

- Inspections booked before 4 p.m. will be scheduled for the following business day.
- Inspections booked after 4 p.m. will be scheduled in two business days.
- Same-day inspection requests are not available.
- High-volume inspection periods may require a 48-hour timeline.

Information needed to book an inspection:

- Building permit number
- Municipal street address of project
- Type of inspection being requested
- Preferred inspection date
- Contact name and telephone number of the person meeting the inspector on-side for the inspection

Appendix A: Drawing Requirements

Construction drawings must be provided. Please note that commencing in September 2022 all building permit applications must be submitted through the Town's Building/Planning Application Portal.

Drawings are to be fully dimensioned, signed and dated and include information such as:

ITEM	REQUIREMENT	COMMENTS
Site Plan	Entire property (including front, sides and rear of property)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurements in metric (imperial measurements as supplemental only) • Clearly indicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot frontage • Location and dimension of parking spots and hard landscaping • Dimensions from house to property lines • Location of entrance and steps • Any additions (including walls/stairs for new basement entrance) • Location of new window wells
Existing Floor Plans and Elevations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing and demolition floor plans of all floors (basement, main, second, third) • Existing elevations where new or enlarged exterior openings are proposed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All exterior dimensions • Room names • Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms • Structural elements • Existing wall and ceiling construction in areas to be altered/renovated • Location of plumbing fixtures and laundry • Location of stairs, furnace, etc. • Clear ceiling heights • Exterior openings (windows and doors) with dimensions

ITEM	REQUIREMENT	COMMENTS
Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor plans of any floor that has changes (basement, main, second, third) • Proposed elevations where new or enlarged exterior openings are proposed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exterior and interior dimensions • Room names • Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms • Window and door location and sizes • Sprinkler heads (if any) • New walls and ceilings • New structural elements • Construction of fire and sound separation • Location of plumbing fixtures (bathroom layout), laundry, floor drains, etc. • Clear ceiling heights • Exterior openings (windows and doors) with dimensions
Section	Building section through construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate fire and sound separation construction including under any stairs • Clear ceiling heights
Details	Details of new wall/ceiling construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical walls and ceiling construction • Exterior walls including insulation values • Interior walls
Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC)	Existing heating system and fuel source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised heating layout • Ventilation summary • Mechanical design layout and heat loss or gain calculations • Air leakage calculation and summary including F-280 forms, mechanical ventilation design summary (as required)

ITEM	REQUIREMENT	COMMENTS
Private Sewage Disposal System	Where no municipal sanitary sewer is available adjacent to a property, the building sewer shall be connected to a private sewage disposal system to contain the sewage. The private disposal system shall be installed and maintained in compliance with all applicable acts, legislation, regulations and By-laws. (By-law 87-2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new septic system design to accommodate existing dwelling unit and secondary suite, or • Provide verification the existing individual septic system will accommodate existing dwelling unit and secondary suite <p>NOTE: The owner or occupier of such property shall operate and maintain the private sewage disposal facility system</p>

SOME OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY BE REQUIRED

Various Forms (as applicable)	Various forms (as applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for a permit to Construct or Demolish • Schedule 1 Designer Information (design, mechanical, septic) • Residential Plumbing Data • Energy Efficiency Design Summary • Sewage System Designer and Installer Information
Other Documents that Pertain to the Project	Various approvals (as applicable to the property in question, fees could apply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) approval • Development Engineering approval (lot grading) <p>NOTE: lot grading plan prepared by an Ontario Land Surveyor may be required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Design and Cultural Heritage division approval • Copy of Aurora Fire and Rescue Service notice • Other items as may become applicable

Appendix B: Sample Ontario Building Code Checklist

The following items are for convenience only and should be checked when preparing a building permit application for converting a single-family dwelling into two dwelling units. Although every application is different, this list should represent the bulk of the items that are to be checked. The items represent the most common solutions. The Ontario Building Code, current edition as amended, governs.

Where compliance cannot be attained through Division B Part 9 of the building code, Part 11 can be utilized if the dwelling has been in existence for five years or more.

REQUIREMENTS	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 9 (NEW BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS LESS THAN FIVE YEARS OLD)	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 11 (BUILDINGS FIVE YEARS OR OLDER)
1. Floor/ceiling wall Fire Resistance Rating (FRR) between dwelling units		
Floor/Ceiling (horizontal) FRR between the two dwelling units and common areas	45 minutes	OPTION 1: 30-minute rating is acceptable OPTION 2: 15-minute horizontal FRR where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Smoke alarms are installed in every dwelling unit and in common areas, and ii. smoke alarms are interconnected (entire building) OPTION 3: FRR waived if entire building is sprinklered, smoke tight construction required
Walls (vertical) FRR between dwelling units and common areas	45 minutes	30 minutes
Door fire protection rating	20 minutes (with self-closing device)	OPTION 1: Existing 45 mm (1¾") solid wood or metal clad acceptable, OPTION 2: Waived if floor area is sprinklered
Floor and wall sound rating (STC) separating dwelling units and common space	STC 50	Existing floor/wall may be acceptable

REQUIREMENTS	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 9 (NEW BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS LESS THAN FIVE YEARS OLD)	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 11 (BUILDINGS FIVE YEARS OR OLDER)
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2. Number of exits and exposure

Shared egress (exiting)	Two means of egress required	Existing one exit may be acceptable
Minimum of one exit	Minimum one exit to the exterior (not through a garage) to be provided NOTE: Two exits may be required.	Acceptable exits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door to the exterior where smoke alarms interconnected within dwelling unit • A shared exit separated by a minimum 30-minute fire separation and interconnected smoke alarms in both dwelling units and common spaces
Protection of exterior exit stair	Exterior exit stair to be protected from fire exposure if this is the only exit	New openings from other dwelling units near unenclosed exit stairs or ramps, in exterior walls of exits to be protected (i.e. wired glass in steel frames or glass block, if openings are within 3 m (9'-10") horizontally and less than 10 m (32'-10") below or less than 5 m (16'-5") above the exit stair or ramp. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No compliance alternatives available NOTE: if there is another exit (i.e. egress window), then protection as noted above is NOT required.
Egress Window	Egress window, minimum clear openable area of 0.35 m ² (3.8 sq. ft.) with no dimension less than 380 mm (15"); except for basements maximum sill height 1,000 mm (3'-3")	

3. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms (general requirements only, additional requirements may apply)

Interconnected smoke alarms	Smoke alarms interconnected within each dwelling unit	If using 15-minute horizontal fire resistance rating option smoke alarms required to be interconnected in entire house (existing dwelling unit, new dwelling unit and common areas)
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REQUIREMENTS	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 9 (NEW BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS LESS THAN FIVE YEARS OLD)	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 11 (BUILDINGS FIVE YEARS OR OLDER)
Location and general requirements of smoke alarms	Smoke alarms required on every floor, including basement, in every bedroom and in hallways serving bedrooms	Smoke alarms required to be on every floor and in hallways serving bedrooms
Visual signalling component (strobe light) for smoke alarms	New smoke alarms to have a visual signalling component (strobe light)	Existing construction may not require a strobe light
Carbon monoxide alarms	Hard wired	May be battery operated or plugged into an electrical outlet

4. Ceiling heights, door sizes, stud wall reinforcement, room sizes

Minimum clear ceiling heights in basement	6'-11" over entire floor area, 6'-5" under beams/ducts	6'-5" over all required room areas, under beams/ducts and any location normally used as a means of egress
Minimum door sizes (minimum height 78")	Unit entrance or service room doors = 32" Bedroom or rooms not mentioned elsewhere = 30" Bathroom, washroom, walk-in closet doors = 24"	
Stud wall reinforcement	Provide stud wall reinforcement for future installation of grab bars in main bathroom – may not be required for existing bathroom	

REQUIREMENTS	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 9 (NEW BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS LESS THAN FIVE YEARS OLD)	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 11 (BUILDINGS FIVE YEARS OR OLDER)
Minimum room sizes	<p>Separate Spaces:</p> <p>Living Room = 145 square feet</p> <p>Dining Room = 75 square feet</p> <p>Master Bedroom = 105 square feet</p> <p>Other Bedroom = 75 square feet</p> <p>Bathroom = sufficient space for a toilet, hand sink, bathtub or shower</p> <p>Combined Spaces:</p> <p>Living Room (more than 1 bedroom) = 145 square feet</p> <p>Living Room (1 bedroom) = 118 square feet</p> <p>Dining Room = 35 square feet</p> <p>Kitchen (more than 1 bedroom) = 45 square feet</p> <p>Kitchen (1 bedroom) = 40 square feet</p> <p>Bedroom Space = 45 square feet</p> <p>Bachelor Unit: = 145 square feet</p> <p>Living, dining, bedroom and kitchen spaces</p>	
5. Natural Light		
Natural light in living and dining rooms	10% of area served	5% of area served
Natural light in bedrooms and other finished rooms	5% of area served	2.2% of area served
Kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, basement recreation room	None required if electrical lighting available	

REQUIREMENTS	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 9 (NEW BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS LESS THAN FIVE YEARS OLD)	BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS UNDER PART 11 (BUILDINGS FIVE YEARS OR OLDER)
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6. Spatial Separation (amount of allowable glass in an exterior wall)

Spatial separation	New glazed openings in exterior walls of houses to meet building code requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New glazed openings in exterior walls of houses to meet building code requirements • Existing windows in walls may be relocated to another part of the wall under certain circumstances
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7. Electrical facilities

Electrical facilities	Minimum electrical facilities to be provided
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8. Laundry fixtures

Laundry facilities	Laundry facilities or a space for laundry facilities to be provided in every dwelling unit or grouped elsewhere in the building in a location conveniently accessible to occupants of every dwelling unit
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9. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system

Duct type smoke detector	The existing heating or air-conditioning system may be altered to serve more than one dwelling unit, provided smoke alarms are installed in each dwelling unit and provided a smoke detector is installed in the supply or return air duct system serving the entire building which would turn off the fuel supply and electrical power to the heating system upon activation of such detector.
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10. Private sewage system

Private sewage disposal system (where no municipal sanitary sewer is available adjacent to the property)	<p>Private disposal system shall be installed and maintained in compliance with all applicable acts, legislation, regulations and by-laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new septic system design to accommodate existing dwelling unit and secondary suite, or • Provide verification existing individual septic system will accommodate existing dwelling unit and secondary suite • Existing location may be acceptable in certain situations
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Footnote: Although every application is different, this list should represent the bulk of the items that are to be checked. The Ontario Building Code current edition as amended, governs.

**It is strongly recommended that you employ the services of a qualified designer with an appropriate Building Code Identification Number (BCIN), engineer or architect.
Unacceptable or inadequate drawings can delay obtaining a building permit.**
