



Updated: December 4 ,2017

Building Permit Checklist For Secondary Suite Development

“Secondary Suite” means a second self-contained dwelling unit that is located within a primary dwelling unit, where both dwelling units are registered under the same land title. Where a building has multiple occupancies, the secondary suite can only be created in a portion of the building that is of residential occupancy. Examples of buildings where secondary suites are permitted include individual detached houses, or where the secondary suite is located in a portion of a building that is of residential occupancy, semi-detached houses (half of a double) and freehold row houses.

- New secondary suite construction shall conform to the requirements of the **2014 Alberta Building Code**.

Secondary suites are only allowed when the Town of High River’s Land Use Zoning allows for this use and the construction of the suite which has been properly permitted and constructed to conform as a secondary suite. When this approval is not in place your dwelling must be occupied as a single tenancy. A secondary suite is only permitted where approved in accordance with municipal land use bylaws.

The costs to develop a secondary suite will vary depending on the conditions of the home, the size and extent of the development and type of changes required to comply with minimum code requirements. Before homeowners decide to proceed with renovating their homes to incorporate a new or upgraded secondary suite, they should approach the Town of High River’s municipal administration office and discuss their plan with a Development Officer or Building Safety Codes Officer and obtain the necessary information regarding permit requirements (e.g. building, plumbing, gas and electrical work), zoning and other construction considerations.

Benefits of getting a permit include:

- You have access to the expertise of certified Safety Codes Officers (Inspectors), who will help you comply with the Alberta Building Code.
- Your plans will be reviewed by a certified Safety Codes Officer to identify potential problems. This will help you make changes in the planning stage and avoid costly corrections after construction.
- Inspections will be carried out by certified Safety Codes Officers, who will provide you with inspection reports and follow-up of any outstanding deficiencies related to the Alberta Building Code.

All of the following information is necessary to complete a thorough evaluation and timely decision on your application. To aid in the evaluation, all materials submitted must be clear, legible, accurate and drawn to professional drafting standards. The Town of High River will only accept complete application submissions. Applicant’s checklist shall be completed and submitted as part of the Building Permit submission. Thank you for your cooperation.



Applicant's Checklist	For office use only	Required Items
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Approved Development Permit (if applicable).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Completed Building Permit application – A copy can be obtained at the Safety Codes counter or online at www.highriver.ca .
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Provide Sub-Contractors List – contractors and sub-trades require current Town of High River business license. Please note: contractors performing plumbing, gas and electrical work must hold a valid certificate to perform work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Set out the prevailing market value of the undertaking. (Note: estimated value of work includes materials, labor, contractor's fees, architectural and engineer's fees (where applicable); excludes cost of land.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. One set of floor plans on a scale of not less than 1:100 or legibly drawn showing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed and existing room(s) layout. • Dimensions of all rooms. • Use of each room (bedroom bathroom, etc.). • Location of all walls, partitions, doorways, windows and other openings • Window sizes, door sizes, location of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms. • light switches and receptacles. • Finish of all floors, walls and ceilings. • Details of structural changes proposed (may require an engineer design) (i.e. separate entrance / bedroom window enlargement). • Electrical panel placement.

NOTE: Issuance of an Occupancy Permit shall not be construed to be permission for, or approval of, a contravention of any provision of any other Act, regulation or Bylaw.

Business Licenses

It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure that all contractors and sub-trades working on this project are licensed to work in the Town of High River. If any of the said contractors or sub-trades do not pay the license fee, the owner will be billed in that amount (which may be taken off the Damage Deposit/Performance Bond) and a Stop Work Order may be placed on the building site until payment has been received. A list of all principal and sub-contractors is to be attached to the building permit application by the owner/applicant.

Full payment

Should you have any questions, please contact the Town of High River Safety Codes Department.

We will require a minimum ten (10) working days to process a completed building permit application. We will double the permit fees should construction start prior to obtaining a building permit. In case of emergency, a temporary building permit (footings and foundation only) may be issued at the discretion of the Authority having Jurisdiction.

The information sheets listed above can be found on our web-site at www.highriver.ca

Office Use Only:

Checked by:

Date:



The minimum ceiling height for living spaces in a secondary suite is 1.95 m.

This requirement is in line with current acceptable practice for unfinished basements. This height makes it feasible for most existing homes to be adapted for secondary suites. For existing secondary suites, the minimum ceiling height may be less than 1.95 m, subject to evaluation by a Safety Codes Officer.

A secondary suite must have a direct exit to the outdoors.

This requirement is an essential safety feature to provide a primary means of evacuating occupants from the secondary suite in the event of fire or other emergency. It is acceptable to have an exit from a basement suite with stairs leading from the basement to a main floor vestibule with a doorway directly to the outside. However, the walls and ceiling for such exits must be provided with protection (gypsum board) from the effects of fire to allow occupants adequate time to evacuate.

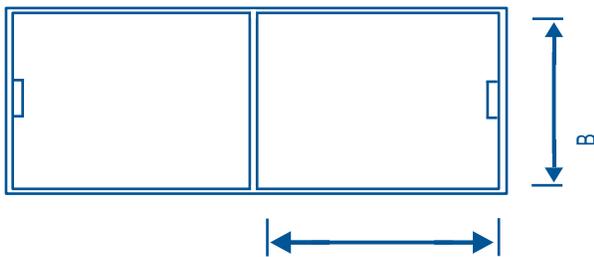
Bedroom Windows

Windows in bedrooms are intended to provide occupants with an alternate exit during a fire emergency. A secondary suite may contain a number of bedrooms, and each bedroom must have at least one window with an unobstructed opening size of not less than 0.35 m² (543 in²) and no dimension less than 380 mm (15”).

If a window opens into a window-well, a clearance of at least 760 mm (30”) between the window and the wall of the window-well is required. An egress window below grade that requires a window well must not be located under any main floor projections.

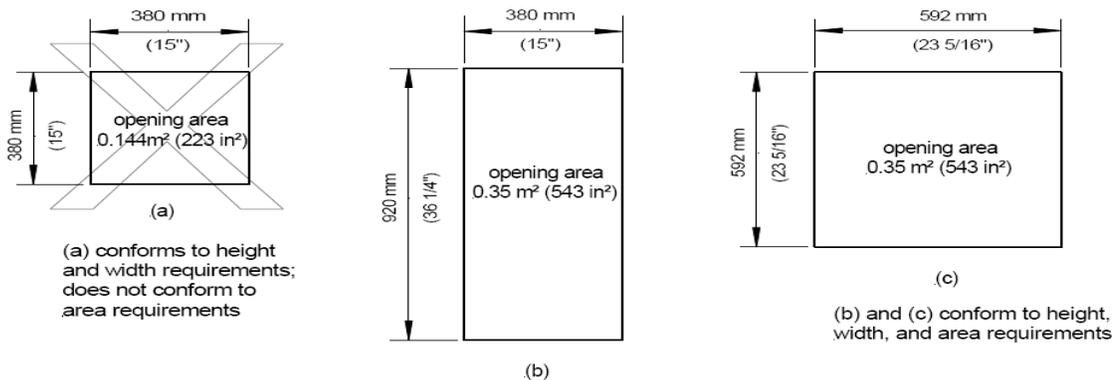
- Bedroom windows must open from the inside without the use of tools or special knowledge.
- If security bars are provided, they must also be able to be opened from the inside without the use of tools or technical knowledge.
- Bedroom windows must be able to be opened for ventilation, natural light and emergency exiting.
- The opening is required to be maintained during an emergency without the need for additional support.

Slider Type Window



Dimensions A and B cannot be less than 15” (380 mm) A x B cannot be less than 3.8 sq. ft. (0.35 sq. m)

Examples of bedroom window measurements:





Provide smoke-tight walls, ceiling, exits, by the use of ½-inch drywall.

This requirement is intended to provide smoke-tight barriers between suites to allow occupants of either unit time to evacuate before fire spreads between units. When the exit from a basement suite goes through a main floor vestibule to the outdoors, adequate fire protection to the exit walls and ceiling is necessary for occupants to evacuate safely.

Beams and floor joists

- Indicate details of any structural changes.
- Do not drill or notch beams or joists unless allowed by the manufacturer (see specifications for product).

Heating and Ventilation System,

Secondary suites, shall be served by an independent heating and ventilation system.

- A warm air vent must be provided in each finished room. Warm air vents must be located so at least one exterior wall or window is bathed by warm air.
- Warm air vents in finished areas must have heat registers with adjustable openings and cannot be located on a furnace plenum.
- The return air system must be designed to handle the entire air supply of the house. This may mean installing a cold air return in each room or leaving adequate gaps below doors.
- Do not locate return air openings within 10 ft (3m) (horizontally) from the furnace and not in an enclosed furnace room, bathroom or laundry room.

Furnace/Utility Room

Gas-fired furnaces and water heaters need to be enclosed in a furnace room which must be provided with ½-inch drywall applied to both sides of the walls and the ceiling to reduce fire spread to the living areas.

- The furnace room must be enclosed and provided with a minimum 32" x 78" door.
- Minimum clearances are required to be maintained around your furnace room appliances.
- Furnace Disconnect Switch – if the furnace is in an emergency condition, you must be able to shut it down without passing by the furnace.
- If the panel is behind the furnace, locate the furnace disconnect switch near the furnace room doorway.
- A clear walkway to the gas appliances of 36" is required.
- Air admittance valves are not allowed where vent piping can be accessed.
- Check your appliance labels as these clearances will be checked at time of inspection.

Plumbing

- All clean outs require an access cover. Well and floor access covers must be accessible.
- Hose bibb shut off requires access covers.
- Water lines and/or drainage piping cannot be located in exterior walls (frost walls).



Bathrooms

The bathroom must have a fan which is vented to the exterior to remove odors and condensation and the switch must be located inside the bathroom.

- If bathroom is on exterior wall it requires a source of heat.
- Bathroom door to be minimum (30") 760mm.
- All shower valves must be pressure-balanced or thermo static-mixing valves.
- Low flow water closets are required as per Town Bylaw.

Town of High River Water Conservation Bylaw No. 4212/2008 - Low Flow Plumbing Fixtures

Low flow plumbing fixtures are encouraged as a conservation measure for existing residential and commercial CONSUMERS.

1. For the purposes of this section, Low Flow Plumbing Fixtures are defined as:
 - (a) toilets having a total water usage of no greater than 1.6 US gallons or 6.0 litres per flush;
 - (b) urinals having a total water usage of no greater than 1.0 US gallons or 3.8 litres per flush, but does not include urinals which flush automatically after a period of elapsed time, regardless of the amount of water usage per flush;
 - (c) showerheads having a rate of water flow no greater than 2.5 US gallons or 9.5 litres per minute;
 - (d) lavatory basin and kitchen sink faucets having a rate of water flow no greater than 2.2 US gallons or 8.3 litres per minute; and
 - (e) public restroom faucets having a total water flow of no greater than 0.5 US gallons or 1.8 litres per minute.
2. Subsection 1. (c) will not be interpreted to prevent the installation of more than one valve in a shower stall or bathroom.
3. Every Person responsible for the construction of:
 - (a) New residential construction, regardless of the number of dwelling units contained in a structure;
 - (b) New industrial, commercial and institutional construction; and
 - (c) Any renovation project regarding a residential, industrial, commercial or institutional structure that requires a plumbing permit;
 - (d) Must ensure that all plumbing fixtures installed in that construction or renovation are Low Flow Plumbing Fixtures, as they are defined in this Section.
4. Water will not be used for any air conditioning or any other means of cooling subject to a written approval from the DIRECTOR.

Electrical

Electrical panel requires 3ft 3 in (1m) of clearance in front at all times and cannot be inside a clothes closet or bathroom.

- One circuit may have a maximum of 12 outlets (combination of lights and receptacles).
- Boxes installed on an insulated outside wall must have a vapor barrier hat installed around the box before it is nailed to the stud.
- All junction boxes must remain accessible (do not cover a box with drywall or build it into an inaccessible location).
- Three-way switches are required to control the basement stairway lighting from top and bottom landings.
- All communications cables must have FT1 or FT4 ratings (for flame-spread) imprinted on the cable. These cables must be separated from power cables by 2" (50mm) throughout (drill separate holes through the studs as well as install separate boxes).
- Bathroom switches must be located inside the bathroom. They are to be at least 500 mm from the side of the tub or shower. Switches must be on a GFCI protected circuit if less than 1 meter from the tub or shower.
- Branch circuits that supply receptacles installed in bedrooms shall be protected by an arc-fault circuit interruptor breaker.
- All receptacles 1.5 m from any sink require GFCI protection unless they are located behind an appliance.
- All receptacles to be tamper resistant.

309B Macleod Trail SW, High River, AB T1V 1Z5 P: 403-652-2110 E: permits@highriver.ca W: www.highriver.ca

The personal information provided on this form is protected by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
Information on this form may be used by the Authority having Jurisdiction.



Smoke Alarms / Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Homes containing a secondary suite must have interconnected smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms installed to cover both dwellings.

Smoke alarms conforming to CAN/ULC-S531-02 “Smoke Alarms” must be located in both the main dwelling and the secondary suite and be installed in conformance of CAN/ULC-S553-02 and the Alberta Building Code. Smoke alarms in a house with a secondary suite shall be wired so that the activation of any one smoke alarm causes all smoke alarms within the house with a secondary suite to sound. Smoke alarms are required in each bedroom and hallway.

Carbon monoxide alarms conforming to CAN/CSA-6.19-01 “Residential Carbon Monoxide Alarming” must be installed in a house with a secondary suite including their common spaces, and shall be hard-wired so that the activation of any one CO alarm causes all CO alarms within the house with a secondary suite including their common spaces to sound. They are required inside each bedroom, or outside each bedroom, within 5 m of each bedroom door, measured following corridors and doorways.

COMMON CODE CONCERNS

- Interior damp proofing is required unless a 25mm (1”) gap is provided between the concrete and the insulated stud wall.
- Interior damp proofing should not extend higher than the adjacent ground level.
- The perimeter of the foundation wall is to be insulated from the top of the wall to a minimum of 600 mm (24 inches) below the exterior finished ground level. This insulation is to have a minimum thermal resistance value of RSI 1.4(R8).
- Foamed plastic insulation materials can be dangerous when exposed to fire and must be protected by a thermal barrier (i.e. ½” drywall or equivalent).
- Spray foam – provide CCMC#.
- Provide a continuous vapor barrier of approved 6mil.polyethylene or equivalent to be installed on the heated side of the insulation.
- Acoustic sealant is required on top and bottom plates, all exterior outlet boxes, and all horizontal poly joints.
- Wood stud furring shall be (spacing of 0.6m (24”) maximum).
- Bottom floor plate shall be pressure treated or separated from the floor with approved 6mil. polyethylene or equivalent.

Inspections are required at the following stages:

- 1) Upon completion of framing, vapor barrier & insulation: prior to concealing work**
- 2) Upon completion (depending on the project)**

To book a Building inspection, please call [403-603-3412](tel:403-603-3412) or e-mail requests to permits@highriver.ca

For Plumbing, Electrical & Gas Inspection, please call [403-603-3468](tel:403-603-3468) or e-mail requests to permits@highriver.ca