

Secondary suites are self-contained living units created within single-family detached homes or when allowed, in an accessory building.

These suites include a kitchen, bathroom, a separate entrance, and provide Albertans with an affordable housing option.

Ceiling Heights of Rooms or Spaces

- Provide fire protected walls and ceiling between secondary suite and main dwelling unit and around common exits by the use of 1/2 inch drywall
- Minimum ceiling height for living spaces in a secondary suite is 1.95 m
- Bedroom 1.95 m



Bedroom Windows/Emergency Exit

- Each bedroom in secondary suite must have at least one window for emergency escape during a fire
- Minimum one *operable* outside window that has "unobstructed opening" of 0.35 m² with no dimension less than 0.38 m
- For sliding windows the minimum dimension applies to the operable portion of the window
- If window opens into window well minimum .56 m clearance in front of window
- Must be able to open window from inside without use of tools or special knowledge, including opening security bars
- See diagram on next page

Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- Smoke/carbon monoxide alarms are required to be installed in ceilings in each sleeping room and a smoke detector/carbon monoxide alarm in a location between the sleeping room doorways and the remainder of the storey (hallway)
- Must have certification label 120V (not battery powered) and wired to general circuit for lights and plugs with no switches between the breaker and the smoke alarm
- Alarms to be located on or near ceiling and within 5 m of every bedroom. More than one alarm may be required
- Carbon monoxide alarms are required when installing wood burning stoves or basement bedroom(s)
- Must have interconnected smoke alarms installed to cover both dwellings

Bathroom/Water Bylaw 23-21

Indoor Water Conservation Measures

- **Toilets**
 - For main level and/or upper storey toilets a WaterSense® certified high-efficiency (HET) or a high efficiency single flush or dual flush toilet with an effective flush volume not exceeding 4.8 litres (1.28 US gallons) per flush with a solid waste removal of 350 grams² or greater
 - For sub grade / basement level toilets, all toilets shall be 6 litres (1.6 US gallons) per flush or less
- **High Efficiency Faucets**
 - A WaterSense® certified high-efficiency (HET) residential Faucets lavatory (bathroom) faucet or; a residential lavatory (bathroom) faucet with a flow capacity/maximum flow rate of not more than 5.7 litres (1.5 US gallons) per minute
 - All shower valves must be pressure-balanced or thermostatic-mixing valves
 - Showerheads -WaterSense® certified or a shower head with a flow capacity/maximum flow rate of not more than 7.6 litres (2.0 US gallons) per minute. More than one showerhead, the cumulative flow capacity shall not exceed 7.6 litres per minute (See Bylaw 23-21)
 - A kitchen faucet with a flow capacity/maximum flow rate of not more than 6.8 litres (1.8 US gallons) per minute
- **Water Conserving Appliances**
 - A dishwasher certified as an EnergyStar® water conserving appliances device; and front and top-load clothes washers certified as an EnergyStar4 water conserving device
- **Fans**
 - Must be vented to exterior with separate switch located inside the room

Electrical

- Electrical panel requires 1 m of clearance in front at all times and cannot be inside a closet or bathroom
- One circuit may have a maximum of 12 outlets (combination of lights and plugs)
- Vapour barrier hat must be installed around the box on an outside wall 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
- Bathroom plugs are required to be GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interruptor) and located at least 0.51 m from shower or tub. Bathroom switches must be out of reach of the shower or tub unless protected by a GFCI
- Branch circuits that supply receptacles installed in basement bedrooms shall be protected by an arc-fault circuit interruptor

Heat/Ventilation

- Warm air vent to be provided in each finished room located next to unheated space (exterior wall or cold room)
- When a room has an exterior wall, warm air vents are to be located with at least one exterior wall/window bathed by warm air.
- Heat registers must have adjustable openings and cannot be located on a furnace plenum
- Return air system must be designed to handle entire air supply of house
- Return air openings are not to be located within 3 m horizontally from the furnace and cannot be installed in an enclosed furnace room, bathroom or laundry room
- Gas fired furnaces and water heaters need to be enclosed in a room with fire protected walls and ceiling by the use of 1/2 inch drywall
- New secondary suites shall be served by an independent heating and ventilation system

Doors

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

Minimum door width sizes:

- Mechanical Room 0.81 m
- Bathroom 0.61 m
- Bedroom 0.76 m
- Minimum door height 1.58 m

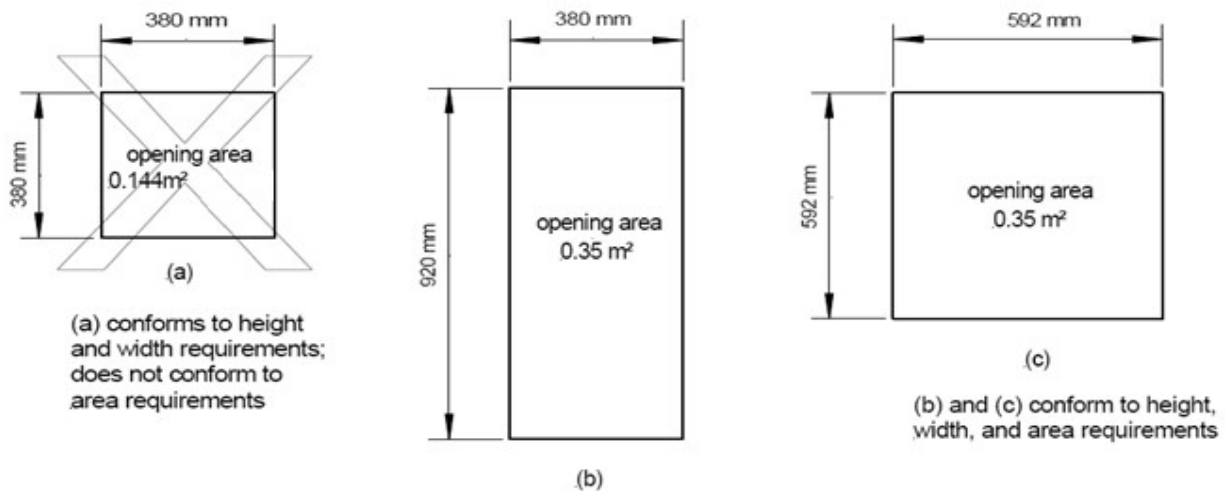
Communication Cables

- Cables must have FT1 or FT4 ratings (for flame-spread) imprinted on the cable. Cables must be separated from power cables by 0.05 m throughout. Drill separate holes through studs and install separate boxes

Mechanical Room

- Gas-fired furnaces and water heaters shall be enclosed in a room with fire protected walls and ceiling with 1/2 inch drywall
- Prior to submitting application check rating plate on appliances (hot water tank, furnace, boiler) for minimum clearance requirements
- Furnaces require disconnect switch which can be the breaker or another switch. When the doorway is made the switch must be located between the entryway and furnace

Example of bedroom window measurements



This guideline may be updated periodically. It has no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various bylaws, codes and regulations currently in effect.