

## SECONDARY SUITE BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

### MEANING OF SECONDARY SUITE

A secondary suite shall:

- Have a total floor area as required by the latest Zoning Bylaw #5000.
- Be located within a building in compliance with the latest Zoning Bylaw #5000.
- Not be subdivided from the building it is part of under the Strata Act; and,
- Have the Owner of the property live in the building of residential occupancy.

### REQUIREMENTS OF THE BC ELECTRICAL BRANCH

A licensed electrician shall apply and pay for an electrical permit for the work on the secondary suite. The homeowner cannot do his own electrical install. Contact **Technical Safety BC** for additional information regarding electrical permits and requirements.

### HEIGHTS OF ROOMS OR SPACES

The minimum head room height is not to be less than 2.1m (6' 10-5/8") in a new or unfinished suite and 1.95m (6' 4-3/4") in existing spaces.

The minimum head room height below existing beams and ducts is not to be less than 1.85m (6' 0-7/8").

### EXIT STAIRS

Exit stairs within or serving a building shall have a minimum width of not less than 860mm (2'-10").

### LANDINGS

The length of the landings for exterior stairs shall not be less than width of the stairs.

### HANDRAILS AND GUARDS

Handrails and guards to be built in accordance with Section 9.8 of the current BC Building Code.

### MEANS OF EGRESS

The width of every common exit corridor shall not be less than 860mm (2'-10").



### FIRE SEPARATION OF EXITS

Every exit, other than an exit doorway, shall be separated from another living space by a fire separation:

- Having a fire resistance rating of 45 minutes, or
- Having a fire resistance rating on not less than 30 minutes where the dwelling units are equipped with photo-electric type smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, with at least one alarm interconnected between each unit.
- Having a fire resistance rating on not less than 15 minutes where the dwelling units are equipped with photo-electric type smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, with all alarms interconnected between each unit.

If the house sprinklered, a resistance rating is not required for the fire separation.

### OPENINGS NEAR UNENCLOSED EXIT STAIRS AND RAMPS

Be aware modifications to the building may be required where a window or door is located close to a stair or ramp serving the other suite in the residence. This requirement can be removed if all smoke alarms are interconnected within an existing, finished house.

### DOORS IN MEANS OF EGRESS

Every exit door or door that opens into or is located within a corridor that provides an exit path for the suite shall:

- Not be less than 1.98m (6'-6") high in new or unfinished spaces and 1.89m (6' 2-3/8") in existing, finished spaces;
- Have a clear opening width (a clear distance when the door is fully open) of not less than 800mm (2'-7½"); and,
- Be permitted to swing inwards.

### SHARED EGRESS (PATH OF EXIT) FACILITIES

Each dwelling unit shall be provided with a second and separate means of egress or an opening window with an opening at least 1.0m (3' 3-3/8") high and 0.55m (1' 9-5/8") where the egress door from either dwelling unit opens onto:

- An exit stair which serves both units;
- A corridor serving both unit suites and served by a single exit stairway;
- An exterior passageway serving both suites and served by a single exit stairway; or,
- A balcony serving both suites and served by a single exit stairway.



### COMBUSTIBLE DRAIN, WASTE AND VENT PIPING

Combustible drain, waste and vent piping is permitted to be located within or penetrate a fire separation required to have a fire resistance rating provided:

- The combustible piping is located within an assembly (wall or ceiling) protected by a membrane of a minimum 12.7mm (½") gypsum board;
- The permitted penetration through a gypsum board membrane is shall not be larger than the outside diameter of the penetrating pipe.; and,
- The combustible piping does not penetrate the gypsum board protection membrane on the underside of a horizontal fire separation.

### SEPARATION OF RESIDENTIAL SUITES

The dwelling unit and secondary suite shall be separated from each other by:

- The separation of the dwelling unit and secondary suite shall be separated by a fire separation having a fire resistance rating of not less than 45 minutes;
- A fire separation having a fire resistance rating of not less than 30 minutes where the dwelling and secondary suite have photo-electric type smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, with at least one alarm interconnected between each unit.
- A fire separation having a fire resistance rating on not less than 15 minutes where the dwelling units are equipped with photo-electric type smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, with all alarms interconnected between each unit.
- A fire separation having no required fire resistance rating where the building is sprinkled.

### SEPARATION OF COMMON CORRIDORS

A common exit corridor serving the building with a secondary suite shall be separated from the suites by;

- A fire separation having a fire resistance rating of not less than 45 minutes;
- A fire separation having a fire resistance rating of not less than 30 minutes where the dwelling and secondary suite have photo-electric type smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, with at least one alarm interconnected between each unit.
- A fire separation having a fire resistance rating on not less than 15 minutes where the dwelling units are equipped with photo-electric type smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, with all alarms interconnected between each unit; or,
- A fire separation having no required fire resistance rating where the building is sprinkled.



### HEATING AND VENTILATION DUCTWORK

Where a supply and return air duct system serves more than one suite, the system shall be designed and installed to prevent the circulation of smoke upon a signal from a duct-type smoke detector.

Supply and return air ducts penetrating fire separations are required to be equipped with fire dampers unless the ducts are non-combustible, less than 130cm<sup>2</sup> (5" dia.) and serving only one fire compartment.

### EXTERIOR WALL CONSTRUCTION

Where the limiting distance (the distance from a wall to a property line) is less than 1.2m (3'-11"), a fire separation having a fire resistance rating of not less than 45 minutes is required for this wall.

Where the limiting distance (the distance from a wall to a property line) is less than 0.6m (2'-0"), the wall face shall be covered with noncombustible material.

Window openings are not permitted if the limiting distance is less than 1.2m (3'-11"). Where the limiting distance is greater than 1.2m (3'-11"), window openings are may be restricted depending on the wall area, wall proximity to the property line and the total area of permitted window openings.

### SMOKE ALARMS

An additional interconnected photo-electric type smoke and carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed in each suite, except as permitted below:

- The separation of the dwelling unit and secondary suite is separated by a fire separation having a fire resistance rating of not less than 45 minutes; or,
- The building is sprinkled.

Smoke alarms may rely on wireless technology for interconnection.

### SOUND CONTROL

An STC rating of 43 or an ASTC rating of 40 for new or unfinished secondary suites. A secondary suite in an existing, finished space does not require an sound rating where resilient metal channel spaced 400mm or 600mm o.c. with an additional layer of a minimum 12.7mm (1/2") gypsum board added to one side of the assembly.



### ATTIC SPACES ACCESS

An attic space access hatchway not less than 0.32m<sup>2</sup> (496 sq in) in an area with no dimension less than 545mm (21½") may serve both suites in a building which contains a secondary suite.

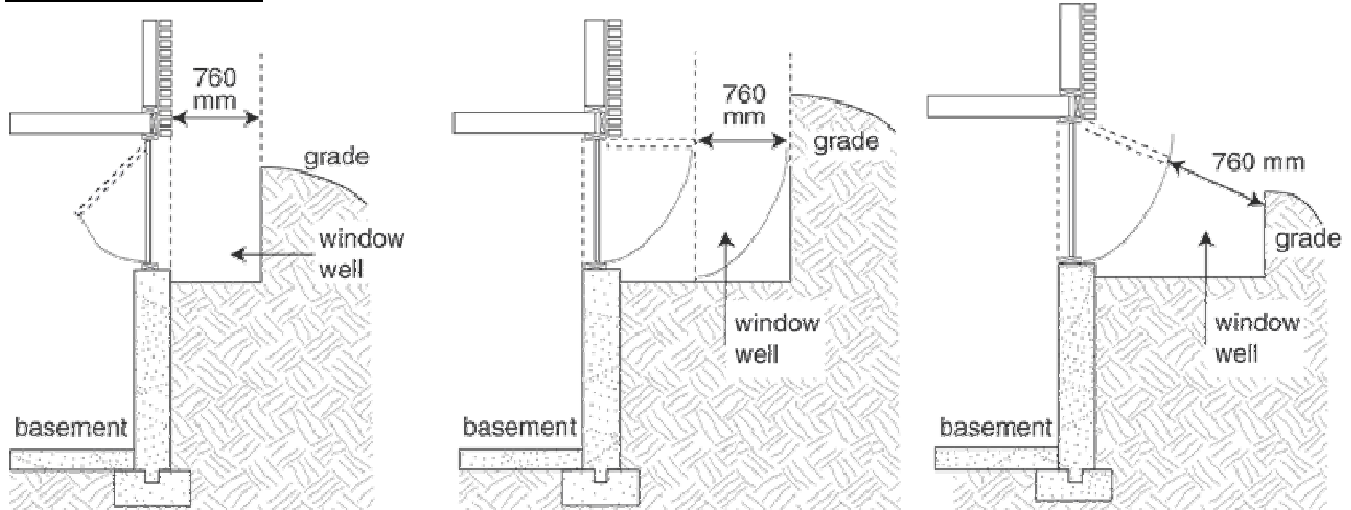
### BEDROOM WINDOWS

Each bedroom or combination bedroom shall have at least one outside window, or exterior door openable from the inside without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.

This window shall:

- provide an unobstructed opening (with the window in the fully open position) of not less than 0.35m<sup>2</sup> (541 in<sup>2</sup>) in area with no dimension less than 380mm (15"); and,
- maintain the required opening during an emergency without the need for additional support.

### WINDOW WELLS



EG00688A

