



# SECONDARY SUITES

Edmonton

## BENEFITS

Secondary suites help homeowners with mortgage payments and contribute to more affordable housing options for renters in Edmonton.

## REGULATIONS

Regulations on secondary suites are intended to balance the needs of the homeowner with the minimum health and safety requirements that apply to all housing.

## EXEMPTIONS

Secondary suites are not permitted in duplexes, semi-detached homes, apartments or boarding/lodging housing, row housing or a home with a major home based business.

## DEFINITION

A secondary suite is a separated dwelling located inside a single detached house, with its own cooking, sleeping and bathroom facilities, and utilities.

Secondary suites have a separate entrance from the rest of the house and can be created through the conversion or development of a basement or other interior space.



## CREATING A SECONDARY SUITE

Most single detached houses or properties zoned for single detached houses are permitted to have a secondary suite.

To find out if a secondary suite may be allowed in your home, go to [maps.edmonton.ca](http://maps.edmonton.ca), select “Zoning” and search your property address. Click on your “Current Zone” under the “General” tab.

- If secondary suites are listed under “Permitted Uses” or “Discretionary Uses,” you **may be allowed** a secondary suite.
- If secondary suites are not listed, you are **not allowed** a secondary suite.

Follow the process below to:

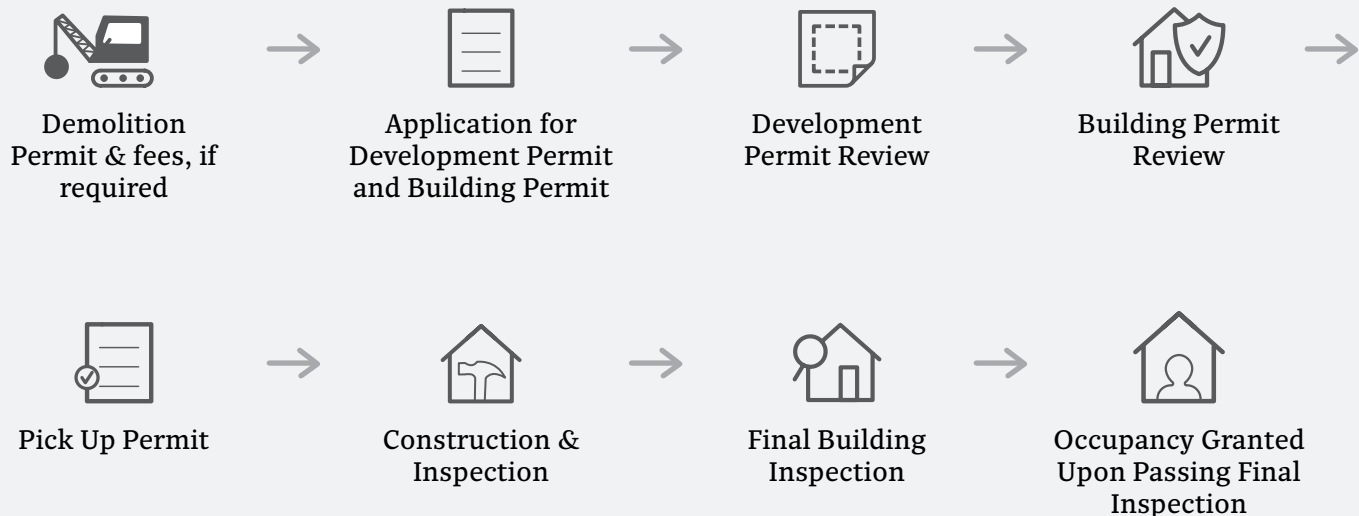
- **Legalize an existing illegal suite**
- **Create a new suite in an existing home**
- **Create a new suite in a new home**

## DISCLAIMER

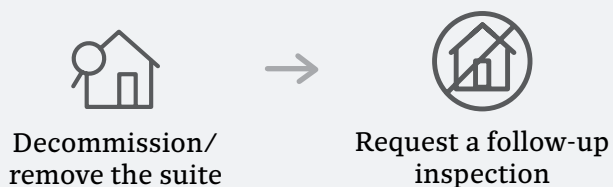
*While [maps.edmonton.ca](http://maps.edmonton.ca) will give you an indication of your property’s zone and applicable regulations, some inaccuracies may occur. To get the confirmation of your zone, please submit a [Zoning Confirmation Application Form](#).*



## APPROVED SECONDARY SUITE PROCESS



If you have a **legal or illegal suite that you would like to remove**, the following process will apply:



## APPLICATION CONSIDERATIONS

There are certain elements of a secondary suite that require careful consideration. Keep the list below in mind while designing your suite and you may be able to reduce costs, and construction time, as well as improve space and efficiency.

## REQUIREMENTS

Specific requirements for each of the elements listed below can be found in the Alberta Building Code and Alberta Fire Code.

**Suite Entrance** - The entrance must provide a safe exit directly outdoors during the event of a fire or other emergency. You may also want to consider the entrance location so that it does not disrupt privacy of the main unit.

**Height of Rooms and Spaces** - A minimum ceiling height must be met for living spaces and staircases in a secondary suite.

**Bedroom Windows** - At least one window or a door in bedrooms must provide occupants with an alternate exit during a fire emergency. Windows must be unobstructed and meet the minimum size requirements.

**Fire Separations** - The secondary suite must be separated from the main dwelling by walls, floors and ceilings that meet the minimum required separation and are constructed of smoke-tight gypsum boards. If there is a fire, this allows occupants of both units time to evacuate before fire spreads between units.

Gas-fired furnaces and water heaters must be enclosed in a room with fire protected walls and ceilings to prevent the spread of fire to living areas and reduce hazards to health (such as carbon monoxide poisoning).

**Independent Heating and Ventilation System** - Independent ductwork systems help to reduce smoke migration and the spread of undesirable air contaminants (e.g. cigarette smoke or cooking fumes).

**Interconnected Smoke Alarms** - Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms must be interconnected so that they cover both dwellings and provide early warning to occupants if a fire starts in the other suite.

**Parking Requirements** - Minimum parking requirements for secondary suites help to reduce on-street parking congestion.

Before homeowners renovate their homes to incorporate a new or upgraded secondary suite, they should discuss their plan with a Development Officer or Building Safety Codes Officer to obtain the necessary information regarding zoning, development permit as well as building and related permits.

## PLEASE NOTE

*If your suite was built on or before December 31, 2006, your house may be subject to building regulations of the Alberta Fire Code. These regulations recognize that older homes were built under different construction standards and are intended to provide flexibility to make secondary suites possible in older homes without compromising safety.*



## SECONDARY SUITE APPLICATION

Before starting any construction work associated with your secondary suite, you will need both a Development Permit and Building Permit from the City of Edmonton.

During Development and Building Permit Review, our staff will review your application submission and point out anything that does not comply with current regulations. Staff will try to work with you to resolve these issues so that a permit can be issued.

You must submit the following with your secondary suite application:

- ☐ A site plan, Real Property Report (RPR) or survey accurately drawn to scale showing:
  - The entire lot, legal description of the property, property lines and identification, and dimensions of setbacks of all buildings from the property line
  - Location of secondary suite and main suite and all parking spaces
- ☐ A floor plan at a scale of  $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'0"$  or metric equivalent accurately drawn to scale that shows:
  - The entire floor area of the level where the secondary suite is located (area calculation)
  - Floor plans of the rest of the house to see the size (floor area) and location of the secondary suite relative to the size (floor area) and location of the main dwelling
  - Use and sizes of rooms, stairs and hallways
  - Sizes of doors and windows including exit door(s) and bedroom egress/exit window(s)
  - Location of smoke and carbon monoxide alarm(s) and primary exhaust fan
  - Wall construction details, including fire separation walls and floors between the suite and main dwelling
  - Location of heating sources and primary exhaust fan

## REVIEW

After your application is submitted, it will be reviewed to ensure that it complies with Zoning Bylaw 12800 and with the Alberta Building Code or the Alberta Fire Code, depending on the construction date.

Other required permits include: heating and ventilation, plumbing, gas and electrical permits may also be required depending on the extent of work.

## FUNDING FOR QUALIFIED HOMEOWNERS

As part of Cornerstones: Edmonton's Plan for Affordable Housing, the City of Edmonton offers some financial assistance to either build a new or upgrade an existing secondary suite.

For more information and to apply for Cornerstone funding, visit [edmonton.ca/secondariesuites](http://edmonton.ca/secondariesuites).



## CONTACT

311 or if outside of Edmonton 780.442.5311

### EDMONTON SERVICE CENTRE

2nd Floor, 10111 104 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0J4

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

[edmonton.ca/secondariesuites](http://edmonton.ca/secondariesuites)