

Building Code Requirements for Secondary Suites

There are numerous considerations under the National Building Code to consider with the addition of a secondary suite to your single detached house. The information below highlights some of the requirements to take into consideration when designing your secondary suite. A complete review of your building plans is required when you apply for your building permit. To receive detailed Building Code information, please contact a Municipal Building Official.

Some of the requirements that secondary suites must follow:

- **Entrances** – A secondary suite must have a separate entry door. This door may open to a vestibule shared with the rest of the house or may lead directly outside. An existing side or back door may be used as the apartment entrance.
- **Fire safety** – Each wall, floor or ceiling separating the secondary suite from the rest of the house must provide adequate fire and sound resistance. According to a brochure prepared by the Province of Ontario, a combination of batt insulation and drywall supported on metal channels will normally enable standard wood-frame construction to meet code requirements. Other requirements include smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and a fire exit.
- **Height, moisture and natural light** – If the apartment is provided in the basement, it must be dry and have adequate natural lighting and enough headroom.

Information from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation



Note

Please note that this brochure has been produced as a guide to accessory dwelling units in East Hants. Contact the Planning and Development Department to apply for the appropriate permits.

The Municipality of East Hants bears no responsibility in ensuring that all Provincial and Federal regulations have been followed.



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Accessory Dwelling Units

A general guide to accessory dwelling units in East Hants



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Introduction

With the adoption the East Hants Official Community Plan in July 2016 came new provisions for accessory dwelling units. Previously, accessory dwelling units were only permitted where the zoning allowed for more than one dwelling unit. A changing demographic has lead to East Hants Council amending the regulations to allow accessory dwelling units on all residentially zoned lands as long as minimum lot requirements can be achieved and subject to the provisions of the Land Use Bylaw and National Building Code. As an example, this change will permit homeowners with R1 zoned lands to construct suites for their aging parents or grown children. It allows for multiple generations to live under one roof while sharing the costs of home ownership.

Types of Accessory Dwelling Units

There are three types of accessory dwelling units: Secondary Suite, Garage Suite, and Garden Suite. All three of these units are only permitted as an accessory use to a single detached dwelling and shall not be considered as a stand-alone structure without the main dwelling unit. Accessory dwelling units are intended to be independent and a separate unit from the main single-detached dwelling which contains its own sleeping, living, cooking, bathroom facilities, and its own independent entrance.

Garage Suite means an accessory dwelling unit built above a detached garage and located behind the primary single unit dwelling.

Garden Suite means a free-standing, single-story accessory dwelling unit located behind the primary single unit dwelling.

Secondary Suite means a self-contained accessory dwelling unit fully contained within and subordinate to a single unit dwelling.



	Secondary Suite	Garage Suite	Garden Suite
Total minimum Lot area	Must comply with minimum lot area requirements.	600 m ²	920 m ²
Yard Setbacks	As per zone requirements, also garage suites and garden suites must not be built closer to the front lot line than the main dwelling.		
Maximum accessory dwelling unit gross floor area	80% of the gross floor area of the main dwelling up to 80 m ²	Lesser between 80% of the gross floor area of the main dwelling, and: Lot area between 600 m ² and 650 m ² : up to 46 m ² gross floor area Lot area greater than 650 m ² : up to 80 m ² gross floor area	Lesser between 80% of the gross floor area of the main dwelling, and: Lot area between 600 m ² and 650 m ² : up to 46 m ² gross floor area Lot area greater than 650 m ² : up to 80 m ² gross floor area
Maximum Building Height	11 m	If the main dwelling is 1 story with or with-out a basement then a maximum 1.5 stories with a maximum 1.22 m pony wall otherwise a maximum height of 9 m	4.5 m
Minimum Setback from other Buildings	2m from non-habitable structures 3m from habitable structures		
Design Requirements			
Accessory dwelling unit exterior	Must match the main dwelling in building material type, cladding colour, roof type, and roof pitch.		