



NORTH VANCOUVER
DISTRICT

Secondary Suite Frequently Asked Questions District of North Vancouver Planning, Properties & Permits

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Secondary Suite Program – Frequently Asked Questions

Definitions

1. *What is a “secondary suite”?*

The District’s Zoning Bylaw defines a secondary suite as:

“an accessory dwelling unit that is attached to a single-family residential building on a lot in a zone that permits a single-family residential building;”

Secondary suites are sometimes referred to as in-law suites, basement suites, nanny suites or mortgage helpers and have been legally permitted in the District since October 14, 1997. A building permit authorizes the installation of a secondary suite.

2. *Which zone(s) permit secondary suite?*

A secondary suite is permitted only in the single family residential zone and in the single family residential house. Secondary suite is NOT permitted in the townhouse or multifamily residential units.

3. *What is a “dwelling unit”?*

The Zoning Bylaw defines “dwelling unit” as:

one or more habitable rooms for the residential accommodation of only one family and contains or provides for not more than one cooking facility, except that not more than one additional cooking facility may be contained or provided in a dwelling unit having a child care facility that is licensed under the Community Care Facility Act;

4. *What is a “cooking facility”?*

The Zoning Bylaw defines a cooking facility as:

“a room or portion thereof where and the equipment by which meals may be prepared”

See also section 501 of the Zoning Bylaw.

Secondary Suite

5. *I just bought my home and the secondary suite may have been built without permits? Do I pay the additional fees?*

Yes, the purpose of this program is to register secondary suites for the collection of the additional water and sewer utility fees, not to inspect your suite. If you purchased your home with a suite already in it, you will pay the additional utility fees regardless of whether you

know if the suite was created with permits or not. If you are already paying the fees, it will be indicated on your tax notice.

Inspections

6. *Will the District be inspecting my suite if I declare I have a suite?*

The purpose of this program is to identify secondary suites only so that the applicable utility fees can be collected. Homeowners are, however, responsible for ensuring that their premises comply with zoning and safety requirements.

New Secondary Suites

7. *What if I don't have a secondary suite but would like to create one in my home.*

A building permit is required before you can create a new secondary suite in your single family home.

Billing

8. *Once I register my suite, when will I be billed for the additional utility fees?*

You will receive a bill approximately one month after registration of the suite for the current year, and once a year after that for as long as the suite exists. The yearly utility fees will appear on your property tax bill.

9. *When did the utility fees first take effect?*

The additional utility fees for secondary suites came into effect in 2001.

10. *How do you build the District's secondary suite utility fee registry list?*

The District also adds previously unidentified suites to the list through new construction, real estate listings and public advertisement research, and complaint investigation. A cursory suite inspection could occur later if it is learned that an undeclared suite exists or if a complaint is received.

Declaring a Suite

11. *I have an unauthorized suite. Am I supposed to declare my suite?*

Yes, it is an offence to use water or sewer services without paying for them.

Suite not rented out

12. *I have a suite in my house but currently do not rent it out. Do I have to pay the extra utility fees? What am I expected to do?*

Yes, if the suite is in existence, you are required to pay the fees, even if it isn't currently occupied. To avoid the fees, you are required to remove the second cooking facility, (this means removing the range, hood vent, range outlet, disconnecting the wiring at the panel and removing the electrical breaker). Once you have removed the second cooking facility, please call the building department at 604-990-2480 to arrange for an inspection. Please note electrical work or gas work done by a contractor requires a permit.

13. *Can I use my secondary suite for operation of the short term rental?*

No, secondary suite can't be used for operation of the "bed and breakfast" or any other form of short term rental including accommodating "boarders/lodgers" like international students.