

Building Permit Requirements for Creating an Additional Residential Unit

A building permit is required to create an additional residential unit within an existing dwelling or an accessory structure. This guide explains the most common requirements for submitting a building permit application for an Additional Residential Unit and is based on the 2012 Ontario Building Code Part 9 (updated January 1, 2022) and Part 11 if the dwelling has been in existence for more than 5 years.

When applying for a building permit the following must be submitted:

1. [Application Form for a permit to Construct or Demolish](#) (15 business day review period)
2. Permit fees paid for at permit submission, minimum \$126.00:
 - \$0.47/sf for previously finished areas being modified and unfinished areas being finished PLUS
 - \$250 rebate fee (refundable upon final sign-off)
3. [Schedule 1: Designer Information form](#) completed by:
 - A qualified designer, minimum "House" required (designer declaration on all drawings),
 - The registered homeowner, or
 - Architect or Engineer (form not required when all drawings are stamped),
4. Site plan or Survey (drawn to scale)
 - Show the required parking spaces and all dimensions
 - Show the location of existing/proposed buildings and all setbacks (if applicable)
5. Construction drawings (single line drawings not acceptable, drawn to scale):
 - Existing floor plans (all floors):
 - Window/door sizes & locations, room names, stair location, wall locations & construction, etc (for all floors).
 - Proposed floor plans:
 - New wall construction, fire separations (new and existing), new windows and doors, room names, plumbing locations for kitchen, bathrooms & laundry, ceiling heights (overall, under beams and ducts), egress/exits, etc.
 - Show accessory structure framing, plumbing, heating, etc. (if applicable)
 - Elevations (applicable if adding egress windows/doors with glazing)

General Zoning Requirements for Additional Units

Contact our planning department with any questions about the below at 519-623-1340 4602. The [City of Cambridge Zoning By-law](#) is also available for review on the City of Cambridge website.

1. **Requirements:**

- a. Up to 2 Additional Residential Units (ARUs) are now permitted in RR1, RR2, R1, R2, R3, R4 zones.
 - i. Where 2 units are permitted up to 1 unit may be located in an accessory structure
 - ii. No more than 1 unit may be located in a basement/cellar
- b. 1 Additional Residential Unit is permitted in R5, R6, RD3, RD4, RD5, RM1, RM2, RM3, RM4
- c. A maximum of **2** bedrooms is permitted within the additional unit (any room with a door and closet is deemed a bedroom).
- d. The unit or units together may not exceed 40% of the total floor area of the principal dwelling (including basement).
 - i. Where the basement exceeds 40% of the total floor area the whole basement may be used for a single unit.
 - ii. Units in an accessory structure may not exceed 80 sq. m of floor area regardless of the total area of the principal dwelling.
- e. The principle dwelling and additional unit must be connected to municipal sewer and water services of adequate size (upgrading may be required). If on private water and sewer, proof must be provided to show that they are capable to accommodate the additional unit, satisfactory to the City of Cambridge.
- f. Min. 2-3 legal parking spaces on the property (tandem permitted)
 - i. Principal dwelling unit requires 1 space for the first 4 bedrooms, plus 1 for each additional 2 (e.g. 4 bedrooms requires 1, 5 requires 2, 7 requires 3, etc).
 - ii. Additional units require 1 space per unit.
 - iii. Spaces required by additional units may be forward of the regulatory building line, spaces required by the primary dwelling unit may not.

Other Requirements

An ESA (Electrical Safety Authority) permit is required when electrical work is being completed.



Building Design Requirements

REQUIREMENTS	BUILDING CONDITION	
	A Less than 5 years since occupancy	B 5 years or more since occupancy
FLOOR FIRE SEPARATION (continuous)		
Permitted Floor Fire Resistance Rating (FRR)	30 min - for all common spaces AND when interconnected smoke alarms are not provided between both suites	
	15 min - when interconnected smoke alarms are provided between both suites	
Permitted Floor Sound Rating (STC)	Not required	
WALL FIRE SEPARATION (continuous)		
Permitted Wall Fire Resistance Rating (FRR)	30 min	
Permitted Door Fire Protection Rating (FPR) (Note: door requires a self-closing device)	20 min	
Permitted Wall Sound Rating (STC)	Not required	
SUPPORTING STRUCTURE		
Permitted Fire Resistance Rating (FRR) for load bearing walls, beams, and columns	Same as Floor FRR	
HVAC SYSTEMS		
Duct type Smoke Detector	Must be installed in return air duct system and will completely turn off fuel and electrical supply to the heating system upon activation if existing furnace serves both dwelling units	
SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS (general requirements only, additional requirements may apply)		
Interconnection between dwelling units	May be required based on Floor FRR (see above)	
Required locations and general requirements	Smoke alarms are required on every floor level, in every bedroom, in hallways serving a bedroom, and in all common areas. All smoke alarms within a dwelling unit shall be interconnected and have a visual signaling component (strobe light). Carbon Monoxide alarms to be installed in hallways serving a bedroom.	
MINIMUM WINDOW AREA		
Living and Dining Rooms	10% of area served	5% of area served
Bedrooms and other Finished Rooms (except kitchens and washrooms with electrical lighting)	5% of area served	2.5% of area served
CEILING HEIGHT (Minimum)		
All Rooms	6'-11" over entire floor 6'-5" under beam/duct	6'-5" over all required room areas and any location normally used as a mean of egress

- All penetrations through fire separations are required to be fire stopped with an approved fire stop device. Existing penetrations are acceptable in existing fire separations.

Building Design Requirements

DOOR SIZES (Minimum)	Minimum Width	Minimum Height
Dwelling Unit Entrance or Utility Room	32"	78" or to match existing ceiling height
Bedroom or Rooms not mentioned elsewhere	30"	
Bathroom, Washroom, and Walk-in closets	24"	

- Any doors between units must have a minimum 20 minute fire protection rating with a self-closing device.

ROOM SIZES - Separate Spaces	Min. ft ²	ROOM SIZES - Combined	Min. ft ²
Living Room	145	Living Room (> 1 bedroom)	145
Dining Room	75	Living Room (1 bedroom)	118
Kitchen (> 1 bedroom)	45	Dining Room	35
Kitchen (1 Bedroom only)	40	Kitchen (> 1 bedroom)	45
Master Bedroom (with closet)	95	Kitchen (1 bedroom)	40
Master Bedroom (without closet)	105	Bedrooms	45
Other Bedroom (with closet)	65		
Other Bedroom (without closet)	75	ROOM SIZES - Bachelor	Min.ft ²
Bathroom	Sufficient space for fixtures	Living, Dining, Bedroom and Kitchen	145

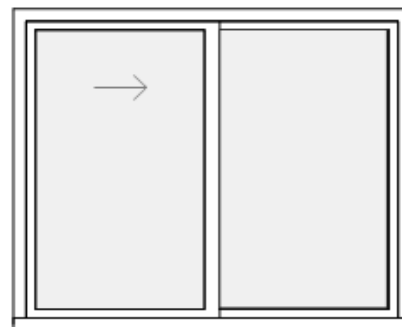
- Combined areas are where one room contains multiple room functions (i.e. open concept, studio apartment, etc.)
- Each unit shall have access to common laundry facilities or have connections within each unit for the connection of laundry appliances

Note: These design tips do not cover all of the requirements for Secondary Suites. The person taking responsibility for the design should refer to the 2012 Ontario Building Code for a detailed listing of all requirements. The most current Building Code is available at [e-Laws - Ontario Building Code](#).

Calculating Window Area:

Window area required as per the Building Specific Design Requirements must be calculated by taking the rough opening size of the window and subtracting any non-glazing components

Accurate area calculations or manufacturer specifications must be provided with your building permit application.



- Note:** Shaded area represents glazing area
- Exiting to meet the requirements of the Ontario Building Code. If an exit is shared by both units, a larger egress window is required and interconnected smoke alarms are required in every bedroom and common space throughout the entire house.
- An egress window is required in basement units containing a bedroom except for walk-out basement conditions, where direct access to exterior is provided.

Fire Separations in Furnace Rooms:

Due to the difficulty of installing a continuous fire separation on the ceilings of furnace rooms serving two dwelling units, Table 11.4.3.4.A of the Ontario Building Code allows the fire separation to be waived where the spaces are sprinklered.

Where a continuous horizontal fire separation is not achievable, sprinklering of the furnace room ceiling is acceptable. The installation of sprinklers may not be feasible where a water service into a home may not be adequately sized without updating the entirety of the system. The walls around the furnace room are to be constructed as vertical fire separations.

Installation of a sprinkler head(s) in furnace room location

A single sprinkler loop installed by a qualified sprinkler installer may be installed in the furnace room when a continuous fire separation cannot be achieved due to obstructions.

System Components:

- Piping materials include: copper (Type L) & cross-linked polyethylene pipe fittings (PEX) certified to CAN/CSA-B137.5
- Listed residential sprinklers shall be used (manufacturer spec. sheets must be retained on-site)

Design Requirements:

- Only residential full flow through installations are permitted
- An adequate water supply shall be confirmed for the demand (min. ¾" diameter service)
- No isolation valves permitted on any portion of the sprinkler service line upstream of the sprinkler head
- Warning sign min. 200mm x 200mm (8"x8") shall be installed adjacent to the main shut off valve indicating that the domestic service is also used for a fire sprinkler system and must not be left closed
- A *floor drain* is strongly recommended to be located in the vicinity of the sprinkler head