

BACKYARD SUITES

WHAT IS A BACKYARD SUITE?

A **Backyard Suite** is a self-contained dwelling unit that is located on the same property as a house or another building that contains only residential occupancies. The Backyard Suite and the Main Suite must constitute a single real estate entity.

Examples of Backyard Suites would include purpose-built structures, existing accessory buildings that are converted into self-contained dwelling units, or self-contained dwelling units that are constructed as an addition to an existing accessory building.

Backyard Suites should not be confused with **Secondary Suites**. A Backyard Suite must satisfy all Building and Plumbing Code requirements as they apply to a residential dwelling. The requirements for a Secondary Suite would not be applicable to a Backyard Suite.

REQUIREMENTS

All **Building and Plumbing Code requirements** for residential buildings will apply to Backyard Suites, including:

- **Limiting Distance/Spatial Separation and Fire Safety.**
- **Exiting.**
- **Heating and Ventilation.**
- **Insulation and Energy Efficiency.**
- **Smoke Alarms.**
- **Plumbing facilities.**
- **Adaptable Housing.**

In addition to the above requirements, you may be required to provide additional documentation including, but not limited to:

- Where applicable, **Proof that the on-site sewage disposal system** can handle any additional load generated by the plumbing fixtures that will be installed in the Backyard Suite, or
- **Details of the connection** between the Backyard Suite's building drain and the existing Halifax Water infrastructure.
- **If you are converting** an existing accessory building into a Backyard Suite, documentation from a Structural Engineer that indicates the existing structure, slab or foundations are adequate to support the expected loads may also be required.
- **A Surveyors Location Certificate** confirming the location of the Backyard Suite on the lot.

During the conversion of an existing accessory building into a Backyard Suite, you may also be required to expose portions of the existing building envelope (walls, floors, roof etc.) to demonstrate to the Building Official that the applicable Building Code and Plumbing Code requirements have been met.

PERMITS

A **Building Permit** is required to construct a Backyard Suite or to convert an existing accessory structure into a Backyard Suite.

An **application for a Building Permit** for a Backyard Suite must include the following minimum information:

- **A Site Plan** that shows the location of the proposed Backyard Suite on the lot and includes distances (setbacks) from the Backyard Suite to the property lines and to the main dwelling.
- **Construction Drawings** that include; elevations showing all windows, doors, and other openings as well as soffits; floor plans that show the layout of the Backyard Suite including all bedroom(s), bathroom, kitchen, living areas, corridors and exits.
- **Structural Details** that show how the walls, floors, roofs, foundation and footings or floor slab are constructed.
- **Details of the Heating and Ventilation** systems that will be installed in the Backyard Suite.

All drawings should be scaled and must include accurate dimensions of all rooms, doorways, windows, exits and stairs. Drawings should also indicate the location of all Smoke/Carbon Monoxide alarms within the Backyard Suite.

Planning and Development staff will review your Building Permit application and may contact you to request additional information or clarification before a Building Permit is issued.

Applicants may apply for a Building Permit by visiting HRM's on-line Permitting portal at:

<https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/building-development-permits/apply-a-permit>

INSPECTIONS

Inspections are required during the construction of a Backyard Suite or conversion of an accessory structure into a backyard suite. The Building Official must be given the opportunity to inspect:

- Footings
- Foundations
- Below grade insulation
- Underground plumbing
- Framing & plumbing rough-in
- Insulation & vapour barrier
- Prior to occupancy

The permit holder must request these inspections in the on-line Permitting portal.

CONTACT US

If you need advice or clarification of any of the requirements outlined above, please contact HRM by visiting the customer service center located at **5251 Duke St, 3rd Floor, Suite 300, Duke Tower, Halifax**, by calling **311**, or by e:Mail at contactus@311.halifax.ca, to request a callback from a member of the Planning and Development team.