



City of Sarnia
Building Department
255 Christina St N, Sarnia, ON N7T 7N2
519-332-0330 x 3301
building@sarnia.ca

Secondary Dwelling Unit – General Requirements

A building permit is required to create a *secondary dwelling unit*.

“Secondary Dwelling Unit” means a dwelling unit that is located within an existing single detached, semi-detached, multiple attached or street multiple attached dwelling unit and is ancillary and subordinate to a primary dwelling unit. **It is a self-contained dwelling unit that contains its own entrance, a private sleeping area, kitchen, and bathroom facilities.**

For example, converting the basement of a house to an additional dwelling unit is considered to be creating a *secondary dwelling unit* and must conform to all zoning and OBC requirements.

A *secondary dwelling unit* is not considered Legal until the building permit has been issued and all inspections have been completed and passed, including the final Inspection. It is vital to meet planning and building code requirements to ensure the unit is safe, legal and a healthy place to be. While planning your secondary unit, it is important to consider the following:

Zoning By-Law Requirements:

Secondary units must meet the requirements of the City's Zoning By-law:

- One secondary dwelling unit is permitted within a **single detached dwelling** in the following zones: UR1, UR2, UR3, UR4, UR5, SR1, RR1, RU1.
- One secondary dwelling unit is permitted within a **semi-detached, multiple attached or street multiple attached dwelling unit** in the following zones: UR2, UR3, UR4, UR5.
- Secondary dwelling units are not permitted in areas classified as 'Natural Hazards.' Please contact the Planning Department to determine if your property is located within a natural hazard area.
- Secondary dwelling units must have a minimum gross floor area of 35 square metres (377 square feet).

Within the UR1 Zone:

- the gross floor area of a secondary dwelling unit can't be greater than 40% of the combined habitable room floor area of both units, with the exception that a secondary dwelling unit may occupy an entire basement.
- Exterior alterations to the front or exterior side yard elevations of the dwelling shall not be permitted to provide an entrance to a secondary dwelling unit.

One parking space must be provided for each dwelling unit (parking spaces may be provided in tandem to a maximum of two spaces in a row). These spaces must be located entirely within the property limits and must meet the requirements of a parking space. Please see Section 3.37 of the Zoning By-Law or contact the Planning Department for further details on parking regulations.

Building Permit Requirements:

To help navigate through the complex building code requirements, it is recommended that you **obtain the services of a qualified professional** such as an Architect, Engineer or Designer registered with the Ontario government (BCIN Designer). The owner of the property is permitted by the Ontario Building Code to provide drawings for this type of application.

It is the designer's responsibility to illustrate compliance with the Ontario Building Code on the plans. The building department will review the plans for compliance with the zoning by-law and the Ontario Building Code based on the information provided but cannot provide advice or consultation services. Insufficient information on the plans will result in delays, or unexpected additional requirements during construction. Additional notes



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may be added by the building department, however, it is not possible to capture all OBC requirements on the plans.

Ensure all notes on the approved plans are reviewed prior to starting construction.

Building Code Requirements should be reviewed prior to submitting an application to avoid issues during the application or inspection process. Secondary Units that do not meet the OBC requirements cannot be approved, Minimum OBC requirements must be achieved. These guides provided may not include all OBC requirements relevant to your *secondary dwelling unit*. Building code requirements to consider prior to applying for a secondary unit include, but are not limited to:

- ☐ **Ceiling Heights:** The finished ceiling height, including the height under beams and ductwork, should be verified by the applicant prior to submitting an application, and the height must be indicated on the plans.
- ☐ **Laundry Facilities:** Must be located within each dwelling unit, or easily accessible by both dwelling units.
- ☐ **Room size and floor area:** All Rooms must meet the minimum area specified by the OBC.
- ☐ **Windows:** Egress windows may be required. All windows must meet the minimum area required by the OBC for all rooms.
- ☐ Exits: Shared/separate entrance, fire rated, smoke/co available?
- ☐ Age of the house (more than 5 years old? See below)
- ☐ Location of the second unit
- ☐ Plumbing and Septic Systems: Each dwelling unit must be equipped with a Kitchen Sink, and a Bathroom that contains a bathtub or shower stall, and a toilet.
- ☐ Heating and ventilation: Is the furnace shared? Is there adequate ventilation? Exhaust fans?
- ☐ Electrical facilities and lighting
- ☐ Fire safety, including fire separations and fire rated supporting assemblies
- ☐ Smoke alarms
- ☐ Sprinklers (if required)
- ☐ Carbon monoxide (CO) alarms
- ☐ Shared spaces, such as laundry rooms
- ☐ Parking

Ontario Building Code regulations for secondary dwelling units allow for Compliance Alternatives for houses that are more than five years old. The [guide](#), provided by the MMAH and OBOA, outlines general OBC requirements for houses that are greater than five years old. Compliance Alternatives allow for alternatives to Part 9 OBC requirements.



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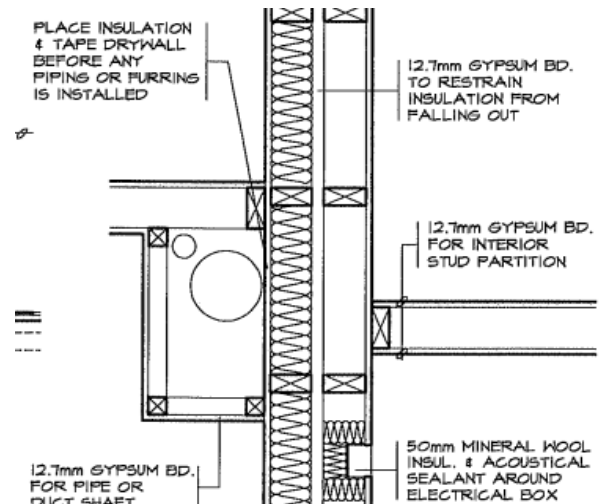
Considerations During Inspections:

Construction cannot begin until a building permit has been issued. You are responsible for informing the building department when different stages of construction are ready for inspection. Work that has not been inspected and approved cannot be covered. Review the guide provided and approved plans prior to beginning construction. The construction on site must be consistent with the approved plans. Ensure you or your contractor are knowledgeable on the OBC requirements for a secondary dwelling, including construction of fire separations.

Fire separations are to be constructed as a continuous assembly. Fire rated drywall must be installed continuously behind/above bulkheads, intersecting walls, etc with smoke-tight joints. Penetrations through fire separations must be fire stopped with an approved fire stopping product that conforms to CAN/ULC-S115. Foam sprays are not rated as an approved firestop.

Building code requirements can vary depending on the location of the secondary unit, exiting, shared facilities and use of Compliance Alternatives at the discretion of the Designer.

The secondary dwelling unit is not permitted to be occupied until an Occupancy inspection has been passed. A passed Final Inspection is required to close the file.



Fire separation detail (typical). Fire rated drywall is required to be continuous behind bulkheads, intersecting walls, etc.



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Secondary Dwelling Unit – Application Submission Checklist

1. Permit to Construct or Demolish Application Form

A standardized application form prescribed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

2. Schedule 1: Designer Information Form

It is the designer's responsibility to illustrate compliance with the Ontario Building Code on the plans. To help navigate through the complex building code requirements, it is recommended that you obtain the services of a qualified professional such as an Architect, Engineer or Designer registered with the Ontario government (BCIN Designer).

This form is to be completed by the Individual preparing the drawings (Designer). Drawings must be prepared by person(s) qualified under the Ontario Building Code (O.B.C.). In most cases this is a **designer with the appropriate B.C.I.N.** (building code identification number) certification or the **Property Owner**.

The schedule 1: Designer Information form must be completed by the individual that prepared the plans. (Owner or Qualified Designer).

All sections of this form are to be completed:

Section A - Project address information

Section B - Designer/Owner Information

Section C - Description of the project.

Section D - Owner will check the box next to: "The design work is exempt from the registration and qualifications required..." and write "property owner or home owner" on the blank space after "Basis for exemption from registration and qualification".

Qualified BCIN Designer (if applicable) will check off and complete the relevant section.

3. Schedule 2: Plumbing Form

Indicate the number of new or relocated plumbing fixtures.

Septic Assessment: [A septic assessment](#) may be required for properties on septic. Contact County of Lambton building services department 519-845-5420

4. Drawings

Drawings must be legible and drawn to scale, and clearly dimensioned in either metric or imperial.

Drawings must include: Municipal Address, **Designers Name, signature and qualification (e.g. BCIN)**, date of drawing, scale, dimensions, clear identification of new construction, existing areas and total area of work.

Site Plan

Lot Lines and Dimensions, Existing and Proposed Construction and Dimensions, Setbacks to Lot Lines, Parking Spaces, including driveway width and dimensions (measured to lot line – not street/sidewalk)

Construction Plans

Floor plans of both units, detailing: Room uses and dimensions, specify shared areas (exits, laundry) fire separation/fire-resistance rated assemblies' construction and location, egress/exiting, window location and sizes. Smoke Alarm/CO Location and interconnection. Building section to outline ceiling height and fire separation construction. Refer to the checklist on the General Requirements page for more information.

5. Heating, Ventilation and Cooling

If both units are permitted to share one furnace through C.A.195, an in-duct smoke detector (UL268A Compliant) is required to be installed. This is required to be noted on the plans. (only permitted for houses more than 5 years old).

It is recommended that Supply and Return air outlets are noted on the plans to ensure locations are in conformance with OBC requirements.

Heat Loss/Heat Gain Calculations, Duct Design Layout, Ventilation Design Summary and Schedule 1:

Designer Information form **are required for complete interior guts and where the alteration increases the gross floor area by more than 20%.**

**CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF SARNIA**

P.O. Box 3018 Sarnia, ON N7T 7N2

Telephone: (519)332-0330, Ext 3301

Fax: (519)332-0776

Application for a Permit to Construct or Demolish

This form is authorized under subsection 8(1.1) of the Building Code Act.

For use by Principal Authority				
Application number:		Permit number (if different):		
Date received:		Roll number:		
Application submitted to: _____ (Name of municipality, upper-tier municipality, board of health or conservation authority)				
A. Project information				
Building number, street name		Unit number	Lot/con.	
Municipality	Postal code	Plan number/other description		
Project value est. \$		Area of work (m ²)		
B. Purpose of application				
New construction	Addition to an existing building	Alteration/repair	Demolition	Conditional Permit
Proposed use of building		Current use of building		
Description of proposed work				
C. Applicant				
Applicant is:		Owner or Authorized agent of owner		
Last name		First name	Corporation or partnership	
Street address		Unit number	Lot/con.	
Municipality	Postal code	Province	E-mail	
Telephone number	Fax	Cell number		
D. Owner (if different from applicant)		<i>*This section MUST be filled in prior to submission. Applications will not be processed without this information.</i>		
Last name		First name	Corporation or partnership	
Street address		Unit number	Lot/con.	
Municipality	Postal code	Province	E-mail	
Telephone number	Fax	Cell number		

E. Builder (optional)				
Last name		First name	Corporation or partnership (if applicable)	
Street address			Unit number	Lot/con.
Municipality	Postal code	Province	E-mail	
Telephone number	Fax		Cell number	
F. Tarion Warranty Corporation (Ontario New Home Warranties Program)				
i. Is proposed construction for a new home as defined in the <i>Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act</i> ? If no, go to section G.			Yes	No
ii. Is registration required under the <i>Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act</i> ?			Yes	No
iii. If yes to (ii) provide registration number(s): _____				
G. Required Schedules				
i) Attach Schedule 1 for each individual who reviews and takes responsibility for design activities.				
ii) Attach Schedule 2 where application is to construct on-site, install or repair a sewage system.				
H. Completeness and compliance with applicable law				
i) This application meets all the requirements of clauses 1.3.1.3 (5) (a) to (d) of Division C of the Building Code (the application is made in the correct form and by the owner or authorized agent, all applicable fields have been completed on the application and required schedules, and all required schedules are submitted). Payment has been made of all fees that are required, under the applicable by-law, resolution or regulation made under clause 7(1)(c) of the <i>Building Code Act, 1992</i> , to be paid when the application is made.			Yes	No
ii) This application is accompanied by the plans and specifications prescribed by the applicable by-law, resolution or regulation made under clause 7(1)(b) of the <i>Building Code Act, 1992</i> .			Yes	No
iii) This application is accompanied by the information and documents prescribed by the applicable by-law, resolution or regulation made under clause 7(1)(b) of the <i>Building Code Act, 1992</i> which enable the chief building official to determine whether the proposed building, construction or demolition will contravene any applicable law.			Yes	No
iv) The proposed building, construction or demolition will not contravene any applicable law.			Yes	No
I. Declaration of applicant				
<p>I _____ declare that:</p> <p>(print name)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The information contained in this application, attached schedules, attached plans and specifications, and other attached documentation is true to the best of my knowledge. If the owner is a corporation or partnership, I have the authority to bind the corporation or partnership. <p>_____</p> <p>Date Signature of applicant</p>				

Personal information contained in this form and schedules is collected under the authority of subsection 8(1.1) of the *Building Code Act, 1992*, and will be used in the administration and enforcement of the *Building Code Act, 1992*. Questions about the collection of personal information may be addressed to: a) the Chief Building Official of the municipality or upper-tier municipality to which this application is being made, or, b) the inspector having the powers and duties of a chief building official in relation to sewage systems or plumbing for an upper-tier municipality, board of health or conservation authority to whom this application is made, or, c) Director, Building and Development Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 777 Bay St., 2nd Floor. Toronto, M5G 2E5 (416) 585-6666.

Schedule 1: Designer Information

Use one form for each individual who reviews and takes responsibility for design activities with respect to the project.

A. Project Information			
Building number, street name		Unit no.	Lot/con.
Municipality	Postal code	Plan number/ other description	
B. Individual who reviews and takes responsibility for design activities			
Name Firm			
Street address		Unit no.	Lot/con.
Municipality	Postal code	Province	E-mail
Telephone number	Fax number		Cell number
C. Design activities undertaken by individual identified in Section B. [Building Code Table 3.5.2.1. of Division C]			
House Small Buildings Large Buildings Complex Buildings	HVAC – House Building Services Detection, Lighting and Power Fire Protection		Building Structural Plumbing – House Plumbing – All Buildings On-site Sewage Systems
Description of designer's work			
D. Declaration of Designer			
<p>I _____ declare that (choose one as appropriate):</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(print name)</p> <p>I review and take responsibility for the design work on behalf of a firm registered under subsection 3.2.4. of Division C, of the Building Code. I am qualified, and the firm is registered, in the appropriate classes/categories.</p> <p>Individual BCIN: _____</p> <p>Firm BCIN: _____</p> <p>I review and take responsibility for the design and am qualified in the appropriate category as an "other designer" under subsection 3.2.5. of Division C, of the Building Code.</p> <p>Individual BCIN: _____</p> <p>Basis for exemption from registration: _____</p> <p>The design work is exempt from the registration and qualification requirements of the Building Code.</p> <p>Basis for exemption from registration and qualification: _____</p> <p>I certify that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The information contained in this schedule is true to the best of my knowledge. 2. I have submitted this application with the knowledge and consent of the firm. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Signature of Designer</p> </div> </div>			

NOTE:

1. For the purposes of this form, "individual" means the "person" referred to in Clause 3.2.4.7(1) d).of Division C, Article 3.2.5.1. of Division C, and all other persons who are exempt from qualification under Subsections 3.2.4. and 3.2.5. of Division C.
2. Schedule 1 is not required to be completed by a holder of a license, temporary license, or a certificate of authorization, issued by the Ontario Association of Architects. Schedule 1 is also not required to be completed by a holder of a license to practise, a limited license to practise, or a certificate of authorization, issued by the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario.

Questions or Concerns - Please Contact:
 County of Lambton - Plumbing Inspection Dept.
 Telephone: (519) 845-0801

SCHEDULE '2'

Plumbing Information

Owner Name:	Address of Proposed Work:
Plumber:	Municipality:

Please list the number of fixtures per floor on the following chart.

FLOOR	Basement	1	2	3	4	Total Number	X	Fixture Units	Total Fixture Units
Water closet							X	4	
Bath tub							X	1.5	
Wash basin							X	1.5	
Kitchen sink							X	1.5	
Laundry tubs							X	1.5	
Floor drain							X	2	
Showers							X	1.5	
Urinal							X	1.5	
Clothes washer							X	1.5	
Dish washer – domestic							X	.5	
Other sinks							X	1.5	
Drinking fountain							X	.5	
Hot water heater							X		
Sewage Pump							X		
Grease Interceptor							X		
Other fixtures							X		
TOTAL						Total Fixture Unit Count			

No. of Dwelling Units	R.W.L.	Water Lines
Soil Vent Stacks	Sanitary Lateral	Oil Interceptor
Catch Basin	Storm Lateral	Backflow Preventor
Lawn Sprinkler System		

Signature

Date



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Permit Process Guide

Submitting a Complete Application

An application is considered “complete” where the proposed construction conforms with all **Applicable Laws**, includes the required Application Forms, and the required Construction Plans as outlined in the City of Sarnia Building By-law. Refer to the Submission Checklist attached.

Applications can be submitted electronically by e-mailing the documents to building@sarnia.ca.

Alternatively, documents can be dropped off at the City Hall drop box, located near the South facing, Christina St. entrance.

Complete Applications, Review Timelines and Building Permit Issuance

Applicants will be notified if the application submitted is **not** considered a “complete application” and will be provided with a list of the outstanding approvals/documents. The review timeline will **not** apply to in-complete applications. Applications that are deemed a “**complete application**” will be reviewed and will be issued or refused within **10 Business Days** for a House, Accessory Building, Deck, Tent or Sign. A time frame of **15 days** applies to other Small Buildings, Residential Secondary Unit’s, and Farm Buildings less than 600 Sq M. If the application is refused, the applicant will be contacted and provided with all reasons why the application has been refused. The application is circulated to multiple departments, and comments may be received separately. The applicant can then address all outstanding items, make necessary modifications, or obtain missing information, and submit them to building@sarnia.ca for review.

If the application is not acceptable due to zoning non-compliance, the applicant can either apply to the Committee of Adjustment for a Minor Variance to zoning requirements or apply for a Zoning Amendment (rezoning). These applications should be submitted to the Planning Department at planning@sarnia.ca.

If the application is approved, the applicant will be contacted regarding [permit fees](#), [development charges](#), payment methods, and a permit will be issued. The Building Permit must be posted on the project site in a location visible from the street.

Inspections

After the Building Permit has been issued, and the payment has been made, the applicant will be provided with the Approved Drawings, Building Permit and Required Inspections list. Construction may only begin once a Building Permit has been issued.

All construction must conform the Ontario Building Code and the approved drawings. The approved drawings may contain key notes/changes from the Plans Examiner.

It is the Permit Holder’s responsibility to call and request inspections at the various stages listed on the Required Inspections sheet PRIOR to continuing construction and Final inspection after all work is complete. The inspection request must be made, allowing 48 hours advance notice, excluding weekends and statutory holidays.

Changes/Revisions to the Approved Drawings, must be submitted for re-review through revised drawings. Revised drawings and related information must be submitted to building@sarnia.ca, noting the building permit number. Construction related to the revisions **cannot continue** until the revisions have been **approved**, and any additional fees have been paid.

When all work and required inspections have been completed, and the conditions of the Minor Variance have been completed (if applicable), the building permit will be closed. An open building permit is an order against the property and may cause a problem when selling the property or during a re-financing process.