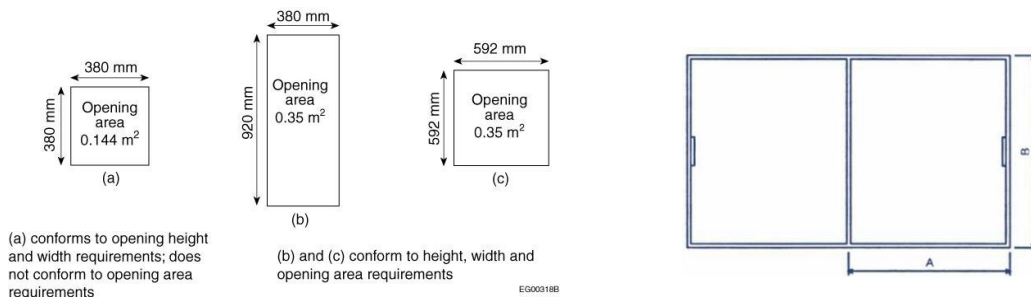


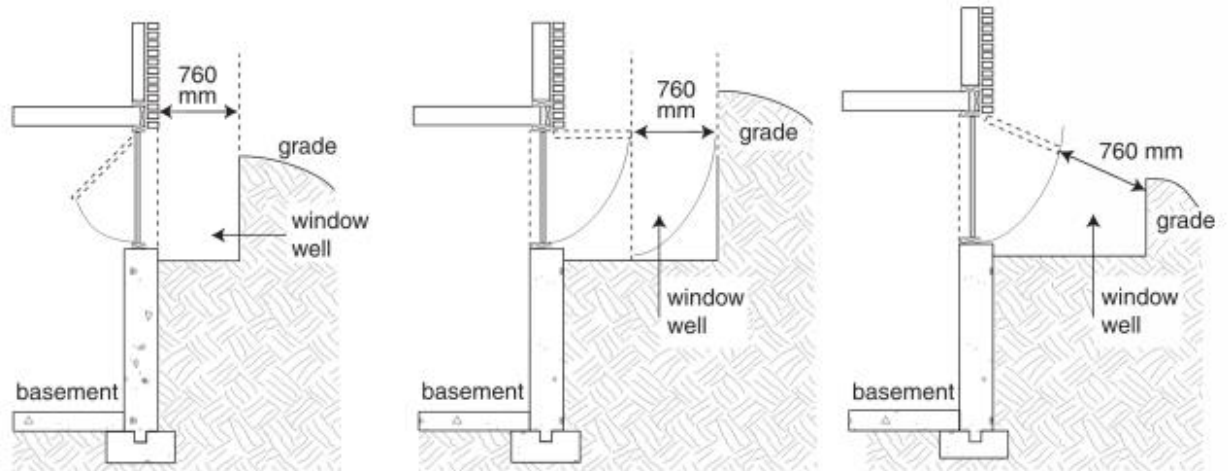
## Secondary Suites - Basic Code Requirements

1. **Minimum Ceiling Heights for living spaces within a Secondary Suite** – The ceiling height within a secondary suite must be no less than 1.95m (6'-4 ¾"). Ceilings are permitted to be reduced below ductwork and beams where necessary but these areas are subject to evaluation by the Safety Codes Officer.
2. **Exiting from a Secondary Suite** – The main residence and a secondary suite must have at least one exit that leads directly to the outside. This may be a door that leads to an exterior stair or a door to a common set of interior stairs that is separated from both the main residence and suite. The walls and ceilings for such an exit must be provided with protection from the effects of fire to allow occupants adequate time to evacuate.

A direct exit from a suite may also be provided by cutting through the foundation for a door to the outside with steps leading to ground level. An exterior staircase that is not fully enclosed with walls and roof will require separation from unprotected openings from the main residence.

3. **Fire protection between suites** – A secondary suite and the main residence must be separated from each other and from any common/shared spaces to allow occupants of either unit to evacuate in the event of a fire or other emergency. This is achieved by providing a continuous smoke tight barrier of minimum ½" drywall on both sides of common walls and on the underside of floor systems. Rooms containing gas-fired furnaces and/or hot water tanks need to be enclosed in a room separated by minimum ½" drywall on the walls and ceilings.
4. **Bedroom Windows** – Windows in bedrooms are required to provide an alternate method for exiting in the event of a fire or other emergency. A bedroom window must have an unobstructed open area of not less than .35 m<sup>2</sup> (3.76 ft<sup>2</sup>) with no dimension less than 380mm (15"). Windows if below exterior grade must be provided with a clear space in the window well in front of the window of not less than 760mm (30"). The window must be openable and remain in an open position without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge. Security bars are likely not permitted.





5. **Smoke Alarms** – Homes containing a secondary suite must have smoke detectors that are interconnected to provide early detection and warning to occupants in both the main dwelling and the secondary suite. All new developed areas require a smoke detector in every bedroom and on every storey. Each smoke detector must be hard-wired into an electrical circuit with a battery backup. All smoke detectors must be interconnected so they will operate in unison.

6. **Carbon Monoxide Alarms (CO)** – CO alarms are required in every residence with a fuel fired appliance or an attached storage garage. CO alarms must be located within each bedroom or located within 5m of each bedroom. All CO alarms must be interconnected so they will operate in unison.

7. **Heating and Ventilation** – An independent heating and ventilation system along with independent temperature control is required for secondary suites. No ductwork can be shared between the main residence and a secondary suite. There are various ways in which this requirement can be achieved. One common method is to install a second furnace serving only the secondary suite. Another popular option is an alternate heat source (electric baseboard or boiler heat) along with a means to provide adequate ventilation such as a heat recovery ventilator (HRV). Home owners are encouraged to investigate heating options with local heating service companies to minimize costs.