

Section 9.37 Secondary Suites

9.37.1. General

9.37.1.1. Application

1) This Section applies to construction of a *secondary suite* and *alterations* to an existing *building* to accommodate a *secondary suite*. (See Note A-9.37.1.1.(1).)

9.37.1.2. Construction Requirements

1) Construction of a *secondary suite* and *alterations* to an existing *building* to accommodate a *secondary suite* shall conform to the requirements in this Part except as provided in this Section. (See Note A-9.37.1.2.)

9.37.2. Specific Requirements

9.37.2.1. Heights of Rooms or Spaces

1) The minimum height of rooms or spaces in a *secondary suite* over the required minimum area as indicated in Table 9.5.3.1. shall be not less than 2.0 m.

2) It shall be possible to travel from the required area of one room to the required areas of all other rooms within a *secondary suite* without reduction of the room height as required in Sentence (1).

9.37.2.2. Solid Blocking

1) Solid blocking may be omitted for doors described in Sentence 9.7.5.2.(9) where the interior wall finish adjacent the door is in place prior to the construction of a *secondary suite*.

9.37.2.3. Exit Stairs

1) *Exit* stairs within or serving a *building* that contains a *secondary suite* shall have a minimum width, measured between wall faces or guards, of not less than 860 mm. (See Note A-9.37.2.3.(1).)

9.37.2.4. Dimensions of Landings

1) Landings for exterior stairs serving both *suites* in a *building* containing a *secondary suite* need not exceed 900 mm in length.

9.37.2.5. Handrails and Guards

1) Handrails and *guards* shall conform to the requirements of Subsections 9.8.7. and 9.8.8. as if serving only one *dwelling unit*.

9.37.2.6. Means of Egress

1) The width of every *public corridor* and *exit* corridor that serves a *building* that contains a *secondary suite* shall be not less than 860 mm. (See Note A-9.37.2.6.(1).)

9.37.2.7. Fire Separations for Exits

1) Except as permitted by Sentence (2), every *exit* other than an *exit* doorway shall be separated from adjacent *floor areas* by a *fire separation*

- a) having a *fire-resistance rating* of 45 min, or
- b) having a *fire-resistance rating* of not less than 30 min where the *dwelling units* are equipped with *smoke alarms* as referenced in Article 9.37.2.19.

2) A *fire-resistance rating* is not required for a *fire separation* that separates an *exit* from adjacent *floor areas* where the *building* is *sprinklered*.

9.37.2.8. Openings Near Unenclosed Exit Stairs and Ramps

1) Where an unenclosed exterior *exit* stair or ramp provides the only *means of egress* from a *dwelling unit* in a *building* that contains a *secondary suite* and the stair is exposed to the hazards of fire from *unprotected openings* in the exterior wall of another *fire compartment*, the openings shall be protected in conformance with Articles 9.10.13.5. to 9.10.13.7. (See Note A-9.37.2.8.(1).)

9.37.2.9. Doors in a Means of Egress

1) Every *exit* door or door that opens into or is located within a *public corridor* or other facility that provides *access to exit* from a *suite* shall

- a) be not less than 1980 mm high,
- b) have a clear opening width of not less than 800 mm, and
- c) be permitted to swing inward.

9.37.2.10. Travel Limit to Exits or Egress Doors

2) In a *building* that contains a *secondary suite*, the travel limit from a floor level in a *dwelling unit* to an *exit* or egress door may exceed 1 *storey* provided the floor level within the *dwelling unit* is served by an operable window conforming to Article 9.9.10.1.

9.37.2.11. Shared Egress Facilities

1) Except as provided in Article 9.9.7.3., where an egress door from a *dwelling unit* opens onto a *public corridor* or exterior passageway, it shall be possible from the location where the egress door opens onto the *public corridor* or exterior passageway to go in opposite directions to 2 separate *exits* unless the *dwelling unit* is served by a second and separate *means of egress* or an opening window conforming to Article 9.9.10.1.

2) Each *dwelling unit* shall be provided with a second and separate *means of egress* or an opening window conforming to Article 9.9.10.1. where the egress door from either *dwelling unit* opens onto

- a) an *exit* stairway that serves both *suites*,
- b) a *public corridor* serving both *suites* and served by a single *exit* stairway,
- c) an exterior passageway serving both *suites* and served by a single *exit* stairway, or
- d) a balcony serving both *suites* and served by a single *exit* stairway.

9.37.2.12. Exit Signs

1) *Exit* signs are not required within a *building* that contains a *secondary suite*.

9.37.2.13. Structural Fire Resistance

1) Table 9.10.8.1., Fire-Resistance Ratings for Structural Members and Assemblies, does not apply to a *building* that contains a *secondary suite*.

9.37.2.14. Combustible Drain, Waste and Vent Piping

(See Note A-9.37.2.14.)

1) *Combustible* drain, waste and vent piping is permitted to be located within or penetrate a *fire separation* required to have a *fire-resistance rating* provided

- a) except for the permitted penetration in Clause (b), the *combustible* piping is located within an assembly protected by a membrane of a minimum 12.7 mm gypsum board,
- b) the permitted penetration through the gypsum board membrane is limited in size to the diameter of the penetrating pipe, and
- c) the *combustible* piping does not penetrate the gypsum board protection membrane on the underside of a horizontal *fire separation*.

2) *Combustible* drain, waste and vent piping enclosed in an assembly or protected as described in Sentence (1) is permitted on both sides of a *fire separation*.

9.37.2.15. Separation of Residential Suites

- 1) *Dwelling units* in a *building* that contains a *secondary suite* shall be separated from each other by
 - a) a *fire separation* conforming to Article 9.10.9.14.,
 - b) a *fire separation* having a *fire-resistance rating* of not less than 30 min where the *dwelling units* are equipped with *smoke alarms* conforming to Article 9.37.2.19., or
 - c) a *fire separation* having no required *fire-resistance rating* where the *building* is *sprinklered*.

(See Note A-9.37.2.15. and A-9.37.2.17.)

9.37.2.16. Separation of Public Corridors

- 1) A *public corridor* serving a *building* that contains a *secondary suite* shall be separated from the *suites* by
 - a) a *fire separation* conforming to Article 9.10.9.15.,
 - b) a *fire separation* having a *fire-resistance rating* of not less than 30 min where the *dwelling units* are equipped with *smoke alarms* conforming to Article 9.37.2.19., or
 - c) a *fire separation* having no required *fire-resistance rating* where the building is *sprinklered*.

(See Note A-9.37.2.16.(1).)

9.37.2.17. Air Ducts and Fire Dampers

(See Note A-9.37.2.17.)

- 1) Except as provided in Sentences (2) and (3), and notwithstanding Sentences 9.32.1.1.(1) and 9.33.1.1.(1), Sections 9.32 and 9.33 applies to a *building* that contains a *secondary suite*.
- 2) Where a heating or ventilation duct system serves more than one *suite*, the system shall be designed and installed to prevent the circulation of smoke upon a signal from a duct-type *smoke detector*.
- 3) Ducts penetrating *fire separations* need not be equipped with *fire dampers* in conformance with Article 3.1.8.9. provided they are *noncombustible* with all openings in the duct system serving only one *fire compartment*.

9.37.2.18. Spatial Separation

- 1) Notwithstanding Sentence 9.10.15.1.(1), Subsection 9.10.15. applies to a *building* that contains a *secondary suite*.

9.37.2.19. Smoke Alarms

(See Note A-9.37.2.19.)

- 1) Except as permitted by Sentence (3), an additional *smoke alarm* of photo-electric type conforming to CAN/ULC-S531, “Standard for Smoke Alarms,” shall be installed in each *suite*.
- 2) *Smoke alarms* required in Sentence (1) shall be wired so that the activation of the additional alarm in one *suite* will cause the additional alarm in the other *suite* to sound.
- 3) An additional interconnected *smoke alarm* is not required to be installed in each *suite* provided
 - a) the *fire separations* required in Articles 9.37.2.15. and 9.37.2.16. have a *fire-resistance rating* of 45 min or greater, or
 - b) the *building* is *sprinklered*.

9.37.2.20. Sound Control

- 1) The assemblies separating the residential *suites* need not comply with the sound control requirements of [Section 9.11](#). (See Note A-9.37.2.20.(1).)

9.37.2.21. Attic Space Access

- 1) An *attic space* access hatchway not less than 0.32 m² in an area with no dimension less than 500 mm may serve both *suites* in a building that contains a *secondary suite*.

9.37.2.22. Garages and Carports

- 1) Section 9.35 is applicable to garages and carports serving a *building* that contains a *secondary suite*.