

ACCESSORY APARTMENT AND TWO UNIT HOUSE REGISTRATION



Accessory apartments are defined as “dwelling units” located within and subordinate to an existing single detached or conforming semi-detached dwelling. These may be occupied or designed to be occupied. They are commonly referred to as “granny flats”, “basement apartments” or “in-law suites”. When a single detached or conforming semi-detached dwelling contains an accessory apartment, it becomes a “two unit house” and must be registered with the City of Guelph.

Accessory apartments are a permitted use in the R.1 and R.2 residential zones. They are subject to certain zoning regulations, such as maximum size, parking requirements and external appearance of the house. Accessory apartments are not a permitted use in townhouses or rowhouses.

The accessory apartment cannot be created or registered unless all applicable zoning, building/fire code regulations have been met.

When a two unit house registration has been completed, the property owner is sent a confirmation letter by Zoning Services. These letters may serve as proof to prospective purchasers, appraisers, financial institutions and the like that the use of the property for two dwelling units is legal.

The application fee for registration of a two unit house is \$100.00 and is a one time requirement with no annual registration.

New proposals to create an accessory apartment require a building permit. For properties already containing an accessory apartment without a building permit, the current owner of that property will be required to obtain a building permit.

For older existing accessory apartments, for which a building permit may not be required, a safety inspection will be completed by a Fire Prevention Officer. Building upgrades may be required.

A general electrical inspection report will be required by the Electrical Safety Authority for both new and existing accessory apartments.

Your property taxes may be affected by the creation of an accessory apartment. Taxes are based on the value of your property, which may increase due to the income potential you have created. Specific questions about your property taxes and how they are calculated should be directed to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.

Coach houses or separate buildings on a property used for residential purposes are not a permitted use under the Zoning By-law and are not covered under the two unit house registration. In order to be considered a legal use on a property, coach houses must either be specifically zoned to permit their existence or grandfathered in as a legal non-conforming use.

A house containing more than two dwelling units (triplex, fourplex, etc) is not covered under the two unit house registration by-law and is not a permitted use in the R.1 or R.2 zones. In order to be legal, the multiple residential use of a single detached dwelling must be grandfathered as a legal non-conforming use or specifically zoned. Grandfathering is only possible in instances where the use has continued, uninterrupted, for many decades. Please check with Zoning Services to ensure that any property you are considering purchasing is permitted to have the number of units in existence. Many illegal properties are discovered every year due to complaints.

City of Guelph Zoning Services (519) 837-5615 ext. 3
City of Guelph Building Department (519) 837-5615 ext. 1
City of Guelph Fire Prevention Office (519) 763-8111

Electrical Safety Authority 1 (877) 372-7233
Municipal Property Assessment Corp. 1 (877) 630-8786

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Building Services

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