

What are the Alberta Building Code requirements to convert a house into a Bed and Breakfast operation?

Introduction

This document is for individuals wishing to convert their single family dwelling into bed and breakfast accommodations. It is based on requirements provided in the 2006 Alberta Building Code. It is important to check with your local Development Officer to ensure that a Bed and Breakfast operation is permitted in the intended location.

The Alberta Building Code treats a residential bed and breakfast the same as a boarding or lodging accommodation. These requirements assume there will be no more than 8 boarders or lodgers in the building. If the Building Code provisions for boarding or lodging are exceeded, then the bed and breakfast establishment is to be treated as a motel or hotel, and other more stringent requirements of the Alberta Building Code will apply. If the total occupant load of the building (permanent residents and guests) exceeds 10 people, a fire alarm systems would also be required.

General

It is recommended that a general overview of the dwelling be conducted by a Building Safety Codes officer to review the overall safety of the dwelling in such areas as structural, stability, stairs, guards and handrails, heating systems, etc.

If any renovation or construction is needed to operate a bed and breakfast, then permits for building, electrical, plumbing and gas may be required. Contact your local municipality or Municipal Affairs.

Bedrooms

No cooking facilities are allowed in sleeping rooms or suites.

Windows

Each bedroom is to have at least one exterior window (unless an exterior door is provided), openable from the inside without the use of tools or special knowledge. It is to have an unobstructed opening of not less than 380 mm (15") in any direction and not less than 0.35 m² (3.76 ft²) in area.

Where a window opens into a window well, a clearance of at least 550 mm (22") is to be provided in front of the window. Where the sash swings toward the window well, the operation of the sash will not reduce the clearance in a manner that would restrict escape in an emergency.

Smoke Alarms

Permanently wired smoke alarms are required on each floor level, including basements. The alarms are required either inside each bedroom, or if outside, within 5 m of each bedroom door. It is highly recommended to provide smoke alarms in each bedroom even if alarms are provided in a corridor outside the bedroom. Where two or more alarms are required, they are to be interconnected so that the activation of one alarm will cause all alarms to sound.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Carbon monoxide alarms are required in the same locations as smoke alarms. There is an additional requirement that a carbon monoxide alarm be provided on or near the ceiling in each room containing a solid-fuel-burning appliance. It is recommended that dual smoke/carbon monoxide alarms be installed if possible.

Fire Alarms

If sleeping accommodation is provided for more than 10 persons (including the guests and owners) a fire alarm system is to be provided throughout the dwelling. As noted above, if the occupant load of the building exceeds 10 persons other code requirements may take effect. Check with your local Building Safety Codes officer for more information.

Fire alarm systems are to be installed in conformance with CAN/ULC-S524-M, *Standard for Installation of Fire Alarm Systems* and tested to insure satisfactory operation in conformance with CAN/ULC-S537-M, *Standard for the Verification of Fire Alarm Systems*.

A certificate of verification is to be obtained from a certified fire alarm technician, who does not work for the installation company, to ensure satisfactory operation of the system.

Fire Extinguishers

At least one Class 2:A 10:BC portable extinguisher is to be installed on each floor level of the dwelling and an additional one is to be installed in the kitchen area.

Heating and Ventilation

The heating system is to be capable of maintaining an indoor air temperature of 22°C regardless of the outside winter temperature.

Cooking Equipment

A domestic stove and oven complete with a range hood is acceptable for food preparation. If a commercial grill and/or fryer is proposed, the kitchen ventilation system is to be designed, constructed and installed to conform to NFPA 96, *Installation of Equipment for the Removal of Smoke and Grease-laden Vapours from Commercial Cooking Equipment*.

Plumbing Facilities

An accessible adequate supply of potable water, suitable sanitary facilities and plumbing fixtures are to be provided for the occupants in the dwelling.

Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs

Swimming pool and/or hot tub facilities made available to guests are to comply with Section 7.3 of the Alberta Building Code and they must also meet the requirements of the Swimming Pool Regulations under the Public Health Act.

Always contact the local authority having jurisdiction prior to any construction activity and ensure your project complies with Alberta Safety codes and local bylaws. Local authority and permit information may be accessed on our website at [Permit Information](#).

If you require further information please contact Safety Services at:

Telephone: 1-866-421-6929

Email: safety.services@gov.ab.ca

www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca