

OVERVIEW: This guide provides the Building Code considerations for conversion of a house, building, or suite to day care use with more than 8 children in care.

Day cares with more than 8 children in care are considered assembly occupancies (Group A-2) and must comply with the requirements of BC Building Code Part 3.

VANCOUVER ISLAND HEALTH AUTHORITY:

A meeting with the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) to discuss a proposed day care is recommended prior to applying for a Building Permit to ensure all the requirements under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the Child Care Licensing Regulation can be met. Detailed information of the process is available on their website.

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-services/community-care-facilities-licensing/child-care-licensing> Final approval from VIHA is required prior to final approval from Building Inspections.

DESIGN PROFESSIONALS:

A2 occupancies must be designed and constructed under the direction of registered professionals as applicable.
Coordinating Registered Professional- Schedule A

Architectural- Schedule B- From an Engineer of Architect signing on for Architectural items.

Mechanical- Schedule B- Required where furnace ducts penetrate the fire separation or new ventilation systems are required.

Electrical- Schedule B- Required where a fire alarm system is being installed.

Fire Suppression- Schedule B- Required where a fire suppression system is being installed.

Structural- Schedule B- Required where structural aspects of building are being modified or where seismic upgrading is required.

BUILDING CODE CONSIDERATIONS:

Existing buildings may have to be upgraded to comply with the BC Building Code requirements of Part 3 to accommodate a day care. The upgrades may include, (but are not limited to), the following:

Fire separations within the building

Fire-resistance ratings between the day care and other uses or suites must not be less than 1 hour and may need to be 2 hrs. where the adjoining occupancy is retail or industrial.

- Includes new and existing walls and/or ceilings. Additional gypsum board and rated doors with auto closers may be required.
- Attached garages must be separated from the day care by a 1.5 hr. fire separation.
- Non-combustible plumbing (i.e. not plastic) or an approved fire stop system is required where plumbing penetrates the fire-rated wall and/or ceiling.
- Fire dampers are required where furnace ducts penetrate fire-resistance-rated assembly. A Mechanical Engineer must submit a design and Schedule B for field review.
- No interconnection of air duct systems is permitted between a residential occupancy and another suite. For example, forced-air heating systems must be completely separate.

- Common rooms or rooms on the same floor as the day care that serve a residential portion of the building (laundry, storage, etc.) must be separated and be accessed without passing through the other occupancy.
- Any room containing a fuel-fired appliance (gas/oil furnace or water tank) must be separated from the remainder of the building.

Washrooms

1-10 persons = one universal washroom (complying with the accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities)

- 1-20 persons = one universal washroom, plus 1 unisex washroom
- 1-25 female and 1-30 male = 1 female universal and 1 male universal washroom

*Note: Community Care regulations may be different than washrooms required under the BC Building Code.

Access for persons with disabilities

Ramps are required to conform to Section 3.8 of the B.C. Building Code to one entrance with a door providing a clear opening of 34 inches.

At least one washroom meeting the accessibility requirements must be supplied for persons with disabilities regardless of whether persons with disabilities will be employed in or using the centre.

Spatial separation (prevention of fire spread to other buildings)

To meet spatial separation requirements, windows may have to be removed, non-combustible cladding installed, and gypsum board added to the exterior walls.

Protecting openings from exits

Unenclosed exit stairs, ramps, and exit decks within: 10' horizontally and less than 32'10" below or less than 16'5" above openings (doors, windows), must be protected from fire within the building by changing windows to *fixed* wired glass or glass block and adding auto-closers to doors.

Exits

Maximum area and travel distance for egress within a suite with a single exit door:

In un-sprinklered buildings, the maximum allowable area is 150 m². Maximum travel distance- 15 m.

- If exceeded, 2 exits are required (exit doors must swing out).
- Emergency lighting is required to illuminate the path of travel from every area of suite to the exit door.

Stairs & Guards

- Guards 42" at landings and 36" at stairs, with 4" maximum openings.
- Stair rise between 5" & 7", stair run minimum 11".
- Minimum tread depth is 12" if a 1" nosing is installed.

Other important considerations:

- Where the A2 occupancies in a building exceed 10% of the area of the story it occupies, the classification of the entire building changes to A2 and may trigger additional requirements.
- Daycares accommodating children under 30 months have requirements additional to the above.

See Bulletin B14-04 for more information:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/construction-industry/building-codes-and-standards/bulletins/b14-04_daycares.pdf

Daycares with an occupant load of over 40 persons (staff and children) require a fire alarm system.