New Westminster

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New Westminster BC
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Child Care Facilities
Building Bulletin

Purpose:

This bulletin has been prepared to assist the public to understand the regulations of the BC Building Code as it applies to Child Care Facilities. Please note: This bulletin is a guideline only; all child care facilities must be in compliance with the current edition of the BC Building Code.

Background:

Licensed child care facilities must meet the requirements of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act (Act) and the Child Care Licensing Regulation. The buildings in which they are located must be in compliance with the B.C. Building Code for use as a child care facility. An application for a daycare license generates a referral to the Building and Fire Departments, and the issuance of a license is contingent on health and safety issues being satisfactorily addressed. Single family homes with care for no more than 8 children generally only require minor upgrades in order to meet the minimum life safety standards. Larger facilities (more than 8 children) should anticipate that significant life safety upgrades will be required to meet these standards. These upgrades, in turn, will normally initiate the requirement for building permits. In some cases permits for plumbing, gas, and electrical work will also be required. Regardless of permits, Inspections of every child care facility will be required.

Building Permit Requirements :

The following documentation must be submitted at the time a building permit application is made:

1. Letters of Assurance from the Coordinating Registered Professional (Schedule B)
2. Code report or analysis indicating the existing classification and construction of the building and the required renovations/upgrades to bring the building into compliance with Part 3 of the Building Code. (note – the original building may not comply to the stricter construction and safety requirements required by the Code, thereby requiring major modifications to the building)
3. Plans:
   A double line plan, drawn to scale, distinguishing new from existing construction, is required (in triplicate) including:
   - Site plan of entire building on lot, streets & north arrow
   - Location of child care facility within the building
   - Detailed floor plans of the child care area showing all dimensions, doors, windows, etc.
   - Locations of required exits and fire separations
   - Location of washrooms and other plumbing fixtures
   - Details of new construction – list materials and finishes. Walls, floor, ceiling, etc.
   - Indicate all structural changes

     Note – a structural engineer may be required

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Child Care for more than 8 children in care:

Child Care facilities fall under the requirements of Part 3 of the Code, which addresses regulations for fire protection, occupant safety and accessibility. The facility will be classified as an Assembly Use (Group A2) under the BC Building Code. In most cases, a building permit will be required for the conversion of the space to a child care facility. Building permit applications must provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the facility will be safe for its intended purpose. Compliance with the requirements of the current edition of the British Columbia Building Code is required for this purpose. The Code specifies that a building or project falling under Part 3 of the code must retain the services of a *coordinating registered professional* (Under the B.C. Architect's Act an architect is required for this type of building).

Child Care in Single Family Dwellings (3 – 8 children in care):

Section 20 of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act supersedes requirements of the Building Code other than those for fire and health safety respecting a single-family dwelling house. Unless physical modifications to the building are contemplated no building permit is required. The basic requirements are:

- Compliance with Division B, Part 9 of the BC Building Code
- Maximum 8 children total (including the license holder's own children)
- Smoke alarms and CO2 detectors (hard-wired and interconnected) required in compliance with the Building Code.

These buildings are reviewed as dwelling units and provided there are no outstanding issues (incomplete permits, work without permits, life safety issues), a child care facility will be permitted.

Where Children Under 30 months are Accommodated :

- the facility shall be located in a building that is not more than 1 storey above or below a storey with an exit that opens directly to the exterior of the building at ground level, or the building is sprinklered.
- A fire alarm system shall be installed if the building contains one or more other suites.

Inspections:

An inspection of the facility is required as part of the licensing process. Prior to requesting an inspection please provide the following minimum information:

- Fraser Health Municipal Approval Form
- Building Drawings:
  - Site plan showing location of daycare, entry/exit, outdoor play areas, fences
  - Floor plans showing all areas of the daycare and the room uses (note: plans to be approved by Fraser Health prior to submittal to the City)
- Fire Safety Plan including: (please check with the Fire Department for further requirements)

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- floor plan indicating exits, location of fire extinguishers, smoke alarms
- emergency fire drill procedures
- contact & medical information for the children

In the course of inspection, you may be required to:

- Obtain permits for the removal or legalization of any unauthorized construction that has taken place on the property (building, plumbing, gas and/or electrical as appropriate)
- Correct any obvious hazards (handrails, guards, furnaces in the bedrooms, bedroom egress, clearance to combustibles in the furnace room, open wire circuits, and any other obvious fire safety or health concerns
- Remove all two sided key locks from principle exits from the child care facility and install locking devices that are readily openable from the inside.
- Correct unsafe installation of stairs, landscape or grading issues for pedestrian traffic to the entrance/exit of the facility
- Upgrade the life and fire safety devices in the building. This may include fire separations (walls, floors/ceilings), smoke alarms/detectors, heat detectors, fire extinguishers, exit lighting, emergency lighting. You may also be required to install a fire alarm system and/or sprinkler the building.