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Child Care Facilities

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This bulletin is to inform Owners, Operators, and Builders of the guidelines and requirements for Child Care Facilities.

Summary

- BC Building Code (BCBC) has special classification requirements for child care facilities to help ensure the safety of children in these spaces.
- Child care facilities with more than two (2) children must be licensed by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).
- Child care facilities require special attention in determining their suitable building code classification. Building code requirements vary depending on building type, and the age and number of children at the child care facility.

General Requirements

- Child care facilities with more than two (2) children are required to be licensed by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).
 - To acquire a license from VCH, the child care facility must submit building plans to the health authority and must meet the requirements of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act (Act) and the Child Care Licensing Regulation (Regulation).
- The BC Building Code (BCBC) requires child care facilities to be classified as Group A, Division 2 occupancy. This applies regardless of the age of the children.
 - Please following the BCBC when planning and constructing your child care facility.
 - Additional requirements for facilities accommodating one (1) or more children under 30 months of age are also outlined in the BCBC.
 - For child care facilities with no more than eight (8) children in care and located in a single family house, the Act supersedes the requirements of the BCBC other than those for single family house use.

Building Code Requirements

- The determination of the applicable building code requirements for child care facilities are based on the number of children and the age of the children.
- The below classification requirements are for child care facilities providing child care during the day. A more restrictive classification or additional requirements may be required for facilities providing overnight care.
- Please see the table below for the code requirements for child care facilities. This table does not include all requirements, please review the BCBC, the Act, and the Regulations for more information (see References).

See over →

1. Up to 8 children in a single family house – regardless of age

- This type of child care facility is considered as a single family house under Part 9 of the BCBC (see Section 20 of the Act).
- Building, Plumbing, and Gas inspections will be undertaken.
 - Any safety and building codes concerns identified must be addressed prior to occupancy.
- A letter from the childcare facility operator indicating the number of children to occupy the space will be required.

2. Any number of children in any type of building – serving children 30 months of age and over

- This type of child care facility is considered as an assembly occupancy (Group A, Division 2) under Part 3 of the BCBC (notwithstanding allowances in the BCBC to classify a low occupant load assembly as a Group D occupancy).
- A building permit is required.
- If the existing zoning does not permit the child care facility use, the property owner will have to apply to the City to see if the zoning of that property can be changed.

3. Any number of children in any type of building – serving children younger than 30 months of age

- This type of child care facility is considered as an assembly occupancy (Group A, Division 2) under Part 3 of the BCBC.
- A building permit is required.
- If the existing zoning does not permit the child care facility use, the property owner will have to apply to the City to see if the zoning of that property can be changed.
- Under the BCBC, the following are also required:
 - A child care facility with 1 or more children younger than 30 months of age must be located in a sprinklered building or be located such that the facility has access to an exit at grade. The exit may not be more than 1 storey from any of the day care rooms.
 - A fire alarm is required if the day care is in a multi-suite building or if the child care facility shares a means of egress located inside a building. Allowances may apply (see BCBC 3.2.4.1.(4)(f)).
 - If the building requires a fire alarm system, smoke detectors are required in each rooms and egress corridor.
 - Where the building does not require a fire alarm system, smoke alarms conforming to CAN/ULC S531 must be provided. The smoke alarms must:
 - Be installed in each room and each corridor serving as part of the means of egress from the day care facility;
 - Be interconnected;
 - Conform to the product standard and be installed to the required standard;
 - Be electrically wired and provided with a seven day battery back-up; and
 - Have no disconnect switch between the overcurrent device and the smoke alarm.

References

- [BCBC 3.1.2.6](#) Group A, Division 2, Low Occupant Load
- [BCBC 3.1.2.8](#) Daycare Facilities for Children
- [BCBC 3.3.2.17](#) Daycare Facilities for Children under 30 Months
- [BC Child Care Licensing Regulation](#)
- [BC Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#)

Should you have any questions, comments, or suggestions concerning this bulletin, please reference the Bulletin number and email building@richmond.ca or call the Building Approvals General Inquiries line at 604-276-4118.