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BUILDING DIVISION

# CHILD CARE FACILITY

This guide has been prepared to assist a building permit applicant proposing to modify an existing building or to construct a new building to accommodate a child care facility. The term “child care facility” includes those operating in residential homes, community centers, places of worship, commercial buildings, etc. This guide is for general guidance only. It does not replace by-laws or other legal documents.

## General Information

A child care facility must comply with all applicable Planning Division requirements, Building Division requirements, and Fire Department requirements. It is important to note that the entire process from identifying a potential operating location to obtaining a building permit can be lengthy and expensive. Applicants are recommended to engage the assistance of subject area professionals as early in the process as possible. This guide focuses on the Building Code requirements and the building permit process.

## Planning Division Requirements

The Planning Division regulates zoning of child care facilities, including permissible locations, maximum number of children, parking requirements, and outdoor play area requirements. Refer to specific zones in the City of Surrey Zoning By-law to determine outdoor play area requirements. For details on the permitted zones and possible rezoning, please refer to the document at [http://www.surrey.ca/files/Setting\\_Up\\_a\\_Licensed\\_Child\\_Care\\_Facility.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/files/Setting_Up_a_Licensed_Child_Care_Facility.pdf). This document also outlines the child care facility licensing application process. Applicants should verify that the proposed location satisfies all Planning Division requirements prior to applying for a building permit. It is also advised to initiate the Fraser Health licensing process prior to the building permit application, as the licensing approval process may result in required changes to the proposed building.

## Building Division Requirements

The Building Division enforces the BC Building Code requirements on child care facilities. Regardless of the proposed location, number, or age of children, Fraser Health approval is always required through its Community Care Facilities Licensing Office. For more information on the child care facility licensing inspections process, please refer to <http://www.surrey.ca/city-services/12862.aspx>.

*Except for child care facilities in residential homes with maximum 8 children*, the BC Building Code requirements are contained in Articles **3.1.2.8** (Daycare Facilities for Children) and **3.3.2.16** (Daycare Facilities with Children under 30 Months). A building permit application with sealed architectural drawings is required. A child care facility is classified as A-2 assembly occupancy, with additional requirements if there are children under 30 months of age (it is recognized that children under 30 months are incapable of evacuating a building without the assistance of caregivers). Please note that child care facilities are often proposed for existing buildings that were not originally designed to accommodate any assembly occupancy uses. In these cases, the proposed building must be reclassified to demonstrate that the assembly occupancy can be permitted (i.e. compliance to the applicable construction class article requirements). This process may involve significant building upgrades, including installing a sprinkler system and a fire alarm system, adding a firewall, enhancing the fire separation and penetration protection to adjacent suites, increasing the number and fire ratings of exits, and increasing the fire ratings of floor and roof assemblies. A fire alarm system that is required by 3.3.2.16.(2) must be installed for the entire building.

*For child care facilities in residential homes with maximum 8 children*, a building permit is not required unless modifications to the building are intended. Smoke alarms, CO detectors, and emergency lighting shall be installed in the residence based on the Building Code requirements. Interconnected smoke alarms are required on each level of a dwelling unit and in each sleeping room within the child care facility. In addition, someone must live in the residence and it should also have a valid occupancy permit. A child care facility is permitted in a secondary suite only if operator lives in the same suite and the suite has a valid occupancy permit.

Before applying for a building permit, applicants are strongly advised to contact a Registered Professional (i.e. Registered Architect or Professional Engineer) who is familiar with the requirements of the current BC Building Code. The Registered Professional will be able to provide advice on the required modifications to the building and possibly the costs involved.

As part of the building permit application review, the drawings may be circulated internally for approval, including Planning (for building exteriors, parking, outdoor play areas, etc), Trees (for proposed landscaping), Engineering (for possible services and driveway upgrades). After the building permit is issued, any applicable trades permits (e.g. plumbing, electrical, sprinkler, sign, etc) shall be applied for separately.

### **Fire Department Requirements**

The Fire Department enforces the BC Fire Code requirements on child care facilities. Please refer to the guide at <http://www.surrey.ca/files/InspectionHandoutDAYCARE.pdf> for a summary of the requirements.

### **Building Permit Application**

If a building permit is required, it should be applied for after confirmation of Planning and Fraser Health approval of the proposed location. Please ensure all applicable drawings and documents are submitted at the time of building permit application.

- Completed Building Permit application form;
- Owner's Authorization form (if the applicant is not the building owner);

- Building Code analysis, sealed and signed by a Registered Professional, to demonstrate either the existing building or the reclassified building can accommodate the proposed child care facility;
- Four (4) sets of site plan, including parking requirements and outdoor play areas delineated;
- Four (4) sets of sealed and signed architectural drawings, including details of outdoor play areas;
- Four (4) sets of sealed and signed structural drawings (if any structural changes are proposed), and/or a sealed letter from a structural engineer to confirm that the existing building meets the current BC Building Code requirements;
- Four (4) sets of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing drawings (if any modifications to these disciplines are necessary);
- Four (4) sets of sealed and signed commercial cooking mechanical and fire suppression drawings (if any proposed cooking produces grease-laden vapours);
- Four (4) sets of landscaping drawings (if required by the rezoning process and/or outdoor play areas);
- Schedule B from each Registered Professional submitting sealed drawings;
- Schedule A from the Coordinating Registered Professional (if more than one Registered Professional is involved), and signed by the building owner;
- Fraser Health approval of the architectural drawings;
- Letter from the operator to confirm the ages of the children (if no children under 30 months).

#### **Additional Information**

It is the applicant's responsibility to determine whether the proposed location will meet all applicable requirements. The building permit fee will be based on the value of construction, and shall be paid at the time of application. Depending on the scope of work, a damage deposit and landscape security may also be required. Please contact the Commercial Section of the Building Division (604-591-4159) if further information is needed on the Building Code requirements and the building permit process.