	Department	Planning, Building and Development	Division	Building Services
	Subject	Detached Additional Dwelling Units (Emergency Access & Servicing Requirements)	Policy #	1102.09
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Purpose

Building Services is committed to providing a consistently high level of service and in doing so the purpose of this policy is to clarify the building code requirements for emergency access and site servicing requirements for a detached additional dwelling unit (ADU) located on the same lot as a detached principal dwelling type.

Background Information

Where the zoning by-law allows for a detached additional dwelling unit on the same lot as a detached principal dwelling type, either through construction of a new building or conversion of an existing accessory building, a building permit is required.

A detached additional dwelling unit is to comply with the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and all applicable law. The current version of the OBC, however, is ambiguous regarding fire department access for Part 9 Buildings. In addition, clarification is required for the addressing and servicing of a detached additional dwelling unit on the same lot as a detached principal dwelling type.

Policy


Fire Department/Emergency Access

Where a detached additional dwelling unit is proposed in the rear yard or side yard of the principal dwelling type, in order to provide fire department/emergency access to the additional dwelling, a minimum 1.0 m wide unobstructed path of travel shall be provided from the public street to the entry of the detached additional dwelling unit.

The minimum 1.0 m path of travel to the detached additional dwelling unit shall:

- be on the same property as the principal building*;
- have an overhead clearance of not less than 2.1 m;
- not contain any projections, e.g. chimney, bay window, window well, HVAC unit, utilities, downspout/roof leader, hose bib, mounted hose rack, exhaust outlet or air intake, etc.; and
- be not more than 45 m measured from the public street to the entry of the detached additional dwelling unit.

Recommended by:	Approved by:	Date Approved:
Frank Peter, Senior Manager	Luciano Chieca, Director of Building Services and Chief Building Official	January 12, 2024

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- be maintained clear, free, and accessible under all climatic conditions to provide access for firefighting/emergency operations. The access shall not be obstructed by vehicles, gates, fences, building materials, vegetation, signs, or any other form of obstruction in accordance with the Ontario Fire Code. This includes but not limited to ice and snow accumulations.
- have an approved emergency access sign clearly posted on the property, located at the entry of the access and in accordance with Fire Prevention sign requirements.

Please Note: *The 1.0 m path of travel shall not be through an adjacent alley and/or any of those public/private ways. The plan reviewer shall also review google maps, as part of the plan review process, to ensure that the site plan submitted matches the street view, and there are no encroachments into this path of travel.

Important Note: The plan reviewer is to add the following as a condition on the building permit:


“A minimum 1.0 m wide unobstructed path of travel shall be provided for fire department/emergency access from the public street to the entry of the detached additional dwelling unit. The access shall not be obstructed by vehicles, gates, fences, building materials, vegetation, signs, or any other form of obstruction in accordance with the Ontario Fire Code. This includes but not limited to ice and snow accumulations.”

Additional Requirements

As part of the approval process the following is required:

- A municipal unit identifier shall be assigned in accordance with the civic addressing policy. Detached ADU’s will be assigned the principal house number with the letter “R” or “S”, to indicate if the detached ADU is in the rear yard or side yard of the principal dwelling type.
- The municipal unit identification sign must be clearly visible and affixed to the building face near the entrance to the detached ADU. In some instances, a wayfinding sign may also be required, where the detached ADU is not visible from the front of the property.
- Emergency contact information (phone number and email address) for the property owner must be provided and the Building Services Division will forward this information to the Fire Prevention Division at fireprevention@niagarafalls.ca. A copy of the building permit placard and the approved site plan must also be included and sent to Fire Prevention.

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Water and Sanitary Services

An additional dwelling unit shall be serviced from the water and sanitary connection in the existing detached principal dwelling type. Separate services to the municipal services are not permitted.

- the water service pipe from the property line to the principal building is sized in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and shall include the number of fixture units for both the existing principal building and the detached secondary or additional dwelling unit;
- the water service pipe from the principal dwelling type to the detached additional dwelling unit is sized in accordance with the Ontario Building Code; and
- a shut off valve is provided in both the principal dwelling and the detached additional dwelling unit.

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