

**STATE OF COLORADO  
OFFICE OF THE STATE ARCHITECT  
REAL ESTATE PROGRAM - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**CHAPTER 7. OFFICE SPACE STANDARDS FOR LEASED OFFICE SPACE**

**Standards for Measuring Overall Space Use Efficiency in Leased Office Space**

As a response to changes in the workplace and the added flexibility of remote working through Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs), the State has shifted from the metric of rentable square feet per worker to the metric of usable square feet per seat to service State agencies' workforce and work style. The Office of the State Architect's Statewide Planning Program issued Design Guidelines for office space in 2021 to address this new work mode. Those guidelines can be found on the Office of the State Architect's website and at the following [link](#).

The goal for office space leased by State agencies is 197 usable square feet ("USF") per required seat, which converts to approximately 227 rentable square feet ("RSF") per seat (using a building load factor of 15%). Office standards for leased office space are based upon 78% of the BOMA average number of square feet in the Denver area for private sector office space of 291 rentable square feet per office worker. This has been found to be an achievable target to use and affords each agency the freedom to design the space in a manner that best fits their specific programmatic needs. Actual individual space allocations will be determined on the basis of functional space requirements, the priorities of the organization, and the total space and budget available. Contact the Statewide Planning Program for assistance.

**1. Category #1 Leases**

Category #1 leases are those leases where the amount of square feet leased is less than 78% of the private sector average. Therefore, Category #1 leases are leases where the amount of space leased is less than 227 RSF per seat. Leases in this category are deemed to be an efficient use of space.

**2. Category #2 Leases**

Category #2 leases are those leases where the amount of square feet leased per seat is between 78% to 85% of the private sector average. Therefore, Category #2 leases are leases where the amount of space leased is between 227 and 247 RSF per seat. Leases in this category are deemed to be an acceptable use of space.

**3. Category #3 Leases**

Category #3 leases are those leases where the amount of square feet leased is more than 247 RSF per seat, but less than the private sector average of 291 RSF per office worker. Leases in this category require approval of the division director/president of the requesting agency/institution.

**4. Category #4 Leases**

Category #4 leases are those leases where the amount of square feet leased is equal to or greater than the private sector average of 291 RSF per officer worker. Leases in this category require approval of the agency/institution executive director/president.

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**Standards for Individual Offices Within Leased Office Space**

- A. Individual Offices VS. Open Workstations. Open office workstations, with their various configuration options, are strongly encouraged. Open offices require less floor space and allow improved heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems. In addition, peripheral circulation (where private offices are located in the center of the building, leaving the window areas open) allows more people to benefit from natural light.

Enclosed offices should be provided on the basis of functional need. By far the most common functional need is for privacy due to frequent discussion of confidential matters in person or on the phone. Other occasional needs for privacy are for security and isolation of confidential documents. Need for privacy can also be accommodated by special furniture and equipment on a case-by-case basis. Based on functional justification, these enclosed spaces may be single occupant offices, shared conference/meeting rooms, interview rooms, and/or other space types.

Managers choosing to allocate a high percentage of private offices will likely find themselves in Category #3 or Category #4 leases, which will require the approval of a division director, an executive director, or institution president. In order to encourage the use of open work stations (as opposed to individual offices) the approval of the division director, an executive director, or institution president must include a statement indicating the business justification for the individuals who are receiving private offices.

- B. Office Sizes. In order to encourage the equitable sharing of the total office space with an office suite, the guideline for office space is a maximum office size of 120 square feet per individual office, 48 square feet per work station, and 36 square feet per touch down space. See the Design Guidelines for additional information. Exceptions will require a letter of approval from the agency/institution division director/president.