

Building Area Definitions

A. Gross Area

1. Definition: The sum of all areas on all floors of a building included within the outside faces of its exterior walls, including floor penetration areas, however insignificant, for circulation and shaft areas that connect one floor to another.
2. Basis for Measurement: Gross area is computed by physically measuring or scaling measurements from the outside faces of exterior walls, disregarding cornices, pilaster, buttresses, etc., which extend beyond the wall faces.
3. Description: In addition to all the internal floored spaces obviously covered above, gross area should include the following: excavated basement area; mezzanines, penthouses, and attics; garages; enclosed porches, inner or outer balconies whether walled or not, if they are utilized for operational functions; and corridors whether walled or not, provided they are within the outside face lines of the building, to the extent of the roof drip line. The footprints of stairways, elevator shafts, and ducts (examples of building infrastructure) are to be counted as gross area on each floor through which they pass.
4. Limitations: Exclude open areas such as parking lots, playing fields, courts, and light wells, or portions of upper floors eliminated by rooms or lobbies that rise above single-floor height.
5. Exception: Include top, unroofed floor of parking structures where parking is available.

B. Assignable Area (Net Assignable Square Feet – NASF)

1. Definition: The sum of all areas on all floors of a building assigned to, or available for assignment to, an occupant or specific use.
2. Basis for Measurement: Assignable area is computed by physically measuring or scaling measurements from the inside faces of surfaces that form the boundaries of the designated areas. Exclude areas having less than a 6'6" clear ceiling height unless the criteria of a separate structure are met.
3. Description: Included should be space subdivisions of the ten major room use categories for assignable space – classrooms, labs, offices, study facilities, special use, general use, support, health care, residential and unclassified – that are used to accomplish the institution's mission.

Source: Federal Construction Council Technical Report No. 50 (Publication 1235), *Classification of Building Areas*, National Academy of Sciences, Building Research Advisory Board.

4. Limitations: Deductions should not be made for necessary building columns and projections. Areas defined as building service, circulation, mechanical, and structural should not be included.

C. Non-assignable Area

1. Definition: The sum of all areas on all floors of a building not available for assignment to an occupant or for specific use, but necessary for the general operation of a building.
2. Basis for measurement: Non-assignable area is computed by physically measuring or scaling measurements from the inside faces of surfaces that form the boundaries of the designated areas.
3. Description: Included should be space subdivisions – building service, circulation and mechanical.
4. Building Service Area
 - a. Definition: The sum of all areas on all floors of a building used for custodial supplies, sink room, housekeeping closets, and for public rest rooms.
 - b. Description: Included should be housekeeping closets or similarly small cleanup spaces, maintenance material storage areas, trashrooms exclusively devoted to the storage of nonhazardous waste created by the building occupants as a whole, and public toilets.
5. Circulation Area
 - a. Definition: The sum of all areas on all floors of a building required for physical access to some subdivision of space, whether physically bounded by partitions or not.
 - b. Description: Included should be, but is not limited to, public corridors, fire towers, elevator lobbies, tunnels, bridges, and each floor's footprint of elevator shafts, escalators and stairways. Receiving areas, such as loading docks, should be treated as circulation space. Any part of a loading dock that is not covered is to be excluded from both the circulation area and the gross building area. A loading dock which is also used for central storage should be regarded as assignable area and coded as central storage (730). Also included are corridors, whether walled or not, provided they are within the outside face lines of the buildings to the extent of the roof drop line.

- c. Limitations: Deductions should not be made for necessary building columns and minor projections. When determining corridor areas, only spaces required for public access should be included. Restricted access private circulation aisles used only for circulation within an organizational unit's suite of rooms, auditoria, or other working areas should not be included.

6. Mechanical Area

- a. Definition: The sum of all areas on all floors of a building designed to house mechanical equipment, utility services, and shaft areas.
- b. Description: Included should be mechanical areas such as central utility plants.

D. Net Usable Area

- a. Definition: The sum of all area on all floors of a building either assigned to, or available for assignment to, an occupant or specific use, or necessary for the general operation of a building.
- b. Basis for Measurement: Net usable area is computed by summing the assignable area and the nonassignable area.

E. Structural Area

- a. Definition: The sum of all areas on all floors of a building that cannot be occupied or put to use because of structural building features.
- b. Basis for Measurement: Precise computation by direct measurement is not possible under these definitions. It is determined by calculating the difference between the measured gross and the measured net usable area.