Department of the Interior
Acquisition, Assistance, and Asset Policy (DOI-AAAP)

Title	Office Space Utilization Design Standard
Reference Number	0049
Version Number	02
Function(s)	Acquisition, Energy Management, Real Property, Space Management
Point of Contact	Veronica Ahmad, Craig Lasser
Source of this Requirement	Utilizing Space Efficiently and Improving Technologies (USE IT) Act of 2025; Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-12-12, *Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations*; *Management Procedures Memorandum No. 2015-01,* ; MPM 2024-01, *Implementation of Occupancy Metrics for Office Space*
Regulatory Reference	N/A

Version Detail

The table below provides version details for this policy.

Version Number	Date	Author	Description of update
02	Date of Signature	Craig Lasser	Compliance with USE IT Act and MPM-2024-01, including updates to utilization standards and occupancy reporting.
01	12/8/2015	Michael Wright	Original policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to define DOI design standards for office space utilization and establish occupancy reporting requirements for certain office locations. Information provided in this policy updates office space utilization requirements provided in 425 DM Chapters 1 and 2, Space Management, and the Space Management Handbook, until those sources are amended.

Scope:

This policy applies to all new office space acquisitions and renovation or significant alteration of office space. This policy also applies to lease renewals and succeeding or superseding leases/occupancy agreements unless the bureau/office demonstrates that application of the standard is not cost effective. Such exceptions must be approved in writing by the bureau/office Senior Asset Management Officer. The policy does not apply to lease holdovers or short term extensions where modification to the space is not practical. For a mixed-use building, this policy applies to the portion of the building dedicated for office use.

Effective date:

This policy is effective immediately.

Background:

In alignment with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-12-12, *Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations*, and Management Procedures Memorandum, 2024-01, *Implementation of Occupancy Metrics for Office Space*, the Department is committed to improving program effectiveness and efficiency and finding ways to reduce operational costs. Working in concert with bureau and office asset management staff, DOI has identified leased space (including GSA-Provided space) and owned office facilities as areas of potential savings. Total space costs continue to increase and will consume an increasing portion of the Department's budget if no action is taken to mitigate this situation. Accordingly, bureaus and offices must prudently scrutinize the assignment and utilization of space and are required to implement the DOI office utilization design standard described below. Utilization in its simplest form is the number of square feet (SF) in a building divided by the number of people who occupy that space in the performance of the mission. However, standards for measuring utilization can be based upon usable (USF), rentable (RSF), or gross square feet (GSF), depending on the type of space acquired (leased, GSA-provided, or owned).

Action:

The DOI utilization design standard for all new, renovated, or remodeled office space (or, in a mixed-use building, the portion of the building dedicated for office use) is a maximum of **150 USF/person**. Leases/agreements at or above the prospectus level (as outlined in the attached) are also required to achieve a maximum utilization rate of 150 USF/person.

Bureaus that have agreements, contracts, or other instruments with non-federal entities to construct, operate, maintain, and utilize bureau-owned facilities shall establish and promote the DOI utilization design standard as an efficiency objective consistent with the agreements, contracts, or other instruments.

Furthermore, bureaus with office space will be required to periodically report on utilization and occupancy rates for those locations. Guidance and reporting methods for meeting this requirement will be provided separately by the Office of Acquisition and Property Management (OS-PAM).

Technical or Process Guidance:

DOI recognizes that a USF measurement is not always readily available or easily calculated. Therefore, bureaus and offices are encouraged to consider the attached supplemental guidance when planning for space actions.

Attachments:

The following attachment applies to this policy: Supplemental Guidance.

Approval Signature:

X

Robert Rushing
Acting Director, Office of Acquisition and Pr...

Supplemental Guidance

GSA-Provided Space: -- USF is calculated by GSA according to the *National Business Space Assignment Policy (NBSAP)*[1] and is noted on the Occupancy Agreement (OA). However, because the NBSAP applies to all functional uses, in addition to spaces excepted/excluded in the NBSAP, certain spaces must be manually excluded from the GSA-provided space OA USF to calculate office utilization. These spaces include: public reading rooms, high density file rooms, hearing rooms, litigation file storage rooms, libraries, law enforcement related and evidence storage rooms, laboratory space, server/network rooms, warehouse space, ware yards, exhibition space, museum space, auditoriums, cafeterias, gymnasiums, restrooms for public-use, laundry, health units, and day care centers. Spaces that should be included are the actual offices, local circulation (e.g., hallways associated with the office use area), conference room(s), kitchenette, occupant storage, and photocopy rooms. Some of the excluded building use types, such as laboratory or warehouse space, may have their own utilization standard, defined in a future DOI policy.

Direct Leased Space: Often direct-leased space is measured in rentable square feet (RSF), and is generally provided by the commercial lessee within the lease document. The RSF will include all office space, and normally a percentage of the common use space in the building. This percentage will be detailed within the lease and may also include such space as vestibules, restrooms, or mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) rooms. When evaluating potential direct lease space or calculating Usable Square Footage, other uses / functions should be excluded as noted above in GSA-Provided Space. To achieve the 150 USF/person office utilization standard, it is recommended to keep the office portion of direct leased space under a utilization rate of 195 **RSF/person** (i.e., the portion of the common space dedicated to office use covering vestibules, restrooms, MEP rooms, etc., should not exceed 45 RSF/person). This 195 RSF/person recommendation may vary from one building to another based on the layout / configuration of the office building, depending on how efficiently the building is designed.

Owned Space: Owned space is generally measured in gross square feet (GSF). GSF is calculated by DOI personnel or found in construction documents. GSF will include vestibules, restrooms, MEP rooms, loading docks, other building circulation, exit staircases, elevator shafts, MEP shafts, and even wall thicknesses. When evaluating renovations or acquisition of DOI-owned space, other uses / functions should be excluded (as noted above in the GSA-Provided Space), and in order to achieve the 150 USF/person office utilization standard, it is recommended to keep the office portion of the owned space under a utilization rate of **210 GSF/person** (i.e., the portion of the DOI-owned building dedicated to office use covering restrooms, MEP rooms, loading docks, exit staircases, elevator shafts, MEP shafts, wall thicknesses, etc. should not exceed 60 GSF/person). This 210 GSF/person recommendation may vary from one building to another based on the layout / configuration of the office building, depending on how efficiently the building is designed.

Prospectus Level Lease Space: The prospectus threshold is the annual dollar amount for leasing or total dollar amount for altering leased space that may be spent without Congressional

approval. This threshold changes annually as referenced in the Federal Management Regulation 102.73.35. Any space action above this threshold is subject to Congressional approval. Utilization for prospectus level projects is also required to be **150 USF/person** or better. DOI prospectus level projects must be approved by the Director, Office of Acquisition and Property Management prior to submission to GSA.

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[1] GSA National Business Space Assignment Policy. GSA Public Building Service, Office of Real Property Asset Management, August 2023.