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Office Workspace Management

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1. What are space requirements for each grade level?

Space requirements based on pay grade or maximum area per person under Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR), Part 101-17, Temporary Regulation D-76 (41 CFR Part 101-17) were withdrawn in 1995 and are no longer mandated by federal regulations, specified by GSA, or recommended by the OGP Office of Real Property Management.

Current guidance, under Title 41, Volume 2, Chapter 101 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Sec. 101-17.301 Space allowances states, "Space allowances are derived from specific studies of the operations of the agencies, and are directed toward providing each employee with enough space to work efficiently."

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR 102-79) defines the current standards for space assignment as follows:

"Executive agencies must provide a quality workplace environment that supports program operations, preserves the value of real property assets, meets the needs of the occupant agencies, and provides child care and physical fitness facilities in the workplace when adequately justified. An executive agency must promote maximum utilization of federal workspace, consistent with mission requirements, to maximize its value to the government." (41 CFR 102-79.10)

"Executive agencies must provide assignment and utilization services that will maximize the value of federal real property resources and improve the productivity of the workers housed therein." (41 CFR 102-79.15)

Further guidance is provided by the "GSA Customer Guide to Real Property," which calls for space to be assigned based on "local market conditions, available vacant space, statutes and regulations, principles of professional space management, and your (the agency's) mission."

GSA recommends that space requirements be based on the tasks required for a particular job and on the organizations needs to accomplish its mission. Other factors affecting space needs may be privacy and acoustic requirements, access to daylight, collaborative needs, space availability, and budget.

For government office space planning purposes, OGP has determined through its Office Space Use Review that an appropriate benchmark is 230 rentable square feet per person, including all individual and shared space such as workstations, circulation, storage, and conference rooms. How one allocates space among the different uses is up to the organization, working with their staff, management, and designers. The 230 rentable square feet per person was determined by benchmarking public and private sector office space users.

For more information on space utilization in the federal government, in addition to the "GSA Customer Guide to Real Property", we recommend:

Office Space Use Review, which contains the 230 SF/person guideline
 Real Property Performance Results
 The Integrated Workplace
 People and the Workplace
 Hallmarks of the Productive Workplace
 Innovative Workplace Strategies

2. Is there a governmentwide standard for office space per person?

No, there are no formal standard, federal regulations no longer mandate nor stipulate space requirements based on pay grade or maximum area per person. In the 1997 "Office Space Use Review: Current Practices and Emerging Trends," and the updated 2002 edition GSA's, Office of Real Property Management provides guidance to office space use in the federal government and the private sector. This review contains valuable data and practical advice pertinent to all real property professionals.

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