

AGPMR ADVISORY

ADVISORY No. 14-01

EFFECTIVE: January 07, 2014

Title: Space Utilization Rate Policy

1. SUMMARY

This Advisory revises the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) policy for calculating a Utilization Rate (UR), which is a space usage efficiency indicator and management gauge. USDA's UR calculation methodology is being revised to correspond with the General Services Administration (GSA) and other Departments and to improve USDA's overall space usage efficiency.

UR is calculated by dividing the sum total of a tenant's usable square footage (USF) by the total number of occupants in the space (personnel count), as follows:

$$UR = \text{Total USF divided by Personnel Count}$$

According to USDA's Space Management Policy, Departmental Regulation (DR) 1620-002, the maximum UR threshold for USDA offices is an average of 150 USF per person. This maximum threshold number is not changing. This Advisory's changes are twofold:

- 1) expand the types of space counted in the USF, specifically additional support type space, such as conference and file rooms/areas, to create an "all in" number;
- 2) clarify the definition of the personnel count in the UR calculation regarding employees with alternate or flexible work schedules, such as teleworkers and interns, and add resident contractors.

2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided to assist with understanding and calculating a UR:

ANSI/BOMA Office (ABOA) area. This refers to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)/Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) standard for measuring office space. ABOA is also known as Usable space (see definition below), and is the space standard used by federal executive agencies to lease office space.

Usable Space: This comprises the numerator in the UR calculation. As mentioned above, it is also referred to as ABOA. It consists of standard office type construction and includes the following types of spaces:

- **Office:** The physical workplace where personnel primarily conduct their work.
Examples: individual workspace such as open workstations, enclosed private and shared offices, and touchdown stations.
- **Support:** Supports physical workplace activities in offices.
Examples: Automated Data Processing or ADP rooms (not raised-floor); client/break rooms; collaborative areas; conference and training rooms; file rooms; office supply; printer/copy/fax/mail functional areas; storage areas.
- **Circulation:** The internal “spaces between the spaces” that personnel travel within a usable space’s workplace setting. Includes internal aisle ways and space around workstations.

Common Area (CA). This is generally fixed building support space, and is usually located outside the tenant’s demised space, because it is either public or used by all tenants and building management. Examples: atriums; courtyards; electrical/telephone/mechanical rooms; janitorial closets; lobbies; public corridors, restrooms; vestibules.

Personnel Count. This is the total number of on-board, full and part-time USDA employees and resident contractors (non-janitorial, non-security guard) whose duty station is located in USDA space, and who report routinely to the work site (e.g., 3 or more days per week). It includes budgeted vacancies. Also included are Farm Service Agency county employees, non-federal partners of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and local cooperators of Rural Development. Excluded are employees who report to the work site less than a total of 6 months per year, such as summer hires. Where two employees share a workstation or private office, and come into the office less than 3 days per week on average, they will count as a single person.

Rentable Space. A tenant’s rentable space is calculated by adding a pro rata share of the Common Area (CA) space to the tenant’s USF and Special space. Rentable space is always larger than USF because it consists of USF and Special SF, plus the CA factor (CAF) that typically ranges between 10% and 15% for standard office facilities and up to 35% for federally owned facilities. Agencies typically pay rent on a rentable SF basis.

Special Space. This space is enclosed and structurally altered (non-office) with special features. It is not usable space and therefore is not part of the UR calculation. (This type space is also not the “special purpose space” authorized under the delegated leasing authority in [AGPMR §102-73.170.](#))

Examples: auditoriums; cafeterias; child care centers; commercial kitchens; credit unions; courtrooms; data centers (raised floor); fitness centers (with lockers and showers); garages; greenhouses; laboratories; light industrial; medical units; sheds; storage – including cold storage rooms such as walk-in freezers or coolers; restrooms; retail space; vaults; warehouses; workshops.

Utilization Rate (UR). This is a space management ratio that gauges space use efficiency. UR is calculated by dividing the total USF occupied by the occupant’s total personnel count. A lower UR indicates better space use efficiency compared to a higher number.

Additional information about applicable space standards is contained in ANSI/BOMA Z65.1-2010, “Office Buildings, Standard Methods of Measurement.” A copy of this publication is available from the Building Owners and Manager’s Association (BOMA) at www.boma.org.

3. UR CALCULATION

To calculate a UR, perform the following steps:

1. Calculate the sum total all USF.
2. Determine the personnel count for the subject location.
3. Divide total USF (result of #1) by the personnel count (result of #2).

Example:

13,500 USF/90 people = 150 USF/person. UR is 150. This meets the maximum UR threshold in DR 1620-002; therefore no exception request is required.

4. APPLICATION

This Advisory applies to all proposed and new space acquisitions as of the effective date. Existing space presently in USDA's inventory shall remain under the terms of the UR policy in current DR 1620-002 (dated May 17, 2004), until it is impacted by a new space acquisition, such as a new lease contract. Therefore, space occupied under a lease renewal or a succeeding/superseding lease at an existing location is excluded until the status changes to a new acquisition.

5. EXCEPTIONS

DR 1620-002 requires Administrative Services Division Directors (or equivalent) to ensure their field locations do not exceed 150 UR, without issuing a written exception approval. Similarly, the Director, Office of Operations, must approve exceptions to the 150 UR in the National Capital Region. Exceptions to the 150 UR should be made on a temporary basis and only after tools such as open concept space planning, teleworking and other flexible workplace strategies have been employed to the maximum extent possible.

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EXPIRATION DATE: Effective upon issue date until canceled.



Paul Walden, Chief, PMD

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