

STATE OF ALASKA

UNIVERSAL
SPACE STANDARDS

FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**

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СОЛБКИОВ СЕВИ БУКИЕГГ

UNIVERSAL SPACE STANDARDS: FAQ

General Overview:

Why are new Universal Space Standards being implemented?

The main goal of establishing Universal Space Standards is to lower costs through reduction of office space leases. This will be accomplished by increasing employee density in the buildings we occupy. Once the new standards are fully implemented, the state's footprint will be substantially reduced. This will result in sizable savings. We anticipate a minimum of \$125 million in savings over the next 20 years, mostly from reduced lease expenditures and also from increased efficiencies in heating and air circulation in more open office environments. Aside from cost savings, the standards help establish a more collaborative work environment that facilitates higher productivity, team building, and equality. Universal standards and practices for space planning, furniture standards, and professional design and layout services will be used to achieve this goal.

When do the new standards take effect?

The new standards are effective February 1, 2013. The state will be phasing-in the standards over the next 5-7 years.

“This change will increase natural light for all employees and will save on space as well as reduce our heating, ventilation and air conditioning costs.”

Changing Space:

What space is covered by the new standards?

The new standards apply to:

- all but minor and /or cosmetic remodels of existing space.
- new space acquisitions.
- lease extensions and situations in which space is added to an office.
- all requests to add new private offices must be pre-approved by the Division of General Services (DGS).



These standards provide square footage based on the number of employees in an office and emphasize shared common areas such as small and large meeting rooms, break areas, copy stations, storage rooms, personal phone rooms, and visitor stations.

When will this affect my office?

The new space standards will first apply to major office space remodels, leases that are being extended, and offices that are adding space. Existing offices that do not meet these criteria will not be affected in the near term. The new space standards will be implemented in the majority of offices over the next 5-7 years;

How will this affect me as an employee?

The new space standards will provide a fresh feel and atmosphere to existing state spaces and offer additional shared support amenities such as phone rooms, meeting and conference spaces and updated furniture and equipment. The new standards will result in an open office concept and will eliminate many private offices.

- Private space will be available outside of the work station to use for private calls, for short term heads down concentrated work and for meetings with co-workers away from your desk.
- There will be increased collaboration and interaction with the rest of your work team. You will be more aware of what others are working on and how that may impact your projects.
- There will be more layout and work space options within your team neighborhoods.

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Noise Levels and Work Environment:

How can I concentrate in an open office environment?

Work processes do change in an open environment. Employees need to be cognizant of their coworkers and activities that may be disruptive to others. Additional private spaces will be available for you to use to help to maintain a quiet work space.

- Protocols will be established that allow you to let others know if they are disrupting your work. Guidelines will also be needed for use of the small shared private spaces.
- Plan ahead for long phone conversations or those on a speaker phone and make them in one of the phone rooms or small conference rooms.
- For private conversations use one of the phone booths or small conference rooms.
- When you do have trouble concentrating you may be able to move into one of these rooms for short periods to perform your work.



There is research available online that refutes the effectiveness of the open office space concept, including higher employee stress and distractions. How will that be addressed?

Real-life examples and evidence prove that the new model works and is cost-effective. Employees and their supervisors will be empowered to address distractions and remind coworkers to use meeting rooms as needed.

What do I do with my visitors – we have private conversations that should not be made in the open?

Visitors should not come into the work space where conversations may be overheard and sensitive information may be out on a desk, table or file cabinet. This would be true in a private office or in an open office setting.

- Visitors should wait in the reception area and be escorted to a meeting or conference room.
- When possible, schedule one of the conference rooms or the small meeting rooms to meet with visitors. Otherwise look for an open space either on your floor or even on another floor.
- If a visit is not scheduled, or a space is not available, ask the visitor to make an appointment and return when you can schedule a private area for a visit.

Confidentiality:

I am a supervisor and deal with confidential information, how do I maintain privacy without an office?

Supervisors can maintain their current levels of confidentiality without a dedicated office space.

- Supervisors and those with confidential information will have locking storage.
- A clean desk policy will be expected with sensitive documents being put away and locked up when not at your work station.
- For private conversations one of the phone rooms or small conference rooms should be used.

I am a supervisor and may occasionally have disciplinary conversations with employees. Won't everyone know that a disciplinary action is taking place?

Once meetings with staff and visitors in neutral meeting or conference room become routine, there will be no stigma or assumptions attached to meetings in these areas.

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I deal with personal identifying information and need to conform to HIPAA requirements.

Your work station and suite will be secure and separated from the public/visitor areas. This separation provides more security of information than meeting with visitors in a private office where documents or computer screens may be visible and surrounding conversations overheard.

- Visitors and clients will no longer be entering the work areas. Because of this, paperwork and conversations will not be compromised by anyone outside of your work team or agency.
- A clean desk policy will be expected with sensitive documents being put away and locked up when not at your work station.

Physicians are granted private offices, but not nurses or other health care providers. Some physicians are administrative physicians who do not attend to patients. Is the private office rule intended actually for 'health care providers who see patients' or was there some other reason to grant offices to physicians but not others?

Licensed medical physicians and psychiatrist are permitted offices to conduct their business, this does not extend to all health care providers.

Will departments with split HR offices (Anchorage / Juneau) be permitted to have an HR staff in each location with a private office? Will Human Resource sections be allowed separating walls for the security of personal sensitive areas and documentation?

One Human Resources staff member per department, regardless of city, will be allowed a primary office. Separating walls for a section sharing an office with other agencies will be reviewed by DGS on a case-by-case basis.

I have documents that are sensitive not only from the public but from my co-workers. What will happen when I no longer have my own printer?

New updated office equipment will have many enhanced features not available on individual printers.

- The new print technology allows protected documents to be sent to a shared multi-function device (MFD) where the print will be held until a code is manually keyed in to retrieve it.
- You will be able to scan documents quickly into PDF or JPEG files, and send them to others on an email list from the MFD.

Support Spaces:

Our office has a large file room. Will the new standards accommodate this need?

The process of renovation will include the need for each department and agency to look closely at the storage of paper and determine what is really necessary to the mission of the agency and the day to day operations.

- Are the documents available in electronic format as well?
- If documents must be kept in paper format do they need to be on site or can the documents be house in less expensive space off site?

There will be accommodation for files within the workspace.

- There will be file space for each neighborhood within their work areas.
- Your agency may choose to create a file room within the overall square footage assigned.
- If your office has an extremely heavy need for physical paper storage you may apply for a waiver to have a structurally enhanced file room built within the office.

I work with large plans and documents and need a lay-down area, how will this be accommodated?

Work stations will be organized into neighborhoods and will include both work height file space for document layout and shared work/team tables within the open work areas.

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This standard only seems to deal with office space, our agency has a need for lab spaces and training rooms.

Spaces outside of normal office space will continue to be addressed on a case by case basis. These include spaces that require acoustical separation, structural upgrades or extensive plumbing. Most buildings will have large meeting rooms available for any State Agency to reserve.

How will the parking issue be adjusted?

The parking space allotment for leased spaces will be revised to accommodate the new standards, and to better align with local ordinances.

Where do they put mail rooms, server/telecomm rooms and supply rooms? Are these all included in the Part A calculation or would these rooms fall under special areas? Mail rooms are not listed on the Space Allocation Worksheet, how much square footage will be allowed?

An average size and quantity of common areas is calculated into the 160 sf per PCN in Part A, this is intended to cover server/telecom rooms, supply storage and mail rooms. If your agency has a unique common room such as a laboratory then it should be accounted for as an Exception in Part B.



Will the new shared printing areas be applied and how many staff will they support? Also, will new print/fax/copy equipment need to be purchased along with the new system furniture?

Most modern copiers already support print/copy/scan/fax capabilities. The standard 160sf per PCN is intended to accommodate room for shared printer areas. If not available some multi-functional devices (MFD) may need to be purchased for confidential printing and to replace individual printers.

Approved state scheduling software used to schedule the use of large and medium meeting rooms; what is the software, what is the cost, and who will be responsible for scheduling?

The State is currently using Outlook Calendar to schedule conference rooms. Scheduling responsibility will depend on the location, size and usage of the rooms.

How will the break-out rooms be adequate to handle frequent interactions with the public?

This is determined on a case-by-case basis. Requests for additional meeting rooms will be reviewed by DGS on a case-by-case basis.

Will staff who work in multiple locations (more than just visiting; actually working for weeks or months at a time in different cities) be permitted to have full workstations in both their work locations?

Full time positions will be permitted a full workstation at their home office. Hotel workstations can be included in the Space Allocation Worksheet for visiting staff. Requests for additional workstations will be reviewed by DGS on a case-by-case basis.

Please explain the traveling Commissioners' offices?

Commissioners and Deputy/Assistant Commissioners are provided one primary office and one smaller secondary office, with the understanding that one of those offices will be located in Juneau.

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Furniture:

I've heard that the state plans to throw out all of our existing furniture and replace it with newer generation systems furniture. How will this save money?

The state will be significantly increasing density in the buildings it owns, which will allow for a reduction in expensive leases for office space. This will result in sizable savings. To do this, it is necessary to invest in newer generation systems furniture, but even with that initial investment expense the savings are substantial.

How detailed are furniture specifications?

The furniture specifications are very detailed and complete. They consist of one brand, make, model, style, with limited color and finish options. There will be limited options for customizing individual spaces based on user preferences and needs.

“NBBJ’s research has found that two-thirds of American office space is now configured in some sort of open arrangement.”

What is the height range of the optional systems furniture adjustable table?

The Steelcase series 5 adjustable tables will go below and above standard work surface height; it has a range of motion from 25.5” to 52” high.

Reference: [New York Times, March 17, 2012](#)

What are the weight capacities of the accessories?

- Binder bin: 10 pounds
- Letter tray: 7 pounds
- Pen cup: half a pound
- Double square dish: half a pound

How much time does it take to install the new systems furniture?

A typical 6-station layout should take Capital Office Systems approximately 30 hours to load in, assemble, and clean up. There will be an additional 5 hours per station to disassemble and remove old systems furniture prior to installation.

How much funds should we budget for new systems furniture? Will DGS be negotiating a reduced rate for this furniture?

A new statewide furniture contract with Steelcase/Capital Office Systems is now available. The cost of the new systems furniture will depend greatly on the agency’s floor plan and individual workstation configurations. For early budgeting calculations, estimate approximately \$6,500 per typical workstation, \$3,900 per hotel station, and \$7,700 per executive workstation.

Explain the role DOA/DGS will have for reviewing request for the systems furniture and the use of the new statewide contract?

Agencies should forward requests for new systems furniture to DGS to ensure compliance with the Universal Space Standards. The Agency may proceed with ordering the furnishings through the WSCA contract with Capital Office Systems. This should take no longer than 3-5 business days, assuming all pertinent information is included.

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Will agencies be required to go through DGS on small existing furniture changes? Will they be required to replace all their existing furniture with new systems furniture? What happens to the investment of recently purchased office furniture; will we get a credit towards the purchase of new system furniture?

Small changes to existing systems furniture will not necessitate replacing everything with the new systems furniture. The new furniture requirements will only be required in offices that are adding space, major remodels, and leases that are being extended. Agencies will not be reimbursed for office furniture purchased in the past.

Who qualifies for an Executive Workstation?

Department Head/Commissioners, Deputy/Assistant Commissioners, Deputy Attorney Generals, Division Directors and Chief Assistant Attorney Generals have the option of an executive workstation in their private office.

I qualify for an office but not for an Executive Workstation. What furniture should I use?

Private offices for employees who do not qualify for executive workstations have the option of selecting typical work stations or the administrative staff furniture option located on the Furniture Guide Brochure.

Funding:

How do the space planners work? What will they cost?

Space planners can be utilized through the DGS Architectural & Engineering term contracts, currently held by Northwind Architects in the Southeast region and ECI/Hyer in the Central and Northern regions, or through Capital Office Systems. Their fees are all comparable, and will be based on the size and complexity of the work required and will be payable by the agency affected by the space changes. You can request cost estimates prior to engaging them. If an agency has a space planner on staff or has a contract with their own architect, the agency may opt to utilize those services.

Who is paying for the renovations and the new systems furniture?

Agencies will be responsible for funding new systems furniture purchases. There are several funding methods available. DGS will review each project and will apply the best funding solution.

- Furniture and lease improvement costs may be amortized by a Lessor as additional rent.
- The Department of Revenue, Master Line of Credit may be utilized.
- Larger installations of new systems furniture will be funded through savings achieved via lease reductions or eliminations.
- Excess Agency funding may be used.

Since the FY14 and FY15 Budgets are complete and since our lease is up in May 2015, what options do we have for the funding?

Reducing lease space will result in cost savings and a reduction in operating expenses. The funding options above are available to agencies, depending on their individual circumstances. Specific funding questions can be directed to the agency's Administrative Services Director.

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How does the State Line of Credit work as an instrument for Agency's to purchase and fund new systems furniture?

Generally, office equipment can be financed using the master lease. However, the Bond Bank has final authority if the request is able to be financed. Therefore, an agency wanting to use this method of finance should submit a notice of intent to lease purchase far enough in advance of the acquisition that they would have options for funding if it were to be denied.

Note: Anything larger than a five million would need additional time to consider. For simplicity you may email a list of the items and services you are considering procuring to Deven Mitchell, DOR (deven.mitchell@alaska.gov) and he'll forward to the bank and the agencies required.

The process is generally:

- An agency fills out Notice of Intent to Lease Purchase and submits to Deven Mitchell, Dept of Revenue.
- The terms of the lease are identified (term based on useful life and agency request and interest rate based on current market).
- A closing date is determined, lease documents are signed, and funding is made.
- Following the issuance of the lease the borrowing agency is responsible for all reporting and maintenance on and for that lease.

How do we pay back the State line of credit?

Most commonly through savings on leased space, using operating funds.



Applying the New Space Standards:

What other local, national, and international organizations are moving from private offices to an open environment?

Alyeska Pipeline, Alaska Gas Development Corporation, Nana Development Corporation, Conoco Phillips, BP Exploration, The General Services Administration – to name a few.

When an agency is due to renew their lease at a State-owned building, will they need to adjust for the Universal Space Standards?

Leases with remaining renewal options will generally not be subject to the new standards, unless there are substantial remodels included or space added. When a lease expires or is extended (as opposed to exercising a renewal option), the new standards will apply.

When will the Universal Space Standards not be implemented?

The Universal Space Standards will not be implemented when there is not a return on the State's investment. The implementation must be in the best financial interest of the State of Alaska. Senior Management of the user agency and the Department of Administration will provide the final determination of implementation.

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What constitutes a “renovation” for the purpose of when to implement these new standards?

Any substantial change, such as adding space, or adding or removing interior walls, constitutes a renovation requiring adherence to the new standards. If you have a question on your particular situation, please contact your DGS representative.

Does the new standard apply to other Agencies such as, ADIEA, AEA, Aerospace, ASMI, etc.?

Every agency and employee stands to gain from adoption of the Universal Space Standards. The Administration strongly suggests complying with the new standard when remodeling or obtaining new space.

The Standards manual states approvals are required from Agency Directors, our Agency would prefer the approval come from the Commissioner's Office, can DGS require this?

Each Agency's process and procedures are different; therefore, it isn't practical to require all approvals to come from the Commissioner's Offices. DGS will do its best to always ensure the Agency's Administrative Services Director and Procurement Officer are copied on each request for use in your internal approval process.

What is the definition of a part time employee as referenced under "other" on the space allocation worksheet?

Any employee working less than the standard 37.5 hours per week.

Who would the exceptions memo be addressed to?

Tanci Mintz, the Division of General Services, Leasing & Facilities Manager.

If an agency moves into a building where walls and basic office structure already exist, will we be required to pay to have them removed to facilitate the open plan design?

To comply with the new standards, interior walls will be removed before occupying new space to the degree such changes are practical. This will be part of the normal tenant improvements either paid directly by the agency or amortized by the landlord over the life of the lease.

How will DOTPF be included in the process in state owned buildings? Will DOTPF be asking to see our DGS furniture approval memo before they replace an office door or will the DGS facilities call center be filtering those requests before they are sent to DOTPF?

DOT&PF managed facilities are included in the new Universal Space Standards. DGS will work closely with DOT&PF to determine an effective process for these kinds of requests.

When filling out the worksheet, do I need to remain within square footage of Section A? If Section B has less square footage than Section A, can I request extra conference rooms?

All offices, meeting areas and support spaces must remain within the square footage of the Space Allocation Worksheet Section A. If, after working through Section B, there is unassigned square footage, additional meeting areas may be requested.

The new Space Allocation Worksheet is based on a “snapshot in time”, how will the Universal Space Standards adjust for changes in position counts (new & deletions) in future years?

The Universal Space Standards will still apply. The Space Allocation Worksheet may be resubmitted when PCN counts change. Space needs may be adjusted if justified, similar to the process used now.

Do the Universal Space Standards have buy-in from the various bargaining units?

This is not a requirement but we are confident all Alaskans will agree that the State should maximize the use of its facilities and make prudent use of its limited resources.

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What is the time requirement for both the negotiation of a lease extension, and conversion to the new Universal Space Standards?

The Universal Space Standards will play a central part role in negotiations for lease extensions. DGS will require an updated worksheet for all lease extensions (as opposed to exercising optional renewals, unless significant remodels are included or space is added). The plan is to phase in the standards over the next 5-7 years.

Will the new Universal Space Standards meet ADA requirements? Are they HIPAA compliant?

Yes, the new standards are ADA and HIPPA compliant.

Resources for Additional Questions:**Who do I contact if I have additional questions about space standards?**

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