



UTAH STATE SPACE STANDARDS

INFRASTRUCTURE AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
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ISSUE BRIEF

SUMMARY

In 1994 the State Building Board revised office space standards for state agencies to align job function with square footage requirements. The Division of Facilities, Construction, and Management (DFCM) uses these standards when planning new buildings and leases. However, because the standards are 16 years old and out-of-date, DFCM and agencies guess as to their exact application. The Analyst recommends updating the space standards by appropriating \$65,000 one-time from the Contingency Reserve Fund to the DFCM Administration line item in FY 2013.

BACKGROUND

In 1994 DFCM and the State Building Board contracted with a consulting firm to revise standards relating to office space for all state agencies. The standards did not include Higher Education, but the Building Board anticipated including them in a future document. The Utah State Space Standards contains:

- specific office layouts and square footage allotments for types of job classification;
- space standards for conference rooms and reception areas;
- space standards for furnishings and equipment;
- appendices listing every job title in the state with approved square footage allocated to that job.

DFCM requires agencies to follow these space standards in planning documents for new buildings and leases. The standards require open cubicles and conference rooms as the primary space in state buildings with exceptions granted as necessary for an agency to transact business. The space standards declare: “It is State policy that employees will have open office workstations with few exceptions.”

DISCUSSION

2009 Multi-Agency Building

With the help of an architect the Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Environmental Quality (DEQ) used state space standards to program the \$51.5 million multi-agency building approved by the 2008 Legislature. DFCM reviewed the programming plans, which were then used to design and construct the building. Table 1 below shows how the space planning differed between DEQ and DHS.

Type of Space	DHS Portion			DEQ Portion		
	Square Feet	% of Sq. Ft.	Quantity	Square Feet	% of Sq. Ft.	Quantity
Enclosed	21,810	26%		30,580	37%	
Open Other	5,570	7%	22	2,200	3%	11
Open Office	24,988	29%	267	36,892	45%	443
Private Office	33,080	39%	236	12,830	16%	82
Grand Total	85,448	100%	525	82,502	100%	536

Table 1

While DEQ has the majority of its office space as open or cubicle, DHS has the majority of its office space as private office. Enclosed rooms include libraries, conference rooms, break rooms, and work rooms. The DHS portion of the multi-agency building contains more private office space than expected in a building following state space guidelines. Open space measuring more than 200 square feet are typically libraries or workstations not allocated to a single individual and were therefore categorized as “Open Other.”

Table 2 identifies the size of open offices in both portions of the multi-office building. The space standards give a typical full-time professional 81 square feet of open office space. Over 90% of DEQ’s open offices are 81 square feet cubicles;

while less than 4% of DHS’ open offices are 81 square feet. The majority of DHS’ open offices are 100 square feet. While DHS does have 57 cubicles measuring 64 square feet, all but one of them is for Department of Technology Services’ employees servicing DHS.

Size (sq ft)	DHS Open Office		DEQ Open Office	
	Quantity	Total Square Feet	Quantity	Total Square Feet
64	57	3,648	1	64
80	-	-	4	320
81	10	810	416	33,696
100	181	18,100	4	400
120	10	1,200	6	720
130	6	780	6	780
150	3	450	5	750
162	-	-	1	162
	267	24,988	443	36,892

Table 2

DFCM affirms that space planning by both DEQ and DHS followed state building standards and officials at both agencies presented rationales for needing specific office space. The guidelines do allow for larger offices for individuals needing privacy; however, the discrepancy in space use between the agencies highlights the need for greater oversight.

Space Standards Need Update

There exists a need for updated office space standards in the state. The current space standards are more than 17 years old and contain outdated information. An appendix in the document lists square footage requirements for every position in state government; however, every one of those two thousand positions is outdated and does not tie to the current job classification. This places DFCM and agencies in the position of guessing which positions pertain to which standard. DFCM currently reviews planning documents, but because a clear standard does not exist, agencies have considerable latitude in choosing office space.

Higher Education Space Standards

In 1996 the State Board of Regents funded space standards and utilization study by a different consulting firm. This study verified the existing utilization of classrooms and laboratories and made recommendations on space utilization and space standards for higher education. During the summer of 2011 the Board of Regents again commissioned the consulting firm to update the space standards for higher education.

2011 G.S. Intent Language

After reviewing this issue during the 2011 General Session, the Infrastructure and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee included the following intent language in S.B. 2:

The Legislature intends that the Division of Facilities Construction and Management explore options for updating the current space standards for state facility construction including Higher Education and report back to the Infrastructure and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee during the 2011 Interim.

DFCM fulfilled this intent by presenting information to the Subcommittee in October 2011. DFCM acknowledged the need for updated standards, particularly relating to job descriptions and space allowances. However, current budget constraints prevent the Division from funding this study internally. The Division contacted the original consulting firm hired in 1993 to create the current standards and received a bid of approximately \$60,000 to update the standards.

RECOMMENDATION

The Analyst recommends the development of new space standards and recommends the Legislature consider appropriating \$65,000 one-time from the Contingency Reserve Fund to the Division of Facilities, Construction and Management Administration line item to update the space standards.