

**El Dorado County Development Services Department  
Building Services**

**POLICY**

*A department policy is based on an interpretation of a code provision and is subject to change based on new information*

*Effective 9/26/2024*

*Expires 12/31/2025*

**\*DETERMINING SQUARE FOOTAGE**

**(For Building Department Use Only)**

**Building Area:**

The building area is defined as the space enclosed by exterior walls (or a combination of exterior and fire walls), excluding vent shafts and courtyards. Areas not enclosed by walls are included in the building area if they fall within the horizontal projection of the roof or floor above, as specified in CBC Definitions.

**Rooms with Sloped Ceilings and Reduced Height:**

For rooms with sloped ceilings, any portion of the room where the ceiling height is less than 5 feet is not included in the square footage calculation.

- **Minimum ceiling height:** To be counted as part of the habitable space, the ceiling height must be at least 7 feet for flat ceilings. For sloped ceilings, the square footage is measured where the ceiling height is 5 feet or greater, and at least 50% of the required floor area must have a ceiling height of 7 feet or more.  
Measurements are typically taken to the exterior face of any knee wall or at the point where the floor and wall meet.

**Stairways, Chimneys, & Bay Windows:**

Stairways are measured once, unless the space beneath the stairway is developed. Chimney chases and bay windows are included in the building area if they originate at floor level.

**Specific Requirements:**

For the purpose of determining occupant load, minimum room size, and light and ventilation requirements, measurements are taken to the inside face of finished walls.

*Note: Determinations made by other agencies, divisions, or departments may differ. The Building Department's determinations do not override or invalidate those made by other agencies, nor do other agencies' findings supersede the Building Department's determinations. Each operates within its own scope of authority based on applicable codes and regulations.*

\* The above is in reference to ANSI Z765-2020 Square Footage Method of Calculation.