Public Services and Procurement Canada

Services publics et Approvisionnement Canada

Canada

SPACE CAPACITY 101

Key Capacity Definitions

The Target Occupancy is determined by using the _Real Property Space Assessment App_., which is a tool that applies the _Space Allocation Standards (SAS)_.

TARGET OCCUPANCY	OCCUPANT LOAD
Also known as <u>on-site capacity</u> or expected <u>daily occupant count.</u> Is the capacity of individuals that can functionally work in the space/workplace at any given point.	<u>The absolute maximum amount of people allowed to be in the space at any time</u>, regardless of number of people assigned, workpoints or seats.

OCCUPANT LOAD is a life-safety limit based on structural, fire-safety, mechanical, and electrical capacity - <u>it is not a design standard or planning target.</u>

The National Building Code (NBC) sets this maximum by evaluating factors such as a building's age, exits, washrooms, and base-building conditions. Because these elements vary, so does the allowable occupant load.

> Always consult the **Building Capacity Assessment (BCA)** to confirm the safe capacity for any space.

Key Risks

Associated with over-capacity and over-programming in workplace design:

- **Workpoint counts ≠ capacity -** adding more desks does not mean a building can safely support more people, because compact workpoints raise density within the same floor area.
- **Over-occupying optimized layouts can unintentionally exceed safe capacity –** because efficient layouts may give the impression that more people can attend—without accounting for peak-day fluctuations, visitors, or required safety margins.
- **The NBC Occupant Load is a life-safety limit, not a design target** and does not account for minimum functional requirements, accessibility, and workplace experience.
- **Functional requirements must account for more than individual workpoints**, including meeting spaces, support spaces, circulation, and accessibility.
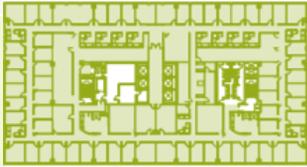
! This is **why <u>PSPC's SAS sets Target Occupancy below the Occupant Load</u>** — to prevent over-assignment and ensure workplaces remain safe, functional, and aligned with modern operational needs.
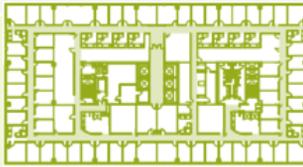
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Additional Key Definitions

USEABLE AREA

CIRCULATION AREA

NET USEABLE AREA

Usable Area also known as the **Space Solution** is the **portion of space available to support workplace functions**. It must include circulation, building loss, mandatory accessibility requirements, and all functional program elements needed to deliver an effective workplace.
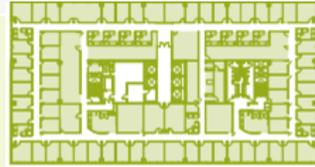
Circulation and Building Loss represent the portion of area that is not usable for workpoints, ensuring safe and efficient movement and layout.

<u>**Circulation**</u> is the clear space needed for safe, accessible movement through the workplace.
<u>**Building Loss**</u> is the floor area unavailable for functional use due to structural elements and irregular layouts

The **net usable space** also known as the **Planning Area** is what remains after accounting for circulation and building loss factors.

It is **the portion of space that gets densified and optimized** and must accommodate all functional elements — including individual workpoints, meeting spaces, support spaces, etc.

Applicable Codes,
Regulations and Standards

NATIONAL BUILDING CODE OF CANADA (NBC)	ACCESSIBLE DESIGN FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	NATIONAL FIRE CODE OF CANADA (NFC)
<u>National Building Code of Canada</u>	<u>CSA/ASC B651, B652 :23</u> National Standard of Canada	<u>National Fire Code of Canada</u>
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*Leased assets may have additional codes and regulations depending on the region and Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) i.e. Ontario Building Code (OBC).