Space Standards for Commonwealth of Virginia Office Space.

The Commonwealth of Virginia establishes space standards as a method for effective and efficient management of real estate. The space standard focuses on office space used for customary office functions including individual work space, conference rooms, file space, circulation, lobbies and like spaces. It does not apply to special-use space that includes areas needed for an agency's specific mission not customarily found in an office setting. Some examples of special-use space are medical examination rooms, holding cells, laboratory space and public hearing rooms.

The standards serve three primary purposes:

1) provide an objective that each agency is expected to achieve on average.

2) guide the allocation of space, so that only the appropriate amount is leased, constructed or assigned to a particular activity.

3) guide the design process, assuring that space is efficiently laid-out.

The standard is expressed as the number of Useable Square Feet (USF) per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) head count. The space standard is supplemented by the Office Space Questionnaire (OSQ), a work sheet that includes such details as the size of individual offices, cubicles, conference rooms etc.

The space standard has been revised several times in recent years as a result of changes in technology, building design, furniture design and the need to reduce costs. For five years the objective has been to occupy space at an average of 205 USF / FTE or less. The standard is applied to every facility with the recognition that some older or small facilities are less efficient therefore requiring exceptions.

Over the last four years the average for all new leased office space designs have been consistently less than the 205 USF/FTE standard.

As a result of this success and the need to further reduce facility occupancy costs, the space standard is being revised to 198 USF/FTE effective immediately.

The intent of this new standard is to create a challenging but achievable goal. Efficiencies can be gained through innovative work space solutions such as a reduction in the on-site storage of paper records, improved house keeping eliminating clutter and obsolete equipment storage, flexible work environments that require smaller work stations, the sharing of infrequently used rooms between organizations and most significantly the elimination of vacant space.

Experience over the last four years demonstrates that careful space planning can reduce the amount of space needed while improving comfort and efficiency of the

office. The most tangible immediate benefit will be reduction in rent and operating expenses associated with the facilities we occupy.

If there are any questions, please contact your assigned Transaction Manager in the Division of Real Estate Services.