This standard was developed through a comprehensive investigative process, that included organizations and individuals directly and materially affected by the existence and use of such a standard, and is exclusively for the measurement and calculation of square footage in a single-family dwelling. It is a voluntary guideline. Contributors included professional real property appraisers, architects, home builders, property assessors, and Realtors®. The enclosed methodology represents a standard of measurement which is recognized and utilized throughout the real estate, appraisal, mortgage, architectural, building, insurance, and other professionally licensed and regulated organizations. The enclosed measurement method is recognized by HUD, FHA, VA, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac.

The enclosed standard describes the procedures, which allow for the reconciliation of differences in current methods of determining residential square footage. It helps to promote and protect the public’s interest, and helps real estate professionals create consistent, reproducible calculations of square footage in single-family dwellings. The herein methodology is offered as a written standard of practice, to define and support an established theory of measurement. It also provides a specific language, which aids in the communications between the real estate, appraisal, and mortgage industries.

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American Measurement Standard
1. Foreword and Introduction

Size or square footage is, and always has been, one of the most important factors in the home valuation process. Other than location, more weight is placed on this one component than any other item of comparability. Does the home have enough space to meet a specific buyer’s needs; rooms, room sizes, layout, and offer sufficient living space for their intended use? Square footage or gross living area provides a comparison; although not always accurate, it does offer an estimate by which to establish a logical value based on comparison with other similar properties. The total finished floor area or the size of a house is one of the most important things a potential buyer needs to know. Square footage is more than just the currency of real estate, it is the foundation.

Agents (and others), when calculating residential square footage, should carefully follow and adhere to these specific guidelines (in their entirety) or any other standards that are comparable to them; and should be prepared to identify any such standard of measurement, when requested. The following guidelines and illustrations were prepared with the intent of assisting agents, appraisers, builders, property assessors, and others, with the fundamental knowledge of the measurement, calculation, and the reporting of square footage in residential dwellings. It also addresses the overall significance this number provides to the mortgage industry and the home valuation process. All real estate comparisons and valuations are directly affected by size or square footage.

All appraisals approved for use in a federally related loan transaction must be completed on the single most widely used appraisal form; the Fannie Mae Form 1004 and Freddie Mac Form 70, dated March 2005. This one form carries both numbers and is used for single-family dwellings only. On this form, at the top of the second page under the “Sales Comparison Approach,” every comparable sale is automatically calculated at the “price per square foot.” This specific calculation does not take into account the land (view or location value), the age, condition, quality, style, bed and bath count, any basement square footage, garages, fireplaces, porches, decks, patios, or any other amenities. A simple calculation based solely on price and size. This “price per square foot” is the only number on an appraisal report where the appraiser does not have an influence on the amount or the adjustment. Other than basic addition, subtraction, and multiplication, this one number is the only automatic calculation on the entire appraisal report. According to this federally mandated form, which requires one specific square footage number for the subject property and all comparable sales, the size of a single-family dwelling is an integral part of the comparison process. The entire home valuation system begins with this one basic unit of comparability. In the real estate industry, no other single number is more significant.

The “MLS” database, provided exclusively by Realtors®, is created one sale at a time and provided by the listing agent. There is no independent check on the accuracy of the description of a home’s attributes. The real estate information chain begins with this one basic component of a dwelling. Square footage (or size) serves as the foundation for our entire system of comparability. CMA’s (competitive market analyses), BPO’s, appraisals, and mortgage loan decisions are often developed based on this one basic ingredient.
This one number is critical to the reliability and credibility of our entire home valuation system. The knowledge and skill necessary to provide this essential component of housing is the basis for this guideline. The standard herein further helps to promote dependable and reproducible measurements for use in obtaining and reporting residential square footage data.

The **American Measurement Standard** is a voluntary guide and subject to annual review, analysis, and recertification. This “standard” of measurement and the associated principles, allows for cooperation among organizations which may have singular goals, objectives, and specific idiosyncratic usability of square footage information. The standard contained herein also helps to establish common and logical definitions of “finished” or “heated” square footage and “gross living area.”

The definitions and descriptions enclosed are provided with the intention of assisting in the preparation of consistent measurements and calculations, and to establish specific categories for use in the reporting or communication of square footage information in residential properties. The following *guide or standard* is not meant to replace or supersede any legally required existing area measurement methods, which may be national, state, or locally defined. This process and its fundamental methodology is suitable for use with proposed new construction or existing single-family homes of any style of construction, and is based specifically on the exterior dimensions of the dwelling. It is not applicable to condominiums, apartments, and/or multifamily properties, and it does not include or consider interior measurements.

County tax departments have measured residential *square footage* (in the U.S.) documented for well over 200 years. Yet no, *written*, residential “national measurement standard” was in existence (in the U.S.) prior to 1996. Over the years, two basic measurement theories have evolved and many groups have formed their own variations for use within their specific organization. At present, the NAR only recognizes the existence of one formal measurement standard: ANSI Z765-2003. The Appraisal Foundation requires appraisers to “be aware of, understand, and correctly employ recognized methods and techniques,” but does not specify what those methods and techniques are. It is up to individual states to determine policy under their jurisdiction. Some states advise (or require) their real estate licensees not to measure or report any details with regard to square footage; in many circumstances due mainly to liability concerns. Many states provide a statement similar to: a licensee is expected to “follow and understand an industry accepted set of measuring guidelines,” but offers no reference to such a *guideline*. Regardless of how agents measure and/or report square footage details, all residential appraisers are required to provide specific square footage numbers for each comparable sale. For the fair comparison of similar properties, accurate (detailed) square footage is imperative.

While there are no national and/or international mandates in regard to the measurement and reporting of residential square footage information, it is the unanimous opinion of this committee that the accurate presentation of specific square footage data for each closed property, is part of a real estate professional’s fundamental responsibility to their peers and the public they serve, and also part of the *due diligence* owed to consumers/clients. The professional management of this data serves to protect the public’s interest in this private information system. In 1996 the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) commissioned the NAHB Research Center to act as secretariat for the formation of an ANSI (American National Standards Institute) Accredited Standards Committee. The “SQUARE FOOTAGE-METHOD FOR CALCULATING ANSI Z765” was first introduced on April 8th, 1996.
The creation of this standard included input from many participants, including the: American Institute of Architects, Appraisal Foundation, Building Owners and Managers Association, Manufactured Housing Institute, National Association of Realtors®, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, HUD, and others. Updated in 2003, it is currently known as “ANSI Z765-2003.”

During a five year period of research starting in 2003, this committee reviewed and analyzed numerous measurement interpretations from throughout the industry. It reviewed guidelines published by state real estate commissions and licensing agencies, and also considered the guidelines published by “ANSI.” This panel interviewed agents, appraisers, MLS committee members and directors, builders, architects, assessors, etc. from across the country. Throughout this research process, it became apparent that the use of two fundamental measurement methodologies are consistently practiced and accepted as “standards” of measurement within the real estate industry. It was agreed that this standard should be reviewed annually and recertified in January of each subsequent year; so as to reflect any new available information and to allow for recommendations from any individual or organization materially and/or directly affected by the use or development of this standard.

There have been two basic measurement methods (and numerous local variations) for as long as appraisals have been in existence. These two separate measurement theories have been discussed and debated for years, but no one system has emerged as the best method or one proven to be more accurate than the other. The first theory was developed into a written standard of practice and became the first formal measurement “standard.” The second theory continues to be utilized by real estate practitioners throughout the industry, although this group has not been afforded the security of having a written, uniform, standard of practice. The introduction of the “AMS” offers a formal, written methodology, which supports the use of one specific basic measurement theory. It is an extremely complex issue and no one standard will work in every scenario. Due to the complexity of the subject matter and exigency for the description and summarization of such an immense range of information, and due to the numerous methods currently utilized around the world, it is difficult to define one true methodology that embraces and encompasses the majority of practical applications being utilized in the field today. The main disagreement in measurement methods has always centered around the measurement and calculation of stairs, and the area beneath. The herein method of measurement and calculation is currently practiced by professional real estate agents, appraisers, and numerous industry leading home builders and architects. (i.e., Centex Homes®, Donald Gardner Architects, Inc.® and by many nationally renown designers featured on sites such as eplans.com®, etc.) The enclosed measurement theory and principles are accepted by FHA, VA, HUD, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

With the continuing influx of new internet technologies, there is an ever increasing need for a consistent reporting method (or real estate language), which can be recognized and accepted in all areas. There is currently a diverse array of titles for “living area.” Throughout the “MLS” database (and assessor’s records) practitioners will find an extensive library of titles including Heated Living Area, Finished living Area, Heated Square Footage, Finished Square Footage, EstLivArea, Total Sq Ft, Living Area, Square Footage, Fin Space, Heated Living Space, HTD Area. Base S/F, Main Fin Area, GFLA, F/LivArea, SF, sf/Fin, etc…, making national (and some local) information searches unreliable. In order for the real estate industry and the mortgage process to remain consistent and credible, all information created and communicated for the purposes of comparability (square footage), and that is to be utilized in the home valuation, appraisal, and/or mortgage informational systems, must be standardized for all users and consumers of residential square footage information.
- Square footage provides the very foundation of value and the “currency” of real estate. The future of the real estate industry is dependant on the reliable, reproducible, creation and communication of this vital data.

The mortgage industry depends on the integrity and quality of the appraisal industry; the appraisal industry depends on the quality of information provided through the MLS; and the MLS database is completely reliant on the quality and the level of detailed information provided by the listing agent of each property transaction. The information chain, which provides the foundation of our home valuation process, is often controlled by the input of data through this one private information system. While there may always be differing points of view regarding the collection and reporting of this information, for those professionals who choose to provide this service, this standard helps to promote the public’s trust; as well as offering a consistent, credible, and defensible source for the methodology utilized in the collection and communication of square footage for single-family dwellings.

Suggestions for the improvement of this standard are welcome and should be directed to:

The Measure Man, LLC
26 Pinecrest Plaza
Southern Pines, NC 28327

D. Hampton “Hamp” Thomas – Director
2. Scope and Purpose

A “standard” allows individuals and organizations which use different terminologies, based on different points of view, to communicate, cooperate, and calculate quantities on a common basis. It is also a “standard,” not because it has been approved by a particular organization or committee, but because it is widely used and recognized by the industry as being standard. The fundamental methodology utilized within the American Measurement Standard is internationally recognized and accepted throughout the real estate industry. It is a pre-established arrangement or organizational format of data and/or the development guidelines of that data, in an established format of communication.

The enclosed standard illustrates the methodology and procedures for the measurement, calculation, and reporting of square footage for a single-family dwelling. The purpose of this Guideline is to describe a particular method of measurement and classification, which will allow others to create, reproduce, and communicate similar results when applying this standard and the associated principles. In the calculation of residential square footage, the objective must be to measure accurately, calculate competently, and identify the improvements in a manner that is not misleading and describes and/or facilitates an understanding of the property.

The intent of this standard is to provide authoritative, verifiable procedures for the measurement and calculation of residential square footage. This standard also defines eight specific categories for the “reporting” of square footage information, which will help standardize communications between all users and consumers of residential square footage data. The enclosed categories for the communication of square footage information are a suggested practice and are NOT required to claim adherence to this standard of measurement.

3. Definitions and Descriptions

A. Square Footage -- An amount based on measurement, described in feet. The enclosed area of a dwelling which is measured and calculated according to this standard. (Square Foot - a square unit of area/space which measures twelve inches on each of its four sides.)

B. Detached Single-Family Dwelling -- A free-standing house which has open space around all its sides.
C. Attached Single-Family Dwelling -- A house with its own roof and foundation, and which is separated from other houses by dividing walls that continue from foundation to roof. Such a dwelling or house would also not share utility services with any adjoining dwelling(s) and may be classified as a townhome (an attached home which is not a condominium), rowhouse, duplex, or other side-by-side housing. This standard is not applicable for use in the calculation of “condominium” square footage. (Condominium is a form of ownership with multiple occupants where each party owns a defined unit, along with an undivided interest in the common elements. The measurement of Condominiums does not include the thickness of exterior or common walls.)

D. Finished Living Area - Finished Square Footage - Heated Living Area - Heated Square Footage
All names, often interchangeable, which typically refer to the enclosed area of a house that is intended for human occupancy; and further defined as space that is suitable for year round occupancy, heated and cooled by a central, permanently installed system; and embodying walls, floors, and ceilings which are similar to the rest of the house. To be counted as finished or heated, the space must be permanently, safely, and sufficiently heated (and/or cooled depending on climate) to permit year round occupancy. [Heated -- by a central system or systems that are permanently installed in the dwelling; not portable in any nature, and must generate sufficient heat and/or cooling to make the space suitable for year round use.]

- Gross Living Area - GLA -- Often interchangeable with the above stated names, “GLA” refers to and is defined as: finished space that is above grade only.

In single-family detached dwellings, “finished” square footage is defined as the sum of all connected, finished, usable areas; measured by exterior dimensions (walls). Each level is counted individually and any above grade space is combined to provide one total square footage number. Treat attached dwellings the same as detached dwellings, with the only difference being the addition for exterior measurements when a common wall is present.

E. Gross Building Area - GBA -- Gross building area includes any finished, partially finished, or unfinished areas which are NOT included in the main living area or “GLA” calculations. (Gross building area may also be any finished space, which requires you to leave the continuous finished living area in order to enter that space. Even though all the other requirements of finished living area are met, such space would still be considered as “GBA” due to the reduced “functionality” or the difference in “utility” between continuous living spaces and separated living spaces.) GBA can be sequentially numbered and then listed by: 1. category, 2. room name, 3. description, 4. size (dimensions); so as to properly identify each individual section or space for appropriate comparison with other similar space(s). All square footage included in “Gross Building Area” may be divided and listed in one of three levels of finish. These levels of finish or categories include: finished, partially finished, and unfinished. A minimum of a brief description of any space(s) not included in “GLA” is recommended. (e.g. finished porch with a portable HVAC unit, heated office with garage access only, unfinished storage, etc.)
“Finished GBA” -- Finished gross building area is any enclosed area which meets the criteria of “GLA,” but is NOT directly accessible without leaving the continuous, finished, main living area. (e.g. ► 1. A bonus room with the same level of finish as the main living area; with carpet, sheetrock walls and ceiling, heated and cooled by the central HVAC system, but requires leaving the continuous finished area (into any partially finished or unfinished space) for access or entry. ► 2. A finished office, bonus room, laundry, utility room, or other finished area with its only access located inside a garage. ► 3. A finished second level bonus room with an unfinished staircase located in (or outside of) the garage. ► 4. A sun room, porch, or any enclosed area, which has been finished similar to the rest of the dwelling, but is not supported by any permanent, central HVAC system.

“Partially Finished GBA” -- Any enclosed area which would not be properly defined by either “finished” or “unfinished.” Any space, which is at a level of finish considered less than that of “finished.” A degree of completion which is less than “finished,” but with some common elements similar to the finished living area; such as flooring, walls, ceilings, and/or other components which are in keeping with the main living areas; and considered more than that of “unfinished,” having one or more features of the finished living area - above grade only.

“Unfinished GBA” -- Any enclosed area which does NOT meet the criteria of finished or partially finished space; such as storage areas, workshops, unfinished framed rooms in and/or above a garage (or other areas), which may have wall framing in place, but does not have flooring, walls, or a finished ceiling installed. Not finished similar to or having any common elements of the main living area(s) of a dwelling. An enclosed area, space, or room with a minimal level of finish.

F. Basement Finished Square Footage -- BsmtFSF -- Any enclosed area(s) {below ground level} with a level of finish similar to the main finished living area or GLA (meeting all the criteria of GLA), but considered as below grade. “BsmtFSF” refers to and is defined as: finished space that is below grade only. In order to be classified as BsmtFSF, all space must provide finished, safe, sufficient, interior access from the main finished living area.

G. Basement Gross Building Area -- BsmtGBA -- Any below grade or lower level (enclosed/interior accessible) space which would not be included within the “BsmtFSF” calculations. For any space(s) considered as BsmtGBA, a minimum of a brief description of any space(s) is recommended. All below grade space should be described so as to properly identify each individual section for appropriate comparison with other similar space(s). A picture (showing all features) is deemed a description. Refer above to “Gross Building Area.”

[These four items of description are NOT a requirement. If desired, space may be reported as listed below:]

1. Category (Finished, Partially Finished, Unfinished)
2. Room Name (e.g. family, bedroom, bath, bonus, game, utility, storage, etc.)
3. Description (e.g. floor, walls, ceiling, HVAC, etc.)
4. Size (e.g. 10.0 x 12.0 = 120 sq ft … 14.0 x 12.8 = 179 sq ft)
For Illustration Only: Suggested Practice - Not Required

BsmtGBA1 - 1. Unfinished; 2. utility room; 3. concrete floor/walls and open ceiling; 4. 10.0 x 12.0 or 120 sq ft

BsmtGBA2 - 1. Partial finish; 2. bonus room; 3. tile floor, sheetrock ceiling/walls, not on central HVAC system; 4. 22.0 x 20.8 or 458 sq ft

BsmtGBA3 - 1. Finished; 2. office (accessed only by entering an unfinished basement area); 3. carpet, sheetrock ceiling/walls, central HVAC; 4. 12.0 x 13.5 or 162 sq ft) *finished gross building area

If desired, list each area by dimensions (as the first option) and/or by total square footage. (e.g. 10.0 x 12.0) or (120 square feet.) BsmtGBA encompasses below grade space(s) only.

Floor Finishes/Concrete -- Floor finishes include, but are not limited to: carpet, hardwood, laminate, tile, cork, vinyl, and certain decorative concrete finishes (such as stamped, imprinted, and/or engraved flooring). “Decorative” finishes are defined as long-lasting or permanent components on a concrete slab; produced by methods such as chemical staining, scoring, stamping, or other methods that physically modify the appearance and/or texture of the slab. No bare or painted concrete flooring is included in any statement of finished square footage under these Guidelines.

Adjoining Finished and Unfinished Area -- Whenever finished living area encounters or is adjacent to unfinished living area (on the same level), the finished area is calculated with exterior measurements and is always allowed the largest possible calculations. Any unfinished area(s) should begin where the exterior measurement of the finished area ends. See illustrations for examples.

H. Above Grade -- Entirely above grade. Defined as space on any level of a dwelling, which has living area and no earth adjacent to any exterior wall. Any space which is ground level and up is considered as above grade. (1st, 2nd, 3rd levels, etc.). In a dwelling with three levels; a basement, main living level, and an upstairs living area, the basement is counted as below grade and the main floor, plus any upstairs levels are combined and all counted as one above grade total. Includes all enclosed areas located at or above ground level.
I. Below Grade -- Defined as space on any level, which has living area (finished, partially finished, unfinished, garage, etc.), is accessible by interior stairs, and has earth adjacent to any exterior wall. If earth is adjacent to any portion of any wall, the entire level is considered as below grade. If any portion of a floor level is below grade, the entire level is considered below grade. Such space(s) may be of similar construction/materials and considered comparable (in finish, use, and/or value) to that of gross living area or GLA; however, the separation of all above and below grade space is consistent within most residential Guidelines and must be separated for reporting purposes. It is acknowledged that this may result in structures that have no above grade finished square footage or GLA. Dwellings described as at grade or on grade are generally considered as above grade.

Grade -- Grade itself is defined as the “ground” level at the perimeter of the exterior finished surface of a dwelling; the slope of a surface; the surface of the ground at the outside face of the exterior enclosing wall.

- No statement of a dwelling’s finished living area should be reported without the distinct separation of above and below grade areas.

Level -- Area(s) of a structure that are vertically within two (2) feet of the same horizontal plane.

J. Grade, Basements, and Advertising -- Agents are permitted to report the square footage of a dwelling as “total living area” or “total square footage,” without a separate distinction between above and below grade; for advertising purposes only (as long as the basement space is finished similar to the upper level space and meets all the requirements for finished living area). In order to be deemed finished basement square footage (BsmtFSF), all space should provide similar utility to the main or upper level and serve as a continuation of finished living area. However, the requirement that appraisers (and agents) must report the distinct separation between grades should be timely disclosed to both buyer and seller. For purposes of stated square footage, any reported “GLA” is defined as; finished space, above grade only. Any square footage data reported to MLS (where required) under “Closed” or “Sold” (or similar) should include a distinct separation of space, and the total square footage of both above and below grade areas.

K. Bay Window -- If a window has a floor underneath, a ceiling height of at least seven feet, and otherwise meets the criteria for living area, it is counted as square footage. If the bay space is a window seat, plant shelf, etc., and does not have a floor finished the same as the surrounding area, it is not considered square footage.

► To properly measure a bay window, first make two measurements; one with the width across (or over) and one with the distance “out” from the main exterior wall (such as 2 feet over and 2 feet out). Next, measure the straight distance across the center of the bay, and then measure the other side of the bay to make sure both sides are equal. To calculate the area of a triangle, multiply its length by its height and divide that figure by two. A bay window generally consists of two triangles and one rectangle. (With any “angled” walls, you must establish a distance over and a distance out to determine square footage. Often titled “Rise and Run” or “Over and Out.”)
L. Chimney -- If the Hearth or Chimney is located outside the main living area and extends beyond the exterior finished surface, the space CANNOT be included in any square footage total. Chimneys that extend to the second level, which may have a hearth on the first level, but extend through the interior of the second level (but with no hearth) should not be deducted from the finished square footage. Count the exterior wall as a flat surface for measurement purposes, similar to that of a bay window without flooring. Chimneys, windows, and other finished areas, which protrude beyond the exterior finished surface of the outside wall(s), but do not have floored, useable space on that same level, cannot be included in the square footage calculations.

M. Dormer -- Defined as a window, set upright in a sloping roof or vertically attached into a small gable, projecting from a sloping roof; or the gable section itself. Dormers are to be counted as finished space as long as they are finished in a similar manner to the surrounding living area and are a functional part of the room. If the dormer space is a functional part of the finished living area, it is included within the square footage measurements.

▶ The measurement of dormers -- The width measurement equals the distance across the interior space plus both exterior wall measurements, so that the total width is equivalent to the actual exterior measurements. When you calculate the interior width, take the measurement from one interior wall to the opposite interior wall, and then add for the width of both exterior walls. In the length measurement, you are actually measuring from the corner of the interior or inside wall. When you place the tape measure on the wall, you are placing it on the corner of an interior wall. Whether drywall, paneling, or other material; it is the “inside” wall. When you calculate the (interior) dimensions, you add the width of the exterior wall. An exterior wall can only count as square footage in one area calculation. When you begin the measurement from this corner (to the beginning of the exterior wall), you have already counted the exterior wall thickness from where you began the measurement. So, in other words, you DO NOT add the width of the exterior wall in the length measurement. Remember, the width of a dormer equals interior measurements, plus the addition of both exterior walls. The length measurement equals the actual length from the inside corner of the dwelling to the beginning of the outside wall with no addition for the thickness of the exterior wall. (You already added the thickness of the exterior wall when you began the measurement.)

N. Breezeway -- A roofed passage connecting two buildings (such as a house and garage). The space may be open, screened, enclosed or otherwise. It may be heated and cooled, or open air. The main function is as a connection, offering covered passage to another area.

O. Closets -- Closets are counted the same as any other living space as long as they are a functional part of the living area and finished in a similar manner. Closets need not have direct heating and/or cooling vents.

P. Mechanical Rooms -- Concealed in the walls of nearly all residential construction; are pipes, ducts, chases, returns, etc., which are necessary to support the structure’s mechanical systems. In order to avoid excessive detail, if the furnace, water heater, etc., is located in a small closet/storage area within the main living space, include it within the main living area even if the space does not meet the other living area criteria.

Q. Hallways -- Hallways are counted as square footage as long as they are a functional part of the surrounding living area. Laundry rooms, pantries, utility rooms, etc., are also counted as living area as long as they meet the general criteria for living space and are not accessed only from outside the main living area.
R. Bedrooms -- A bedroom is defined as a room into which you can fit a conventional bed. Local zoning and health codes may also establish minimum requirements. For purposes of this standard, a bedroom should be at least 90 square feet with at least one bedroom in the dwelling of at least 120 square feet. To be defined as a bedroom, the space should have a standard size, single door, which provides a separation of spaces and allows for privacy within the room. A bedroom should have a closet, and a window which provides an emergency exit, natural light, and ventilation. Bedrooms should have direct access to a bathroom, hallway, or other common living area. The intent of a room may also help to define the space in older dwellings. Such rooms, intended for use as a bedroom, as long as they meet the door and window criteria, may be defined by local custom.

S. Bathrooms -- A bathroom is technically defined as a “room with a bath” or a “room where one bathes.” For the purposes of this standard, to be classified as a “full” bathroom, the minimum requirements include at least three fixtures (including a sink and a toilet). A “half” bathroom (powder room) must include at least two fixtures (including a toilet). Any and all other bathroom classifications may be locally defined.

T. Stairs -- Stairs may be calculated by any of the statements below.

- Count the stairs on the level they serve or from where they start and ascend.

- Staircases do NOT need to be independently measured and are included within the exterior dimensions of the lowest finished space.

- Upper level living areas (2nd, 3rd, etc.) include finished, functional space (only); which serves as a continuation of the first or main level living area.

Stairs are included within the exterior dimensions (and square footage) of the lowest finished level. Also remember, the space CANNOT count on two levels. Stairs can only be square footage on one floor/level. Staircases are deducted from first level calculations, ONLY when there is finished space (BsmtFSF) on the lower level. (See illustrations.) All “GLA” located on any upper level must be floored, functional, finished space. Stairs (treads and landings) count as finished square footage only on the (finished) level from which they ascend.

Agents should identify and include any “bathroom” space located beneath the stairs in the listing file. The space utilized by the staircase is already included within the first level finished square footage. Any additional functional space (such as a half or full bath) should have a fixture (or room) count, so as to reflect the additional value provided by the functionality of an additional bathroom and/or by bathroom fixtures. While no space under the stairs is added to the total square footage, additional credit or value should be added whenever a bathroom (or other usable contributory space) is located underneath the stairs. Also by utilizing this method of calculating stairs, the ceiling height requirement of seven feet is consistent throughout all finished living area.
In order to further clarify this area, view staircases and square footage by the following:

Count stairs on the lowest finished space. The actual staircase is counted as though physically lowered to the first floor level, thus leaving a hole in the second level measurements and eliminating any room and/or space that was located below the staircase. In most cases, areas located below staircases offer some degree of sloped ceilings. While there are cases where bathrooms, closets, or other typical (finished similarly to the rest of the living area) space may be located below a staircase, the majority of space(s) provide some form of sloped ceilings with limited functionality and/or utility. Such spaces would not offer the same level of contributory value as other finished living space(s). Due to ceiling height requirements and unlimited possible configurations, any sloped areas under a stairway leave such spaces open to opinion rather than standardization and make reproducible calculations unlikely.

In order to avoid excessive detail, NO square footage is added for ANY space located beneath a staircase.

U. Open Foyers -- Interior space which is open from the floor of one level to the ceiling of the next higher level, is included in the square footage for the lower level only. Any area occupied by interior balconies, lofts, etc. on the upper level, is included in the square footage of the upper level. In cases such as an open foyer, be careful to count only the floored, usable space on the second level (plus the thickness of any exterior walls).

V. Additions/Enclosed Areas -- When measuring and reporting the living area of homes, be alert to any additions, remodeling, etc., such as an enclosed porch, garage or other modifications. The space must meet all the criteria for living area. Pay particular attention to the heating and cooling criteria, because the central system for the original structure may not be adequate for the increased square footage, even when a HVAC vent has been added to the room. Although agents are not required to determine the adequacy of heating systems, they should note whether there are HVAC vents or other heating/cooling sources in the room. If any portable air conditioner, wall mounted heater, space heater, and/or wall heat pump (minisplit) unit is present, it should be documented and disclosed. Rooms with separate heating and/or cooling (such as wall units) that are not part of the main central system for the dwelling, are NOT counted the same as the rest of the finished living area and would be included in the “Gross Building Area” category.

Porches are often added, enclosed, and/or finished the same as the main living area. However, if a window air conditioner or portable heating and/or air conditioning system is required, the area is counted under gross building area and is not considered the same as the main living space. This is an area often subject to interpretation and an agent may be prudent to contact an appraiser or ask for a second opinion to help determine if this area qualifies as “GBA” or “GLA.” If the area has no ductwork installed that is connected to the central system, the area should be separated. When in doubt, separate it out. All such space (other rooms) should be noted in the listing data to advise potential purchasers of any space that does not meet the criteria for finished living area, but which contributes to the overall functionality and therefore value of the dwelling. For example: unfinished attics and basements (with permanent stairs), bonus rooms, workshops, carports, storage areas, etc. Any feature which has contributory value to a property should be included within the listing information.
**W. Attic** -- The area, room, or space located directly below the roof of a building. [Lofts and/or finished attics must be accessible by a conventional stairway and meet the other requirements of finished living area to be included in any statement of square footage.]

**X. Sloped Ceilings** -- In rooms with sloped ceilings, any area with a ceiling height of less than (5) five feet is not included in the finished square footage. When you find sloped ceilings, place the end of the tape on the floor and measure straight up, from the floor to the five foot point on the sloped ceiling. At that point, start your width measurement extending from one interior wall to the opposite interior wall following the same height restrictions (i.e., five feet on both sides).

- **The Five Foot Height Requirement**: Finished space is measured from the five foot mark on any sloped ceiling. In rooms with sloped ceilings, measurements start at the five foot height line, with no addition for the width of the exterior wall.

In order to be included in the finished living area calculations, the living space with the sloped ceiling must maintain an average ceiling height of at least seven (7) feet for over one half of all the finished space; and have a minimum ceiling height of at least eight (8) feet at the center or highest point of the sloped space. To be included within the GLA, such space(s) should be a continuation of the finished square footage and function as part of the main living area.

**Y. Height Requirements** -- In order to be included in the finished living area calculations, all space must have a minimum ceiling height of at least (7) seven feet). **For inclusion in finished square footage, no part (beams, ducts, and/or other obstructions) of the ceiling can drop below seven feet in height (except as noted in sloped ceilings).** An agent’s judgment must be relied upon in unique spaces or in unusual height configurations. Space must be similar (in appearance and function), and deemed a continuation of the surrounding finished living area(s) to be included in the finished square footage total. A typical ceiling height is a minimum of eight feet.

**Z. Conversion, Rounding and Squaring** -- **It is recommended that a tape measure indicating linear footage in tenths of a foot be used for most calculations.** The following conversion chart is included as part of this text. However, remember there will be slight variations with any conversion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Equivalent Feet</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1”</td>
<td>.08 ft</td>
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<tr>
<td>2”</td>
<td>.17 ft</td>
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<tr>
<td>3”</td>
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<td>4”</td>
<td>.33 ft</td>
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<td>.42 ft</td>
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<td>9”</td>
<td>.75 ft</td>
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<tr>
<td>10”</td>
<td>.83 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11”</td>
<td>1.0 ft</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1” = .08 ft. * 2” = .17 ft. * 3” = .25 ft. * 4” = .33 ft. 
5” = .42 ft. * 6” = .50 ft. * 7” = .58 ft. * 8” = .67 ft. 
9” = .75 ft. * 10” = .83 ft. * 11” = 1.0 ft.
Always use exterior measurements (where possible) and round off to the nearest tenth of a foot (or nearest inch).

As a rule of thumb: five tenths of a foot or less is rounded down and anything over five tenths is rounded up. (Technically defined as 0.499 rounds down and 0.5 rounds up.) Use your best judgment in these measurements. Also remember to deduct for exterior siding, corners, or caps when they extend beyond the actual corner of the dwelling. Homes are constructed by human beings and, as such, walls may not always “square.” Whenever you find a circumstance where the building is not the same width or length on all sides, experience and judgment must be considered and common sense must dictate any such adjustments necessary to “square” the dwelling. There is no single system that can account for every possible scenario or situation and in some instances the agent’s judgment must be relied upon.

2A. Shapes and Measurements -- The vast majority of calculations involve basic squares and rectangles. Triangles also occur in bay windows and many other areas. To calculate squares and rectangles: multiply length by width. To calculate the area of a triangle: multiply its base width by the height and divide that figure by two.

Octagons and other unusual spaces should be divided into smaller sections and broken down into more easily calculated shapes. An octagon can be converted into rectangles and triangles, and a full octagonal shape can be broken down into seven smaller calculations. For circular areas, the basic formula of a circle is radius squared (number times itself), times 3.14. The radius can be determined by measuring the diameter of the circle (or the width across) and dividing that number by two. Multiply that number by itself, and then multiply by 3.14 and you have your square footage. An area with a half or semi-circle shape is much more common. Simply calculate a full circle and divide your total by two. Most angled areas can be measured using the “rise and run” or the “over and out” method; the distance straight out from the house and the width from the start to end of angled space.

2B. Wall Construction -- For the purposes of this standard and in order to avoid excessive detail, to calculate the width of an exterior wall add five tenths of a foot (or six inches) for each exterior wall (not to exceed actual exterior dimensions).

There is no one standard of measurement that will replicate all construction types. When interior measurements are all that are available, you must add the width of the exterior walls. With the numerous construction types and materials today, each house could be taken on a case by case basis and consider the basic elements that make up an exterior wall. The widths and materials of exterior walls vary greatly by location. In order to provide consistent and reproducible measurements, the width of five tenths of a foot, six inches, or one half a foot, are deemed to be a “typical” width and suitable for the purposes of standardization and comparability. If the exterior wall measurements are easily visible and the dimensions are significantly less and/or more than the “standard,” you should always use the total that best identifies the actual exterior measurements. The following is offered as a visual aid to understand the components of an exterior wall.
Drywall or sheetrock equals approximately 1/2 inch. A (2 x 4) wall stud equals approximately 3 1/2 inches. Exterior *sheathing* adds an additional 1/2 inch. (Common sheathing products include plywood, wafer board and oriented strand board “OSB.”) Exterior sidings may include vinyl, cement fiber board, brick veneer, stucco, stone, aluminum, asbestos siding, wood siding, etc. Most types of *siding* are considered to have a width or thickness similar to one inch. Brick, stone, log, or other similar exterior wall products are generally most similar to 3 inches (+-). Walls with siding (vinyl, wood, etc.) and walls with brick veneer, stone, etc., equal different thicknesses. A *typical* or *standard* exterior wall size must be used to allow for consistent and reproducible measurements. See below.

► **Wall Construction**

In order to help provide consistent, reproducible measurements, add five (5) tenths of a foot or six (6) inches for “each” exterior wall (not to exceed actual exterior dimensions).

When using interior measurements, add the above exterior wall dimensions to all interior measurements in order to obtain similar results utilized to measure finished space on the first or main level. **For exteriors with overlapping pieces, boards, or sections, the exterior width measurement is made from the bottom or lowest point on the exterior siding.** The above illustration is for reference only. All measurements are approximate.
• To further clarify **Exterior Measurements:**

All space considered as *finished* square footage should be derived using *exterior measurements*. Exterior measurements, in this case meaning the exterior dimensions or the perimeter of all *finished* living areas.

“Exterior Only” means you do not enter the dwelling and cannot verify any interior openings; stairs, garage shapes, storage spaces, balconies, unfinished or partly finished space, etc. “Exterior Only” measurements are NOT an accurate or acceptable method for obtaining square footage. The word “only” signifies a potential problem.

Remember, “**exterior measurements**” are utilized for the calculation of finished living space with confirmation of any and all interior openings - “**exterior only measurements**” means you did not enter the dwelling and cannot confirm any interior openings and/or the actual finished square footage.

2C. **Second Level Measurements** -- The goal is to measure any upper level space(s) the same way as the first or main level, using exterior dimensions to calculate all *finished, usable* space. When calculating the square footage of a second story (or higher) area, where interior measurements are all that are available, you must add the width of all exterior walls, (except where one wall adjoins with another finished living space). All methods of calculation should be noted/disclosed. View the square footage of upper levels as *finished* space you can walk on, plus exterior measurements (not to exceed the actual exterior dimensions). Use actual exterior measurements when and if possible. When you have to use interior measurements, add interior measurements plus the width of all exterior walls, to create a width which should equal the actual exterior dimensions (except as noted in rooms with sloped ceilings). Wall measurements and materials/components vary by location and are subject to local custom. However, in order to claim adherence to this standard of measurement, the width of exterior walls (for addition to interior measurements) must be consistent with the above referenced *exterior wall measurements*; or, should be stated as actual exterior measurements when available. Stairs are included within the exterior dimensions of the lower level only.

2D. **Detached: Finished and Unfinished Areas** -- **Finished** areas which *are connected* to the main body of the house by other finished areas (such as through a door, heated hallway or stairway) may be included in the Gross Living Area. **Finished** areas that *are not connected* to the house in such a manner (such as hallways or stairways) CANNOT be included in any Gross Living Area and must be counted as Gross Building Area, regardless of the level of finish.

**Any space, which requires you to leave a finished continuous space, cannot be included in any statement of Gross Living Area or GLA.** Even though such space may be finished in a manner similar to the rest of the dwelling, if it requires you to leave the perpetual living area, it cannot be included with or counted the same as the other GLA or continuous finished living areas. Whether heated with the same central heating system as the rest of the house or heated and cooled by portable means, if it requires you to leave the continuous finished area, it is counted as Gross Building Area and not Gross Living Area.
Finished areas above garages may be included in the finished square footage, only if they are connected to the house by a continuous finished area, such as a hallway or staircase. Any area, space, structure, or building that requires you to exit that space; enter any partially finished, unfinished, or open space; and then access the main dwelling/living area, must be considered as “detached” and separated from other areas. Detached space (finished or otherwise) must be counted in the gross building area category. (Any basement space with “exterior only” access should be counted as detached and listed as GBA)

2E. Square Footage and the Order of Calculation -- For purposes of this standard, square footage is to be counted in sequence as listed and defined under the “Eight Basic Categories of Square Footage.” In spaces where multiple finishes are located side by side, finished living area is always measured first. This is to allow for the largest possible square footage to be credited in the most valuable space, or the finished category. All space defined as gross building area (GBA) may be divided into one of three levels of finish: finished, partially finished, or unfinished to determine the order of calculation.

Finished Square Footage, GLA, or BsmtFSF should always be calculated using exterior measurements. Where a finished area meets an unfinished area, the finished space receives the benefit of the largest available dimensions. Any interior wall measurements (in a finished space) should have the width of an exterior wall added to the interior dimensions. (Finished; or fully enclosed space, which includes the thickness of the exterior wall(s).) When an area that is not part of the finished living area (e.g. a garage) shares a common wall with any finished living area, treat the common wall as the exterior wall for the finished living area. Therefore, the measurements for the finished space will include the thickness of any common wall(s) and the measurements for the other area will not.

2F. Garages -- A garage is a structure (attached or detached) with its intended function for the storage of automobiles and other vehicles. Typical garages are attached to the dwelling with a direct entry into the main living area. Garage sizes and shapes vary greatly by location and there is currently no nationally recognized or “standard” size for a one, two, or a three car garage. In order to avoid excessive detail, garages and all attached spaces which are not included in the living area (e.g. GLA, GBA; storage areas, mechanical rooms, closets, etc.), may be included in the garage calculations and defined as is typical or custom in the local market. Garage space is generally open space and not separated by walls. All garage space located on the lower level (below grade) should be identified and described accordingly.

2G. DetG or Detached Garages -- Any garage space that is detached from the main living area and not attached by any other covered method (such as breezeway, porch, etc.). Detached space designed specifically for the accommodation of vehicle storage. Does not include any space above a garage.

2H. DetGBA or Detached Gross Building Area -- Detached gross building area includes any space that is detached and/or separated from the main finished living area(s). Areas such as guest cottages, apartments, in-law suites, studios/rooms or any space(s) above a detached garage; or any finished or unfinished structure on a permanent foundation which is detached or separated from the main dwelling. Reported (named) as local market defines.
2I. P/D/P or Porches/Decks/Patios -- Any space considered as outdoor living area(s), including covered and/or open spaces. Each space measured by perimeter dimensions and listed separately. Includes all definable outdoor living spaces and/or improvements; such as screened porches, covered porches, decks, covered decks, patios, terraces, gazebos, lanais, pools, outdoor kitchens, fireplaces, arbors, pergolas, porticos, water features, etc. These areas may not be included in any statement of finished square footage. (Not to include guest cottages, pool/bath houses, or other structures on permanent foundations with enclosed living area.) Due to the nature of construction and numerous possible differences in materials, design, functionally, etc., pictures are recommended for any feature or item which provides contributory value to a property.

- PDP1 - Deck 10.0 x 12.0 (120 sq ft)
- PDP2 - Covered Porch 14.2 x 16.8 (239 sq ft)
- PDP3 - Concrete Patio 18.0 x 20.0 (360 sq ft)

2J. Room Counts and Grade -- Any finished room located above grade, which is listed within the GLA, should be included within the total room count for the first or above grade levels only. Room count quantities and gross living area must be consistent to set a comparable value to other dwellings. Any finished room(s) (bedroom, bathroom, etc.) which is located below grade, must be separated from the above grade room count. (In a dwelling with an advertised room count of four bedrooms and three and one half baths, if one bedroom and one bath are located in the BsmtFSF, they should not be included in the gross living area room count. The house should be reported as three bedrooms and two and one half baths in any statement of finished GLA. For the accurate comparison of gross living areas, any and all rooms associated with the total GLA should only reflect those rooms included in above grade space.

Size Matters!
4. The Eight Basic Categories of Square Footage…

**GLA** or Gross Living Area, etc. (Size) -- To be considered as GLA, space must be *finished*, above grade, permanently heated/cooled, and suitable for year round occupancy. (See definitions, page 9)

**GBA** or Gross Building Area -- Gross building area includes any *above grade* (finished, partially finished, or unfinished) areas, which are not counted in the main GLA or accessed through the main living area. Example: an office within a garage which is *finished* similar to the main living area, but not directly accessible without leaving the finished or main living area to enter. (See definitions, page 9)

**BsmtFSF** or Basement Finished Square Footage -- All space(s) defined as or finished similar to the first or main finished living area or **GLA**, but considered as “below grade.” (See definitions, page 10)

**BsmtGBA** or Basement Gross Building Area -- All space(s) defined as or finished similar to gross building area or **GBA**, but considered as “below grade.”

**Gar** -- Garage; meaning *open* area(s) designed specifically for the accommodation of vehicle storage. Garage space must be *attached* to the main living area with direct, covered access. Garage space should be separated and counted as garage area only. Not included in any *gross building area* calculations. (Due to wide design variations, such space may be locally defined.)

**DetGBA** or Detached Gross Building Area -- Detached gross building area includes any space(s) which is *detached* from the main finished living area. Areas such as guest cottages, apartments, in-law suites, space(s) above a detached garage, workshops; or any finished or unfinished enclosed building (on a permanent foundation). Reported (named) as local market defines. (See definitions, page 20)

**DetGar** or Detached Garage -- Any garage space that is *detached* from the main living area and not *attached* by any other covered method (such as breezeway, porch, etc.). Detached space designed for the accommodation of vehicle storage.

**P/D/P** or Porches, Decks and Patios -- Anything in this category, including covered and/or open spaces. Each space measured by perimeter dimensions and listed separately, but with all included within this *outdoor living* category. Include all definable outdoor “living space” or improvements. These areas may not be included in any statement of finished square footage.

The categories listed above are the **eight basic categories** used throughout this *Guideline* to report all space associated with a single family dwelling. Use of these categories is a **recommended** method for the reporting of square footage information and designed to aid in the consistent (and reproducible) creation and communication of residential square footage data. Multiple items within the same category may be sequentially numbered.

The use of these eight categories is **NOT** a requirement for adherence to this standard.
5. Commentary on AMS C42129-2008

A. The Measurement and Calculation of Square Footage

- This standard does NOT address the use of the International System of Units (SI).

Measure around the outside of the house above the foundation. To calculate square footage in a single-family dwelling, multiply the length by the width of each rectangular space. Then add the subtotals of any and all spaces and round off your calculations to the nearest square foot. A house should be measured to the nearest tenth of a foot (or nearest inch). Any statement of square footage should include the total living area of each level and disclose the method of measurement upon which all calculations are based. All dimensions for finished living area include the width of all exterior walls. The practice of rounding measurements to the next nearest half foot (even if the method is disclosed) is not recognized and would automatically void any claim of adherence.

In order to claim adherence to this standard, all of the requirements must be employed when calculating and reporting square footage in single-family housing. The total is to be reported to the nearest whole square foot. Begin at one corner of the dwelling and proceed with measuring each exterior wall. Make a sketch of the structure, writing down each measurement as you go and recording it on your outline or sketch. Round off your measurements to the nearest tenth of a foot (or nearest inch). A tape measure that indicates linear footage in “tenths of a foot” will greatly simplify your calculations. Draw the sketch using graph or similar lined paper and be certain all sides are equal (or square) before leaving the site. Legal sized graphing paper (or laptop computer), and the use of lined markings as a reference will greatly increase the accuracy of your sketch.

Write down each measurement as you move around the perimeter of the dwelling and record each number in a correlating sequence in a grid or on graph paper. A clipboard, graphing paper, sharp writing instrument, a flexible one hundred foot tape measure, calculator, (screwdriver, lawn spike, putty, tape, or some method of attaching one end of the tape in areas where it is not possible or practical to attach the other end of the tape), flashlight, a laser measure if available, and a digital camera should all be part of your property information collection equipment.

The garage offers a good foundation to begin your measurements. Measure the perimeter of the dwelling making sure any garage doors are open to permit the measurement and inspection of the interior of the garage. Carefully inspect the interior of the garage and any storage areas, as well as the interior of the dwelling to locate any stair openings, unfinished spaces, and/or storage areas which should be deducted from the exterior measurements. Measure porches, decks, patios, barns, pools, detached buildings (on permanent foundations only), balconies, etc., in a similar manner and include any amenities/features that have contributory value. Any item which adds value to a property (and is not deemed personal property) should be listed and described in the listing file and MLS records.
Corners -- When taking measurements on dwellings with exteriors such as vinyl siding, cement fiber board, wood siding, certain brick and other styles, or any time a “corner cover” is present; be careful to adjust for any difference between the corner “cap” and the actual location of the corner. There can be differences of up to one inch (or more) between the actual location of the corner on the house and the “cap,” which can be on one or both ends of a wall measurement. Make sure to total and review your calculations prior to leaving the site. It’s much easier to verify and correct any inconsistencies while you are physically present than to try and estimate a difference later.

B. Agent’s Responsibility and Allowable Data Sources

It is up to each individual agent to actively pursue the knowledge of calculating square footage within their office, peer group, or through any qualified available source. By learning and following one specific set of standards or guidelines, agents are better prepared to create, communicate, and defend their calculations should any question arise. By having a “standard” of measurement to refer to, the verification of the method utilized and the ability to say “this is how I calculated the square footage” can greatly reduce any possible liability. An agent may rely on the square footage reported by other persons when it is “reasonable under the circumstances to do so.” Generally speaking, an agent working with a buyer may rely on the listing agent’s square footage representations, except in those unusual instances when there is an error in the reported square footage that should be obvious to a reasonably prudent agent. Should any “red flags” regarding square footage be noticed, point them out to the listing agent, make all parties aware of the question, and then seek to verify the information and correct any error.

An agent who relies on another’s measurements would still be expected to recognize an obvious error in the reported square footage and to alert any and all interested parties. An agent should NOT rely on square footage information determined and/or provided by the property owner or included within public records. An agent should also NOT rely on square footage information included in a listing (or an appraisal report) which was prepared in connection with an earlier transaction (without verification of its current accuracy). Square footage information may be obtained by an outside source, such as a licensed and/or certified appraiser or other competent professional. It is also appropriate for an agent to rely on measurements and calculations performed by other professionals with greater experience in determining square footage. The use of measurement companies, appraisers, and/or other qualified professionals (to provide square footage details) should be disclosed. The measurements and calculations of total square footage prepared by any competent source, should include a written disclosure, listing (at least) the name of the person who measured the dwelling, the company name, date the sketch was prepared, who ordered the sketch and the specific intended purpose, street address and owner’s names, and the measurement standard or methodology utilized in the calculation of any square footage totals.

In all circumstances, an agent should disclose the source of square footage information which is to be included as part of the listing file. Real estate agents are expected to be able to accurately calculate the square footage of most dwellings, and when reporting square footage, whether to a party to a real estate transaction, another real estate agent, or others; a licensed real estate agent is expected to “provide” (from a credible source) accurate square footage information that was compiled using these or other comparable Guidelines.
Even though agents are NOT required (by most states) to measure any dwelling, they are expected to understand the basics of residential construction and measurement. Regardless of whether an agent ever personally measures a listing, most states agree that a licensed professional should have a fundamental knowledge of the process of calculating the size of a single-family dwelling, and to discover any significant over and/or under-statement of square footage. While an agent is expected to use reasonable skill, care, and diligence when calculating square footage, it should be noted that most commissions and/or licensing agencies do not expect absolute perfection. Because all properties are unique and no guideline can anticipate every possibility, minor discrepancies in calculating square footage are not considered to constitute negligence on the part of the agent. Minor variations in tape readings and small differences in rounding off or conversion, from inches to decimals, when multiplied over distances, can cause reasonable discrepancies between two competent measurements of the same dwelling. In addition to differences caused by minor variations in measurements and calculations, discrepancies between measurements may also be attributable to reasonable differences in interpretation. For instance, two agents might reasonably differ about whether an addition to a dwelling is sufficiently finished to be included within the measured living area or finished square footage.

Differences based upon an agent’s thoughtful judgment are generally not considered to constitute an error on the agent’s part. Deviations in the calculated square footage of a small amount will seldom be cause for concern, with regard to licensing agencies (check with your state licensing agency to verify local rules). No specific percentage guideline can chronically and uniformly apply to all properties. Due to potential extreme variations in square footage and designs, any specific percentage guideline cannot consistently apply in all scenarios. In unusual designs, complex angled dwellings, large square footages, or any in any dwelling which provides an elevated degree of difficulty, a second (and sometimes third) opinion is always a good idea. In such cases, all sketches and calculations should be included within the listing file, along with the reasoning behind the final determination of square footage.

Agents are not required by most license laws or commission rules to report the square footage of properties offered for sale or rent. But, when they do report square footage, it is essential that this information be accurate. (Additional rules and regulations may be subject to individual state policy. Verify your state’s requirements, commission rules, and/or licensing laws.) Agents should be prepared (when requested) to provide documentation of how the square footage was determined and to identify the standard used in the measurement and calculation of any square footage information they provide.

Reproducible Measurements -- Two professionals measuring the same dwelling, should be very close in any statement of square footage, only accounting for slight technique differences. A basic, rectangular, one level dwelling, if measured by two different people using the same standard and reading the tape with the same rounding principles, should be very close in size. When the same principles and measurement standard are uniformly applied, the results should be recognizable as having been applied and uniform in their statements of total square footage. A listing agent should be able to produce a dwelling sketch, with the measurements and calculations utilized to produce any statement of square footage; from which, others viewing the same information should be able to recognize and reproduce similar results (if requested). The herein contained method for calculating square footage requires measurements to be taken to the nearest tenth of a foot (or nearest inch) with the final floor area reported to the nearest whole square foot.
Public housing records are created through a mass appraisal process and are generally created as an *estimate* of size only, specifically for use within the assessor’s office. While all other information contained within public records is a verifiable *fact*, square footage records are not based on any single measurement methodology. The collection and listing [or names] (i.e. FinLivAr; HeatedSpace; HeatedArea; HeatedSqFt; FinHtSp; FinLA; EstFLA; etc.) for *finished* living, and what square footage (basements, finished, partially finished, etc.) is included within that total, vary depending on location. Regardless of when or how square footage information is obtained, the responsibility of its accuracy ultimately rests with the listing *agent*. If square footage information is utilized from any public records system, it should be disclosed. A professional real estate agent is expected to have a fundamental knowledge of home construction, calculating square footage, and enough knowledge to recognize an obvious error in square footage.

C. Reporting and “MLS”

“*Reporting*” is defined as any statement and/or disclosure (written or otherwise) about a specific property made to any interested party and/or to the “MLS” databank. (MLS is a registered trademark, owned and operated exclusively in the U.S. by the “NAR” - National Association of Realtors®.) Any agent with the authority to report property listing information to the “MLS” database is considered to be a “member” in good standing with the “NAR” and therefore must adhere to its policies and code of ethics. Agents with the ability and the authority to participate in the sharing of information (as provided through the MLS) must also abide by the policies, rules, and bylaws associated with their local “MLS” and Association or Board of Realtors®; and further uphold all associated state and national policies, rules, and regulations required of members of such organizations.

A listing *agent* should have a “sketch” in the office file showing the basic design or layout (room locations and functionality). The file should also include a square footage statement for all levels of the dwelling. A “grid” similar to those included in the illustrations section of this publication serves as an excellent disclosure tool, but is not mandatory. It does serve as a statement of how calculations were made and allows others, who may not be familiar with the property, to disclose details to potential buyers, agents, appraisers, and others. Each listing file must contain a legible *sketch* of the dwelling.

Any stated square footage which is obtained from *exterior measurements only* and cannot confirm the actual interior openings, must be properly disclosed and is NOT considered a reliable indicator of total square footage. “Exterior Only” signifying the property measurements are *estimated* with no interior inspection.
In listing a property for sale, to accurately reflect the size, condition, bedroom and bathroom count, and/or the amenities/features of a property (and therefore make credible disclosures to the public and all other interested parties), an agent should make every attempt to enter the property prior to publishing any information.

Agents should also consider the potential consequence of pricing and advertising property information where no interior inspection has been completed; and where no room count, room sizes, condition, etc., has been inspected, verified, and/or confirmed by the listing agent. In the event that an interior inspection is not possible, a disclosure should be made similar to the following: “Finished square footage calculations made based on an exterior only inspection and may not accurately reflect the actual finished living area. The agent (listing company) makes no representations as to the interior condition of the dwelling and/or its components; and makes no representations and/or warranties otherwise. All information provided is subject to verification.”

 Statements for illustration only. Consult an attorney in your area for specific disclosure requirements.

In such cases where direct measurement of certain areas is not possible; due to terrain, structures, or other possible obstacles which prevent the direct measurement of a particular area (or where interior measurements and the addition of exterior walls is also not possible), any such space or circumstance should be adequately and timely disclosed. Such as: “Calculations developed under extraordinary circumstances precluding the direct measurement of said area. Dimensions are an estimation only and subject to verification.”

► This information is not meant or offered as a legal opinion or advice and is only a general description of a possible disclosure statement. Please consult a licensed professional to assist you in the preparation of any disclosure statement(s) to meet your individual needs.

► This standard is a voluntary application; but, when applied, must be applied in its entirety. It cannot be used selectively or be used as part of a combination of methods. The standard must be followed universally or it is considered not applicable and void. Use of exterior only measurements does NOT allow for compliance with these Guidelines and voids any use and/or claim of adherence.

D. New Construction and Plans

Whenever you report a finished square footage total taken from a builder’s and/or designer’s plans, it should be disclosed that the finished square footage calculations are based on plan dimensions only and may differ from the actual finished square footage. Such as: “GLA taken directly from builder’s plan and subject to verification;” or “Square footage measurements obtained from the architect’s drawings of the proposed dwelling and the actual, as built, finished square footage may differ from the plan dimensions.” A similar type statement (or other form of disclosure) should always be included when relying on square footage information taken from a builder’s plans. The measurement of completed new construction is always recommended to confirm the “as built” square footage, which may be greater or smaller than stated in the original or pre-construction plans.
E. Pictures, Comparisons, and “MLS”

A photo of the property, taken at or near the time of closing, provides an accurate record of the property at that specific time. Additional photos showing any exterior features (such as decks, porches, patios, detached buildings, fencing, pools, etc.) are also extremely helpful in understanding what was offered and included at the time of sale. Many new owners make immediate improvements; new exterior siding, roofs, windows, porches, decks, fencing, landscaping, paint, etc. A photo taken at the time of closing provides an accurate reflection of the property condition and what was included at the time of sale. Existing homes should be photographed with a front and rear photo included, plus a photo of any additional feature(s) which provides contributory value and is not visible within the front and rear photos. New construction dwellings should have a photo added at the time the C/O (certificate of occupancy, or similar) is issued or soon thereafter. Any photos of new construction submitted at the time of listing or prior to completion are subject to local MLS rules and regulations.

Pictures of the front and rear of the dwelling are recommended on all listings reported through the “MLS.” For the proper comparison of properties (CMA’s, appraisals, etc.) and to allow for consistency in information sharing throughout the national database, photos of any and all items which provide contributory value to the property, should be included within the “sold” information as reported through any Multiple Listing Service or (MLS). Front and rear photos are encouraged for all “closed” properties (when physically possible).

Even if a dwelling is not listed for sale through MLS; if the property is reported as a “closed” sale (entered for comparable use only or otherwise), front and rear photographs are recommended to be included within the closed sale information.

Collection, Calculation, and Communication
To claim adherence to this standard of measurement, you must consistently follow this standard (in its entirety) and cannot utilize just the parts you like or agree with. The proper measurement, calculation, and communication of square footage in a single-family dwelling requires knowledge and experience. It also plays a significant role in the comparison and valuation of residential property.

This *standard* may be used to measure and calculate all detached and attached single-family houses, including townhomes, row houses, and/or other side-by-side housing types. This standard does not apply to the measurement and calculation of condominium units and does not cover or include individual room dimensions. Users of this standard are cautioned to carefully verify the legal definition of property ownership to avoid any confusion and/or violation of state or federal law. The term *Square Footage* is utilized due to its common use among real estate practitioners and consumers. The terms *Gross Living Area* and *GLA* are utilized due to their common use within the real estate, appraisal, and lending industries.

The statements *(suitable)* or *(intended for human occupancy)* are used by established building codes to describe a room or space, which has as one of its requirements, a specified amount of natural or mechanical light and ventilation. The definition of gross living area and other similar terms does not imply that any such space(s) conform to any requirements for light, egress, or ventilation and is considered beyond the scope of this standard.

All sketches contained herein were created specifically for use in this publication and were developed using Apex Sketching Software provided through Alamode, Inc., and licensed through Carolina Appraisers and Real Estate.

6. *Illustrations*

For assistance in measuring, calculating, and reporting the square footage of single-family homes, refer to the following illustrations and instructions (pages 30 - 65). These 20 sketches and the following explanations are included to provide practical examples of the methodology utilized in the *American Measurement Standard*. 
Square Footage Basics

Length times width, always using exterior measurements for finished living areas. Measure the perimeter of the dwelling, above the foundation. GLA or gross living area; finished space that is above grade only.

Sketch "A"

Sketch "B"

Drawing for illustration only
See comments page 31
“A” - One Story with Detached Garage and Breezeway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1st Level</td>
<td>50.0’ x 35.0’</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>22.0’ x 22.0’</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Breezeway</td>
<td>9.0’ x 6.0’</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GLA 1,750 sq ft
GBA1 54 sq ft
Garage 484 sq ft

► Top Sketch -- [MLS Report] - GLA 1,750 - GBA1/Brzwy 54 - Gar 484

“B” - One Story with Attached Garage and Deck.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1st Level</td>
<td>50.0’ x 35.0’</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>22.0’ x 22.0’</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deck</td>
<td>10.0’ x 10.0’</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GLA 1,750 sq ft
Garage 484 sq ft
P/D/P Deck 100 sq ft

► Bottom Sketch -- [MLS Report] – GLA 1,750 - Gar 484 - P/D/P 100
**Sketch "A"**

Finished Office: 12.0'
Screen Porch: 10.0'

22.0' x 32.0'

Count chimney as flat exterior wall.

**Sketch "B"**

Unfinished Storage
Unheated Office

10.0' x 12.0'

2 Car Garage

22.0' x 22.0'

Count chimney as flat exterior wall.

Drawing for illustration only
See comments page 33
“A” - One Story with Attached Garage, Screened Porch, & Finished Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1st Level</td>
<td>50.0’ x 35.0’</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>22.0’ x 22.0’</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen Porch</td>
<td>13.0’ x 10.0’</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Det) Finished Office</td>
<td>12.0’ x 13.0’</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MLS Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GLA</th>
<th>1,750 sq ft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GBA1</td>
<td>Finished Detached 156 sq ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gar</td>
<td>484 sq ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/D/P1</td>
<td>ScPorch 130 sq ft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“B” - One Story with Attached Garage, Unfinished Office, and Unfinished Storage; Plus Bay Window and Fireplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1st Level</td>
<td>50.0’ x 35.0’</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Triangle</td>
<td>3.0’ x 3.0’</td>
<td>(9 div x 2) x 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Rectangle</td>
<td>5.0’ x 3.0’</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Bay @ Right</td>
<td>9.0’ x 3.0’</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total GLA)</td>
<td>(1,801)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>22.0’ x 22.0’</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unheated Office</td>
<td>12.0’ x 16.0’</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished Storage</td>
<td>10.0’ x 16.0’</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GLA</th>
<th>1,801 sq ft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GBA1</td>
<td>(Partial Finish) Unheated Office 192 sq ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBA2</td>
<td>Unfinished Storage 160 sq ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gar</td>
<td>484 sq ft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the main, finished living area, always verify that all space included within the exterior dimensions offers interior access. Always list outdoor (P/D/P/) spaces considered as “under roof” as “covered.”
One Story with Attached Garage, Unfinished Storage Areas, Porch and Deck.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1st Level</td>
<td>10.0’ x 20.0’</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.0’ x 48.0’</td>
<td>1,488</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.0’ x 5.0’)</td>
<td>(-25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8.0’ x 4.0’)</td>
<td>(-32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.0 x 4.0’</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.0’ x 8.0’</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>21.0’ x 21.0’</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished Stg 1</td>
<td>5.0’ x 5.0’</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished Stg 2</td>
<td>15.0’ x 6.0’</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished Stg 3</td>
<td>6.0’ x 6.0’</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porch</td>
<td>10.0’ x 20.0’</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deck</td>
<td>12.0’ x 12.0’</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,903 sq ft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBA (All Unf Stg)</td>
<td></td>
<td>GBA - 1-2-3</td>
<td>151 sq ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gar</td>
<td></td>
<td>441 sq ft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/D/P1</td>
<td>Porch</td>
<td>200 sq ft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/D/P2</td>
<td>Deck</td>
<td>144 sq ft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three unfinished storage areas. The first two are very basic and common in many dwellings. The area measuring 5.0’ x 5.0’ is unique due to the access door, which opens into the garage only and does NOT permit access from inside the dwelling. Since this storage space can only be accessed from inside the garage space; even though the space is within the exterior measurements of the finished living area, it must be deducted from the other finished living area. If this same storage space opened from inside the house, it would be included within the finished living area (even if it was not finished the same as the rest of the finished living area). In this case, the location of the door makes the difference between this closet being included within the GLA or GBA.
1st Level = 1,750  
2nd Level = 1,712  
Total GLA = 3,462

50.0' 

50.0 x 35.0 = 1,750 sq ft  
Minus 3.2 x 12.0 or 38 sq ft

2nd level = 1,750 - 38  
Total 2nd level sq ft = 1,712

In this case, 38 sq ft 
deducted from 2nd level GLA

2nd Level

50.0'  

50.0 x 35.0 = 1,750 sq ft  
Stairs included in 1st level  
Total 1st level sq ft = 1,750

3.2

12.0

3.2 x 12.0 or 38 sq ft  
Stairs to 2nd level

1st Level  

Drawing for illustration only

See comments page 37
Two Story with Basic Staircase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Level</td>
<td>50.0’ x 35.0’</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Level</td>
<td>50.0’ x 35.0’</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staircase</td>
<td>(12.0’ x 3.2’)</td>
<td>(-38.0’)</td>
<td>-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,750 sq ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,712 sq ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total GLA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,462 sq ft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

► Stairs may be viewed by any of the following statements:

- Count the stairs on the level they serve or from where they start and ascend.
- Staircases do NOT need to be independently measured and are included within the exterior dimensions of the lowest finished space.
- Upper level living areas (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.) include finished, functional space (only); which serves as a continuation of the first or main level living area.

All staircases are included within the exterior dimensions of the lowest finished living area. In the sketch on page #36, this basic two level design shows that the staircase, which leads from the first level to the second level (or serves as access from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> level) illustrates how the staircase is included within the total square footage (GLA) of the first level living area, but not included within the second level living area. Although the exterior dimensions are the same, the second level square footage (GLA) is reduced by the staircase measurements.

**Stairs can only count as square footage on one floor.**

Stairs and Second Levels

Count any finished living area on a second (or higher) level as floored, usable, walkable space only. All second floor measurements should not include any staircase openings and be on the same floor level. The space may also be defined by: on any upper level living area(s), only count the space as that of floored, usable, finished, functional space, plus the width of all exterior walls (not to exceed actual exterior dimensions). [Note five foot height requirement rule.]
Stairs from Basement
Deduct from 1st Level

Stairs up to 2nd Level
included in 1st level GLA

Stairs from 1st Level
not included in 2nd level GLA
2nd level includes only floored
finished, functional space

Stairs leading from Basement to the 1st level
included in Basement square footage
and deducted from 1st level GLA
### Stair Basics - Two Story with Basement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Level</td>
<td>40.0' x 25.0'</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairs from Bsmt</td>
<td>(12.0' x 3.2')</td>
<td>(-38)</td>
<td>-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Level</td>
<td>40.0' x 25.0'</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairs from 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Level</td>
<td>(12.0' x 3.2')</td>
<td>(-38)</td>
<td>-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basement</td>
<td>40.0' x 25.0'</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
<td>GLA1</td>
<td>Level One</td>
<td>962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GLA2</td>
<td>Level Two</td>
<td>962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bsmt FSF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total GLA</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; + 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Level</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,924 sq ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Basement</td>
<td>BsmtFSF</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000 sq ft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three levels, four sets of stairs, and each floor with the same exterior measurements. This basement offers 1,000 square feet of finished living space. This staircase starts in the basement and leads up to the main or first level. This space is counted as square footage in the “finished basement” leaving the total at 1,000 square feet. The first (or main) level also offers 1,000 basic square feet, but has two sets of stairs. The staircase that leads from the basement to the first level (which is counted in the basement square footage) must be deducted from the square footage (GLA) of the first floor. 1,000 square feet minus the staircase of (12.0 x 3.2 or 38 square feet) leaving 962 total square feet (or GLA) on the first level. The staircase that leads from the first to the second level is included in the first level measurements. That set of stairs must be deducted from the second level measurements (or not included). The second floor has the same basic 1,000 square feet exterior, minus the staircase of 38 square feet (and also provides 962 square feet as on the first floor). This leaves matching totals (962) on the first and second floors, and the basement with the full 1,000 square feet. (Property may be advertised as 2,924 sq ft, but should be reported in sold data as follows:)

- **GLA1** 1,000 sq ft - Stairs from Bsmt -38 sq ft 962 sq ft
- **GLA2** 1,000 sq ft - Stairs from 1<sup>st</sup> Floor -38 sq ft 962 sq ft
- **BsmtFSF** 1,000 1,000 sq ft

- **Total Living Area or GLA** 1,924 sq ft
- **Total Basement Finished Square Footage** 1,000 sq ft
Drawing for illustration only
See comments page 41
### 1 1/2 Story with Finished Basement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Level</td>
<td>15.0' x 42.0'</td>
<td>630</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.0' x 34.0'</td>
<td>748</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.0' x 42.0'</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td>2,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairs from Basement</td>
<td>(12.0' x 3.2')</td>
<td>(-38)</td>
<td>-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total GLA1 2,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Level Bonus Rm</td>
<td>8.0' x 6.0'</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.0' x 24.0'</td>
<td>288</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8.0' x 2.0')</td>
<td>(-16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus Room 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total GLA2 320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished Basement</td>
<td>28.0' x 25.0'</td>
<td>700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.0' x 14.0'</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BsmtFSF 910 sq ft</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Level 2,348</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bonus Room 320</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total GLA</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,668 sq ft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BsmtFSF</td>
<td></td>
<td>910 sq ft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>22.0' x 24.0'</td>
<td>528</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A two story dwelling generally has a second floor with the same basic area as the first floor or main living area. A one and one half (1.5 or 1 ½) story design is simply a dwelling with a reduction of square footage in the second level, generally due to the slope of the roof. The 1.5 or 2 story description is a broad generalization and there are literally thousands of possible upper level combinations. Designs and/or style names may be locally defined.

Due to the basement design (offering finished living area), the stairs leading from the basement to the first floor are deducted from the first level GLA. The stairs leading from the first level to the second level are included in the first level GLA and not included in the second level GLA.
**Bonus Room Access**

**Upper Level "A"**  
From stairs located inside the dwelling

**Upper Level "B"**  
From stairs located inside the garage

**Upper Level "C"**  
From stairs located outside the garage

---

Drawing for illustration only  
See comments page 43
## Bonus Rooms and Access.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.0’ x 2.0’</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Level - “B”</td>
<td>22.0’ 22.0’</td>
<td>484</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.0’ x 2.0’</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(12.0’ x 4.0’)</td>
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<td>- 48</td>
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<td>1,248 + 452 = 1700</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLA “C”</td>
<td>Finished GLA</td>
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<td><strong>Total “C”</strong></td>
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<td>GBA “C”</td>
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<td>“A” GLA</td>
<td>Finished</td>
<td>Square Footage</td>
<td>1,700</td>
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<td>“B” GLA</td>
<td>Finished</td>
<td>Square Footage</td>
<td>1,700</td>
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<td>“C” GLA</td>
<td>Finished</td>
<td>Square Footage</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sketch “A” and “B” both contain staircases that are considered as finished living space. Therefore, both sets of stairs are included in the “GLA” calculations and both plans provide a total of 1,700 square feet of GLA. The only change in sketch “C” is the location of the staircase. However, that location has a substantial influence on the utility, function, classification, and ultimately the value of the bonus room. In this third configuration, you must leave the heated, finished area in order to enter the upstairs bonus room. You must leave the finished lower level, walk into the outside air, and then up the staircase to enter the finished space above the garage. Sketch “C” would be reported with 1,200 total square feet of “GLA” plus a 500 square feet bonus room. The bonus room would be listed as finished gross building area or GBA. The bonus room as shown in sketch “C” should never be included in any “GLA” calculations and should always be separated. No interior access equals “GBA.”
In this case, the actual exterior dimension is 4.0. If the interior measurement is 3.4, the total measurement would still be 4.0 and not 4.4. Remember, the total measurement cannot exceed the actual exterior dimensions.

Width equals exterior wall to exterior wall. Length equals interior corner to start of exterior wall.
Dormer Calculations

The “Width” of a dormer is calculated using inside measurements, plus the width of both exterior walls, just like most other second story measurements. The “Length” is calculated using interior wall to interior wall. You **start** on the inside corner of the dormer and **stop** at the beginning of the exterior wall. **You do NOT add the width of the exterior wall in the length measurement.**

This sketch is a look at two basic dormers. The top sketch shows exterior measurements of 12.0 x 8.0. These measurements are generally taken from inside the dwelling and you have to account for the exterior walls in the calculations. When you measure the interior width, the measurement from one interior wall to the opposite interior wall shows 7.0’. (Arrow one shows the interior dimensions or what you actually measure.) Then add for both exterior walls to get the correct total measurement. (Five tenths for each exterior wall, not to exceed actual exterior dimensions - see wall construction.) Arrow two shows your total width measurement (exterior wall to exterior wall) and arrow three shows your length measurement; from the corner wall of the main living area to the **beginning** of the exterior wall.

In the length measurement, you are actually measuring from the corner of an interior wall. When you place your tape measure on the wall, you are placing it on the corner of an interior wall. When you calculated that measurement (in the second level living area) you added for the exterior wall; in this case five tenths or one half foot. So, this time when you pull the tape measure, from this interior corner to the inside wall against the dormer or outside wall, you have already counted the exterior measurement. Width equals interior measurements plus the addition of both exterior walls. The length equals the actual measurement you take from inside the dwelling with no addition for an exterior wall. Look at it as though you are adding the width of the exterior wall when you begin the measurement.

- **Although you normally add the width of an exterior wall, you can’t count the same wall twice. In dormer calculations, just remember to count the length measurement from the interior corner to the beginning of the outside or exterior wall.**

Width = 7.0 feet interior measurement, plus 0.5 tenths for both exterior walls, for a total width of 8.0’. (12.0’ x 8.0’ = 96 sq ft.) Length = 12.0’ using interior measurements only. The top dormer is 96 sq ft.

In the lower sketch, both dormers are identical and are calculated the same as above. Here, we have an interior width of 3.0’. Then we add both exterior walls for a total exterior width of 4.0’. The length starts at the interior corner and ends where the wall starts (on the inside of the exterior wall), giving us a total measurement of eight feet. 8.0’ times 4.0’ equals 32 square feet, times two dormers. 32.0 square feet times two dormers for a total of 64 square feet.
First level GLA equals 50.0 x 40.0 minus the staircase of 48.0 sq ft.
Basement with Finished and Unfinished Space.

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<thead>
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<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1st Level</td>
<td>50.0’ x 40.0’</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staircase from Bsmt</td>
<td>12.0’ x 4.0’</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basement</td>
<td>50.0’ x 40.0’</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished Sq Ft</td>
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<td>1300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.5 x 16.5</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>1,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished Sq Ft</td>
<td>23.5 x 17.5</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GLA      1,952 sq ft
BsmtFSF   1,589 sq ft
BsmtGBA   411 sq ft

The basement measurements are 40.0 x 32.5 or 1,300 square feet; plus 17.5 (18.0 - 0.5) x 16.5 (16.0 plus five tenths of a foot for the exterior wall) or 289 square feet (remembering the rounding guideline). The finished area of the basement totals 1,589 square feet or BsmtFSF.

The unfinished storage area would be measured as 23.5 x 17.5 or 411 square feet of BsmtGBA (Basement Gross Building Area). The stairs are included within the finished basement measurements and would be deducted from the finished first level measurements or GLA.
Basement with Finished and Unfinished Space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main 1st Level</td>
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<td>2,616</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bay Window</td>
<td>3.0’ x 3.0’</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.0’ x 3.0’</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Front Entrance</td>
<td>(10.0’ x 6.0”)</td>
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<td>-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staircase</td>
<td>(12.0’ x 3.4”)</td>
<td>(-41)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.0’ x 3.6”)</td>
<td>(-14)</td>
<td>-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total GLA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Basement BsmtFSF       | 65.4’ x 20.5’ | 1341     |          |
| BsmtFSF Stairs         |              | 55       | 1396     |
| Basement BsmtGBA       | 65.4’ x 19.5’ | 1275     |          |
| Entrance Above         | (10.0’ x 6.0”) | (-60)    |          |
| Staircase              | (see above)  | (-55)    |          |
| Total GBA              |            |          | 1,160    |

GLA                      |          | 2,525 sq ft |
BsmtFSF                  |          | 1,396 sq ft |
BsmtGBA                  |          | 1,160 sq ft |

The staircase which leads from the basement to the first floor living area is located in the *unfinished* storage area of the lower level. The staircase is *finished* similar to the rest of the finished living area and leads into the finished section of the basement. This staircase should be added to the finished square footage and included within the finished basement measurements (BsmtFSF). The same space (which is added to the *finished* square footage) should also be deducted from the *unfinished* measurements (BsmtGBA).

A bay window, as long at both sides are equal, is easily calculated with the “over” measurement multiplied by the “out” measurement; in this case 3.0’ x 3.0’ or 9.0 square feet. Then add the rectangular middle section of 5.0 x 3.0 or 15 square feet. The total of the bay window is 24 square feet.
Advanced Calculations.

Level 1

50.0' Width

Utility 11.0 Bedroom Bedroom

11.0 Bedroom Full Bath

40.0' Height

Kitchen Full Bath

Dining Room Foyer Bedroom

Basement

Outside Door Only

Full Bath 7.5 Partial Fin Workshop

Storage 8.0 18.0

Rec Room 2 Car Garage

50.0 Total Width

Drawing for illustration only
See comments page 51
Basement with Four Different Categories.

This sketch provides another possible combination of lower level spaces. It offers a finished living area, partially finished workshop, garage, plus a storage area with an outside only entrance. The first level is very basic with exterior dimensions of 50.0 x 40.0 or 2,000 square feet. The staircase measures 11.0 x 3.4 or 37 square feet. Since there is finished space on the lower level, the stairs are included within the finished basement square footage and must be deducted from the first level living area. 2,000 minus 37 equals 1,963 square feet or GLA.

The basement is always counted with finished square footage first. The exterior measurements are 40.0 x 26.5 or 1,060 square feet. Follow the arrows (1-2, 3-4, etc.) to see how the measurements should be calculated. In the finished area, deduct the storage space (with exterior only entry) of 17.5 x 7.5 or 131 square feet. 1,060 minus 131 equals 929 square feet of finished basement or BsmtFSF.

After the finished calculations, the workshop area would be counted next (arrows #5 and #6) and (#7 and #8). With a length of 18.5 and a width of 23.5 (outside wall to inside wall in this case-exterior wall adjoining storage space was credited in the finished living area), the partially finished workshop would be 435 square feet. Next, count the garage. Arrows #9 and #10 show the measurement from the exterior wall of the garage to the interior garage wall, where it adjoins the partially finished workshop. With a length of 21.5 and a width of 23.5 (arrows #11 and #12), the total garage is 505 square feet.

The finished basement space of 929, plus the partially finished workshop of 435, and finally the garage with 505 square feet, provides a total of 1,869 square feet. Why not 2,000 sq ft? (50.0 x 40.0)

In this case, the unfinished storage area of 131 square feet is NOT included in any attached square footage total. This storage space is accessible from the exterior only and provides no entrance from inside the dwelling. Any space, which does not provide access to another basement space (finished, partially finished, unfinished, or garage), is not included in any statement of basement square footage. All basement space must be accessible from one or more lower level areas, which provide ingress and/or egress to the main level living area. (The same is also true of the main or first level; to be included in attached square footage, all space must be accessible from the interior of the dwelling.)

Such space is considered similar to that of a detached building and should be separated from all other attached square footage. This space should be included in the detached gross building area category. Detached space literally means detached from the main dwelling. This is one of the few exceptions when an attached space may be included within the detached category. (ex 2: full unfinished basement with no access between levels-exterior entry only. Both spaces technically defined as BsmtDetGBA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
<td>(2,000 – 37)</td>
<td>1,963 sq ft</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BsmtFSF</td>
<td></td>
<td>929</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BsmtGBA1</td>
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<td>435</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td></td>
<td>505</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bsmt)DetGBA</td>
<td></td>
<td>131</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Bsmt Sq Ft</strong></td>
<td>(929+435+505)=1869</td>
<td><strong>1,869</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparable Spaces

Sketch "A"

One Level Ranch Style
50.0 x 40.0 = 2,000 sq ft

2,000 sq ft of finished living area
(GLA) all on one level

Sketch "B"

1st Level
2nd Level Bonus Room

44.0 x 44.0 = 1,760 sq ft
20.0 x 12.0 = 240 sq ft
Total GLA = 2,000 sq ft

1,760 sq ft of finished living space, on the 1st level
240 sq ft of finished space, on the 2nd level
1,760 sq ft of GLA and 240 sq ft of GBA
Square Footage and Comparability.

House “A” offers 2,000 finished square feet (on one level) in one continuous floor plan. House “B” offers 1,760 square feet of continuous space on the first level, plus a 240 square feet finished bonus room, which is only accessible through the garage. You must leave the finished living area, enter the garage, and then go up a flight of unfinished stairs to access the second level bonus room. The bonus room is finished similar to the main living area and is heated and cooled by the same central system. However, due to the reduced “utility” or “functionality” of the upper level space, it is technically defined as finished gross building area (GBA) and should not be included in any statement of gross living area “GLA.” The two dwellings and designs are not a fair comparison of space and should never be reported with the same “finished” square footage or “GLA.” While they both contain 2,000 square feet of finished living area, they do not contain the same “GLA” and the two spaces are far from equal.

If both houses are reported in MLS as sold with 2,000 square feet of finished living area or GLA, the next time an agent is working on a CMA (or an appraiser is selecting comparable sales) they will only see two houses with the same finished square footage. Just by looking at the exterior pictures of the homes, often it is not possible to distinguish any differences in GLA or living areas. When these two homes are used together or considered as equal sizes for comparable purposes, any value conclusion will be adversely affected. These two properties are not “comparable” sales and many future values may be adversely affected. To be included in GLA, all space should provide similar utility.

- The “reporting” or communication of square footage details are just as important as the proper measurement and calculation of that same square footage information. Details allow for the fair comparison of similar properties.

Order of reporting as defined in the eight categories of square footage:

1. GLA
2. GBA
3. BsmtFSF
4. BsmtGBA
5. Gar
6. DetGBA
7. DetGar
8. P/D/P
Divide the living area into geometric sections and calculate the GLA.

There is no specific method required for calculating total space (left to right; right to left, etc.). Each “block” or “section” may be added together, or larger sections created with deductions. Regardless of the order or method, all calculations should create the same square footage total.
Sectionalized Calculations.

Take one geometric section at a time and do the math. There is no right or wrong order. The colored (or dark) sections on the sketch above are just one example of how you can box off individual areas and gives you some sectionalized method for calculating a total. Small sections added together or large sections with deductions, both should provide the same results.

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
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<td>3,576 sq ft</td>
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</table>

Garage calculated as 10.0 x 3.0 plus 30.0 x 22.0 = (30 + 660) or 690 square feet
2nd Level Bonus Room with Finished Stairs inside the Garage.

Drawing for illustration only
See comments page 57
Second Level Measurements

This sketch shows a typical "bonus room" (or FROG – finished room over garage) with stairs located outside the main dwelling and inside the open garage space. In this case, the stairs are finished similar to the rest of the dwelling and provide a functional part of the floor plan, but are located outside of the other finished living area. This staircase provides access to finished living areas on both the lower and upper levels, but is included within the lower or main level measurements only.

To calculate this dwelling’s square footage, make five blocks or sections. Our first building block (working left to right) measures 12.2 x 34.7 or 423 square feet. Our second block measures 15.9 x 29.7 or 472 square feet. Our third block measures 12.0 x 40.8 \((34.7 – 5.0) + 9.5 + 1.6 = 40.8\) or 490 square feet. The fourth block measures 24.1 x 26.6 or 641 square feet. Our last block is for the addition of the staircase. In this case, we are counting the stairs where they start and go up or in the lowest finished living area; because you enter the stairs from inside the finished living area and they serve as a (finished) connection of finished living spaces. The stairs measure 11.0 x 3.5 for 38 square feet. The total heated square footage or GLA on the first level is \((423 + 472 + 490 + 641 + 38\) for a total of) 2,064 square feet.

The bonus room measures 6.1 x 3.5 or 21 square feet, plus 20.6 x 14.0 or 288 square feet, giving us a total square footage of 309. 2,064 on the first level plus 309 on the second level, for a total of 2,373 square feet. You can’t count stairs on two levels or in two categories. In this dwelling, the stairs are located inside the garage, but are counted as finished square footage on the first level.

![Image #1](image1.png) ![Image #2](image2.png) ![Image #3](image3.png)

When calculating the square footage of a finished bonus room (or any second level living area), remember to include the width of all exterior walls (not to exceed actual exterior dimensions; note sloped ceilings). The goal of measuring any upper level space is to measure that space by the same method you would any first or main level living areas, utilizing exterior measurements. If you place your tape measure on a sheetrock wall (such as in photo #1) and measure to the opposite side of the room (again to the beginning of a sheetrock [or other wall material] wall), you must include the width of two exterior walls. In a finished bonus room, if the interior measurement is fourteen feet (14.0), then the total dimension would be listed as fifteen feet (15.0). \(14.0 + (0.5 + 0.5) = 15.0\). If you can actually place the tape measure through a window, attic access door (or other method of attachment to an actual exterior wall), always use the actual dimensions. In all second (or higher) level measurements you must add or include the width of exterior walls, except where an interior wall adjoins another finished living area. (See wall construction, page 16) In dormer areas such as #2, remember the width is NOT measured the same as length. In second level measurements, consider all walls with similar components to those as pictured in photo #3. All upper level measurements should be calculated from (behind the sheetrock, 2 x 4’s, sheathing, and exterior siding) exterior walls and/or dimensions. [Exception; five foot height rule.]
Sloped Ceilings

All rooms with sloped ceilings must maintain an average height of seven feet for over one-half of all finished living area.

The sloped ceiling height requirement stops the finished measurement at the five foot mark on any sloped ceiling, without any addition for the width of the exterior wall.

Spaces with sloped ceilings are included within the GLA calculations when they serve as a continuation of the finished living area and meet the ceiling height requirements.

In areas with sloped ceilings, pull the tape measure straight up, from the floor to the five-foot mark on the wall. At that point, begin the interior measurement. Do NOT add the width of any exterior wall(s).
**Sloped Ceilings**

This sketch shows a building section of a typical one and one half story dwelling with a loft or upper level living area, which has a ceiling height on both sides of less than five feet. The shaded section (on both sides of the loft area) is less than five feet in height and would NOT be counted in the finished living area. The rest of the space (as long as over one half (1/2) of the total room width is at least seven feet in height) can be counted as GLA as long as it meets the other requirements for finished space or gross living area.

When you find sloped ceilings, place the end of the tape on the floor and measure straight up, from the floor to the five foot point on the ceiling. At that point, start your width measurement (extending from one interior wall to the opposite interior wall) following the same height restrictions (five feet on both sides). In order to be included in the finished living area calculations, any living space (with a sloped ceiling) must maintain an average ceiling height of at least seven (7) feet for over one half of all the finished space; and have a minimum ceiling height of at least eight (8) feet at the center or highest point of the sloped space. In areas where sloped ceilings are present (i.e. bonus rooms, second or third levels, etc.), to be included in the finished living area, the space must function the same (or offer the same utility) as the main finished living areas. If the space is a continuous, functional part of the main living area, then it should be included within the GLA calculations. In areas where the average ceiling height does not equal or exceed the eight feet height requirement, such space(s) would be considered as GBA and not GLA.

- The continuous ceiling height must equal seven feet (or more) for over one-half of all gross living area. The point (or peak) must be at least eight feet in height.
- The interior measurement is taken from where the five foot wall height rule is applied on one wall, to the same height on the opposite wall.
- In areas with sloped ceilings, pull the tape measure straight up, from the floor to the five-foot mark on the wall. At that point, begin the interior measurement. Do NOT add the width of the exterior wall(s).

The exterior measurements are NOT added to the interior dimensions, for rooms with sloped ceilings only.
Shapes and Solutions

30.0’ x 20.0’ = 600 sq ft

Basic Rectangles or Squares:
Length Times Width Equals Total Square Footage

18 feet from bottom to top

18 feet across the bottom

Triangle = Height Times Width Divided by Two
18 sq ft times 18 sq ft = 324 sq ft
324 Square Feet Divided by 2 = 162 sq ft

Triangle Measurement of 162 square feet

The basic formula of a circle; radius squared (number times itself), times 3.14. Measure the diameter of the circle (width across), and divide by two. Multiply that number by itself, and then by 3.14, and you should have your square footage. An area with a half circle shape is much more common, so just remember to divide your total by two.

Octagons should be broken down into rectangles and triangles.
Whenever an attached garage is present, the interior measurement stops at the beginning of any interior wall. Whenever a detached garage is present, the measurements are taken using exterior dimensions, like those of finished space.

**Garages**

**Detached 2 Car Garage**

Calculations:
20.8 x 22.0 or 458 sq ft

**Attached 2 Car Garage**

Calculations:
20.3 x 22.0 or 447 sq ft

Drawing for illustration only

See comments page 62
Garages

The top drawing shows a basic detached garage. (Detached: standing by itself, not sharing any wall with another building; separated; disconnected.) All the walls are separated from any other area and are counted similar to any finished square footage, with all exterior measurements. Length times width for the total square footage. The distance between arrows # 1 and # 2 (22.0) times the distance between arrows # 3 and # 4 (20.8) for a total of (22.0 x 20.8) 458 square feet.

The bottom drawing shows an attached garage with one (interior) wall attached to the finished living space. Arrows # 1 and # 2 are identical to the detached version above and are measured from exterior wall to exterior wall. But, in this case arrow # 3 is an exterior measurement and arrow # 4 is an interior measurement. The distance between arrows # 3 and # 4 is five tenths of a foot shorter than the # 3 to # 4 measurement in the sketch above, due to the presence of an adjoining interior wall. 22.0 x 20.3 for 447 square feet.

When measuring and sketching garage space, remember the key is accurate measurements. Building sketches may be drawn so as to reflect the proper alignment of the width of exterior walls (where garage spaces adjoin finished living spaces); however, such detail or precision in sketching is not required to accurately calculate and reflect the as-built square footage. The building sketch should provide a general representation of the home, the functionality of the design/layout, and its total square footage. Another professional should be able to take the sketch and confirm all measurements. If the house displays an obvious floor plan (utility) problem and/or any functional obsolescence, then a more detailed design of the interior should be included to show any such inadequacies.

The rules of calculating finished space call for exterior measurements. Any finished living area is given the benefit (of the width) of any exterior wall(s) [on all levels] and therefore provides for the largest possible measurements in the most valuable spaces.

Garage space (Gar) is defined as “open” space designed for the storage of automobiles or other vehicles. Unfinished, enclosed storage areas should be included in the GBA category, not GLA or Gar (but are subject to local custom).
• **Stairs**

Stairs can only count as square footage on one floor.

- Count the stairs on the level they serve or from where they start and ascend.

- Staircases do NOT need to be independently measured and are included within the exterior dimensions of the lowest finished space.

- Upper level living areas (2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, etc.) include finished, functional space (only); which serves as a continuation of the first or main level living area.

Stairs are included within the exterior dimensions of the lowest finished space, and not included in any upper level measurements. Do NOT add any square footage for any space located below the stairs.

*See Page 14 for full Guideline.*
Second Level Measurements

The dashed outline represents the appropriate second level measurements. The stairs, open Foyer, and the open Great Room are counted as square footage only on the lower level. Upper level calculations include functional, finished living areas.

2nd level designs. No stairs are included within second level square footage totals.
Bonus Room Measurements

The upper level is counted as floored, functional, finished space. The staircase is not included in the second level square footage total. All second level square footage must be at the same level, floored, useable, finished space. The stairs are included within the perimeter measurements of the first level.

Follow the outline to calculate “finished” space.

The stairs are not included within the second level square footage total. All second level square footage must be at the same level, floored, useable, finished space. The stairs are included within the perimeter measurements of the first level.

The upper level is counted as floored, functional, finished space. The staircase is not included in the second level measurements and neither is the open Foyer, or the open space above the Great Room on the first level. The dormers are finished like the rest of the surrounding space and would be included within the finished square footage or total GLA. While the balcony area is open (with only hand rails) facing the great room below, it is floored, functional space and would be included within the GLA calculations. Balcony area is counted to the outermost edge.
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