

Office Space Principles & Utilization Policy

The office environments provided by the state, whether leased or owned, should be consistent across agencies in its approach to provide a workplace that helps to attract and retain employees, serves citizens, and ensures safety and security. When renovations or construction takes place these principals and guidelines provide flexibility to meet the needs of the work being done in various agencies and departments while aligning the entire organization to efficient and effective use of space. Exceptions are both allowed and expected when moving into existing space with no changes and where historical properties make following them impossible or imprudent.

Culture of Service and Collaboration

State government serves best when the complexities of the system are overcome by the employees and not the individual citizens. The workspace should be customer focused; where the public moves should be easily accessible, include navigational assistance, and provide for the safety and security of all based on the type of services delivered. The environment should support high levels of collaboration and knowledge sharing and establish a culture of learning and partnership within and across agencies.

Activity Based Workspaces

The environment should support the individual's work being done at the time with access to options for employees that maximize flexibility while recognizing that an individual will likely need the ability to collaborate with others, concentrate in a quiet space, will socialize, and learn over the course of the workday. This can best be achieved with a work environment that provides shared spaces that maximize the use of square footage and not only allows, but encourages, individuals to move through those spaces as the day's activities require and the employee prefers.

Access to Natural Light

The environment should be designed to allow the most natural light to the space and therefore to as many of the team members as possible. To support this, enclosed and hard wall spaces should be built in the interior of the structure, away from windows. Workstation and modular walls should be kept as low as possible incorporating transparent panels above 54 inches, whether clear or opaque, while taking care to understand options for ensuring visual confidentiality.

Consistency Across Agencies

While each agency has varying missions and funding mechanisms, the goal of our work environments is the same to support the employees in their delivery of service to citizens and each other. Employees across state government should have similar resources for their work and a positive experience with the environment.

Office and Workstation Standards

1. Free Address Spaces are unassigned which can and should include bench style seating, individual workspaces of varying sizes, and collaborative spaces.
 - a. Individuals who work in the office less than 60% should have access to free address spaces. This includes hybrid employees and those whose main work responsibilities are outside the office, even when they are assigned to the specific location.
 - b. Part-time employees, working 20 or fewer hours per week, should utilize free address spaces regardless of the percentage of time they work in the office.
2. Assigned Workstations should support the kind of work being done in the most effective and efficient space possible taking into account the need to host visitors and access to shared spaces.
 - a. Employees who work in office 60% or more are eligible for an assigned workstation if one is desired.
 - b. Assigned workstations should be between *36 and 95 square feet*.
3. Assigned Private Offices are limited as they take large amounts of square footage and are often empty for significant percentages of the workday.
 - a. Job grades M / L07 / EM1 / AM1 / L3 / NM1 / SM1 / M3 / IT8 and above may have offices between *110 and 220 square feet* when requested, approved by leadership, and available. Because leaders at this level of the organization are often outside of their offices, these spaces should be furnished and made available to others as conference or huddle space when not in use by the assigned individual.
 - b. Job grade J, K, L / L05, L06 / IT5, IT6, IT7 and above with direct reports may have offices between *80 and 125 square feet* when requested, approved by leadership, and available.
 - c. Confidentiality Requiring Private Offices
 - i. Fully enclosed spaces may be assigned to individuals in lower grade levels when 60% or more of their job requires face-to-face interactions likely to reveal information regulated as confidential.
 - ii. Shared spaces such as huddle rooms or intake rooms should be provided for employees whose work requires less than 60% face-to-face interactions with individuals being served when regulation requires confidentiality.
 - d. Meeting the Privacy Needs of Customers and Employees
 - i. Employees serving individuals face-to-face regarding topics that are not required by regulation to remain confidential, but in which privacy is preferred, should move to huddle spaces, intake rooms, or other shared spaces when possible.
 - ii. Phone booths, quiet workspaces, small huddle rooms, or similar unassigned private spaces should be provided for employees to

have their personal conversations that require privacy or are protected by regulation, when space is needed for minimal distraction, or to present or actively participate in online meetings.

1. One such space should be provided for not less than every 10 workstations, whether assigned or free address space.
 2. The square footage should vary to maximize square footage used and the percent of space capacity used.
- e. Building additional offices should be avoided when possible.
 - i. Offices should be made with modular walls whenever possible to maintain flexibility, long-term ease of change, and reduced downtime compared to traditional construction.
4. Employee breakrooms, or preferably work lounges, should be centrally located with access to natural light and provide options for comfortable seating as well as meals. When multiple agencies reside in the same building, the space is are to be shared. Given the size of these spaces, it is prudent to have furniture for informal meetings, opportunities to work in a different setting, and to encourage use outside of traditional breaks.
 - a. Microwaves and other cooking devices are to be in these spaces and well-ventilated to reduce odors and the effects of those odors on others.
 - b. Vending options should include healthy snack and drink options.
5. Hard wall construction should be used most often for permanent structures like restrooms, elevator lobbies, corridors, huddle rooms or offices abutting support structure, medical examination rooms, large, shared spaces like conference rooms, work cafés, lounges, and training rooms. Furniture systems should be used for most office spaces, huddle rooms, private spaces, phone booths where walls are needed for visual and sound privacy as often as possible to maximize long-term flexibility of the space.

Operational Standards

Finish

Paint, flooring, and ceiling tile standards, as well as those for mechanical systems such as electrical and plumbing, have been carefully evaluated to provide ease of maintenance, longevity, and be aesthetically pleasing. For samples or additional information, contact Buildings and Grounds.

The finish options approved for use are available at these links: [paint](#), [carpet](#), and [luxury vinyl tile](#). It may be appropriate, in public areas, for other flooring choices to be used. Please contact the Office of State Engineer to discuss options that address the need more effectively.

Other colors and styles may be used in historic structures when restoration takes place to be period correct. The Office of the State Engineer provides the support needed to make those determinations in consultation with architects and design experts.

Art and Decoration

A welcoming environment for citizens and employees should be the goal of art and decoration. Art selections should be made that are reflective of South Dakota, our history and culture, and the mission of the agency. We recommend seeking the support of the South Dakota Arts Council and the [Art for State Buildings](#) program for common areas highly trafficked by citizens. With exception for historical purposes, murals and permanent art are generally not allowed. Art should be mounted or placed to maintain flexibility of the space.

Individual workspace decorations should be tasteful and avoid art, signage, or statuary that contains offensive, political, or unwelcoming messages particularly in areas which citizens access. The exterior of workstations should not be used for display, even temporarily, for individual decoration, post-it notes, art, posters, etc.

To avoid damage to unseen mechanical systems in walls, contact Buildings and Grounds to complete installation whenever possible. In facilities without Buildings and Grounds personnel, use appropriate tools to ensure the safe installation and check for services prior to placing nails or screws in a wall.

Plants require appropriate care by the owner to prevent insect infestation, rot, and odors. Plants should not be vining across walls or workstations. While allowed as decoration, employees may be required to remove plants that create problems.

Decorations, art, plants, books, and other items should be kept below workstation wall level to maintain access to light and to keep the work area clutter free.

Holiday decorations in individual work areas should be powered with batteries provided by the individual. Those in common areas, whether visible to citizens or employees, can be plugged in but must not create unnecessary risk. Avoid the use of extension cords. Live trees, with the exception of those decorated for Christmas at the Capitol, are not permitted. Candles and open flames of any type are prohibited in state offices and facilities.

Signage

Contact Buildings and Grounds for guidance and creation of signage for public direction, name plates, room numbers, restroom, etc. When information such as hours of operation or customer/employee entrance information, etc must be placed on glass doors or windows, vinyl lettering or cling on type signs should be used. Contact Buildings and Grounds for approved vendors.

Taping signs on glass windows and doors should be avoided, especially in areas where sun and heat make it very difficult to remove the tape and residue. When temporary signage is needed, it is best to have a display properly mounted in which information can easily be changed.

Appliances

Refrigerators, coffee makers, microwaves, and other cooking appliances should be in break areas or appropriate shared spaces within an office and not used in private offices or assigned workstations. Temporary exceptions for crock pots or similar for potlucks, holiday celebrations, or other office events are allowed.

Space heaters may be used in limited circumstances when systems cannot keep up in large areas, for specific health needs, and other extenuating circumstances. When a request is approved, the following requirements apply: 1) the appliance is plugged directly into the wall outlet with no extension cord. Cubical wall outlets do not meet the criteria for this; 2) has a thermostat with automatic shut off; 3) placed on the floor and away from combustible materials; 4) does not have visible coils; 5) is not left on when unattended; and 6) is not close to a building thermostat and/or does not affect the building HVAC system.

Moves and Remodel

Coordinate the scheduling of moves and remodels through the Facilities Planning Team to ensure that all aspects of the work are coordinated to minimize downtime.

Contact BHRA at 605-773-3344 for additional information and support.