

ANSI Standard: Square Footage Measurement in Single-Family Homes & Condos

DEFINITIONS

Attached Single-Family House – A house that has its own roof and foundation, and that is attached, yet separate, by walls from roof to foundation

Detached Single-Family House – A house that has open space on all its sides

Finished Area – Enclosed area of a house that is suitable for year-round use, including walls, floors, and ceilings that are similar to the rest of the house

Garage – A structure intended for the storage of automobiles or other vehicles

Grade – The ground level at the perimeter of the outer finished surface of a house

Level – Areas of the house that are vertically within 2 feet of the same horizontal plane

Square Footage – An area of a house that is measured and calculated with use of the standard

Unfinished Area – Sections of a house that do not meet the criteria of *finished area*

CALCULATION OF SQUARE FOOTAGE

To claim use of this standard, the following methods of calculation must be applied when quantifying square footage in *single-family houses*. When using English measurements, the house is measured to the nearest inch; the final square footage is reported to the nearest whole square foot.

Calculation Methods

Calculating square footage using the outer dimensions of a house without inspection of the interior spaces is allowed, but this must be stated as such when reporting this calculation.

Circumstances may occur in which direct measurement of a structure isn't possible (i.e. access may be unavailable due to the nature of the terrain, structure, or other obstacles). Dimensions acquired through some means other than direct measurement may be susceptible to inaccuracy, and so can the calculated area. Obtainment through such a method must be stated when reporting calculations.

Detached Single-Family Finished Square Footage

The finished square footage of each level is the sum of finished areas on that level measured at *floor level*; or by using the outer finished surface of the outside walls.

Attached Single-Family Finished Square Footage

The finished square footage of each level is the sum of the finished areas on that level measured at *floor level*; or by using the outer finished surface of the outside walls; or from the centerlines between houses, where appropriate.

Finished Areas Adjacent to Unfinished Areas

When finished and unfinished areas are adjacent on the same level, the finished square footage is calculated by measuring to the outer edge or unfinished surface of any inside space between the areas.

Openings to the Floor Below

Openings to the floor below can't be included in the square footage calculation. But the area of stair treads and a landing, proceeding to the floor below, is included in the finished area of the floor from which the stairs go down, not to exceed the area of the opening in the floor.

Above- and Below-Grade Finished Areas

The above-grade finished square footage of a house is the sum of finished areas on levels that are entirely above grade. The below-grade finished square footage of a house is the sum of finished areas on levels that are fully or partly below grade.

Ceiling Height Requirements

To be included in finished square footage calculations, finished areas must have a ceiling height of at least 7 feet, except under beams, ducts, and other obstructions, at which may be 6 feet, 4 inches; under stairs where there is no specified height requirement; or where the ceiling is sloped. If a room's ceiling is sloped, at least one-half of the finished square footage in that room must have a ceiling height of 7 feet; no portion of the finished area that has a ceiling height of less than 5 feet may be included in finished square footage.

Finished Areas Connected to the House

Finished areas that are connected to the main body of the house by other finished areas (Hallways, stairways, etc.) are included in the finished square footage of the floor that is at the same level. Finished areas that are not connected to the house in such a manner cannot be included in the finished square footage of any level.

Garages, Unfinished Areas, and Protrusions

Garages and unfinished areas cannot be included in the calculation of finished square footage. Chimneys, windows, and other finished areas that protrude beyond the outer finished surface of the outside walls and do not have a floor on the same level cannot be included in the calculation of square footage.

STATEMENT OF FINISHED SQUARE FOOTAGE

Failure to provide declarations listed below – where applicable – voids any claim of use to this standard.

Rounding

The finished square footage of a house is to be reported to the nearest whole square foot for above- and below-grade finished square footage.

Reporting of Above- and Below-Grade Areas

No statement of a house's finished square footage can be made without the clear and separate distinction of above- and below-grade areas.

Areas Not Considered Finished

Finished areas that are not connected to the house, unfinished, and other areas that do not fulfill the requirements cannot be included in the statement of finished square footage but may be listed separately if calculated by methods explained in this standard. Also, any calculation listed as unfinished must distinguish between above and below grade areas.

Interior Spaces Not Inspected Method

If calculations of finished square footage are made without inspections of the interior, a declaration must be included. An example is the following:

DECLARATION 1:

“Finished square footage calculations for this house were based on measured dimensions only and may include unfinished areas, openings in floors not associated with stairs, or openings in floors exceeding the area of associated stairs.”

Plans-Based Method

If the calculation of finished square footage is made from the plans of a proposed house, the Statement of Finished Square Footage must include a declaration similar to the following:

DECLARATION 2:

“Finished square footage calculations for this house were made based on plan dimensions only and may vary from the finished square footage of the house as built.”

Other Methods

Circumstances may exist when direct measurement of a structure isn't possible. Obstructions (such as those listed previously) may exist which disallow direct measurement. If calculations are made through some means other than direct measurement or plans can be susceptible to inaccuracy, as is the calculated area. Calculations developed under such circumstances must include a declaration similar to the following:

DECLARATION 3:

“Finished square footage calculations for this house were made based on estimated dimensions only and may include unfinished areas, or openings in floors not associated with stairs, or openings in floors exceeding the area of associated stairs.”

CLOSING STATEMENTS

This standard may not be applied to multi-family homes and/or apartment buildings. It may be applied, though, to all detached and attached single-family homes, including townhouses, row houses, and other side-by-side apartments.