

The BOMA MOMCOM* Report

*By William B. Tracy, Vice-chair, BOMA Standard *Methods of Measurement Committee*

If there is one thing that BOMA does to impact everyone in the real estate industry, it is floor area measurement standards. Starting in 1915 with the initial publication of the Standard Method of Measuring Floor Area in Office Buildings, everyone in the industry, both in the US and in many other countries, looks to BOMA to provide a current basis for clear and consistent computation and communication of square footage for leasing and management of commercial buildings.

The last few years have seen a torrent of new measurement resources developed by the Standard Methods of Measurement Committee under the leadership of its Chair, Kent Gibson, who was recently elected Secretary/Treasurer of BOMA International.

Starting in 2004, BOMA collaborated with SIOR to produce Standard Methods for Measuring Floor Area in Industrial Buildings. This standard offers two methodologies, an “exterior face of wall” method and a “drip line” method to meet the needs of industrial real estate owners and tenants all over the US. It can be applied to any building whose use is at least 51% industrial, which includes many “flex space” properties.

In 2008, BOMA published “A Unified Approach for Measuring Office Space for use in Facility and Property Management.” This was the result of a three year effort by a task force of BOMA and IFMA representatives to iron out the differences in terminology and methodology between the measurement standards authored by the two associations. This document forms the basis for future updates to both BOMA and IFMA measurement standards and is a terrific resource for measurement best practices.

The Unified Approach did not address measurement of the gross area of buildings because the stakeholders for that concept consisted of a wider group of industry members than those on the task force. This gap was filled by BOMA in June of 2009 with the publication of “The Gross Area of a Building: Methods of Measurement.” This 32-page standard was based upon over a dozen US and international measurement standards. Like the Industrial Standard, it offers two measurement methods; an “Exterior Gross” measurement that encompasses only fully enclosed space and a “Construction Gross” measurement that includes, in addition, unenclosed balconies, roof terraces, colonnades, and such. It is intended for application to buildings containing all types of occupancies, and it can be applied to buildings leased to single or multiple tenants.

Next in line for release is “Office Buildings: Standard Methods of Measurement and Calculating Rentable Area.” This will replace the 1996 BOMA “Standard Method of Measuring Floor Area in Office Buildings” and will also offer two optional methods. For those who want to maintain the basic logic of the current standard, a “Legacy Method” is included. For those who dislike the existing “floor-by-floor” calculation of load factors, there will be the option of using a “Single Load Factor Method” that features, as you might expect, a single load factor for all multi-tenant floors of a building. This exciting new method follows practices that have been used for over 20 years but have been previously considered “modified BOMA”. Another “modified BOMA”

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practice that has been incorporated is “External Circulation”, a common feature of buildings in warm climates where the only access to tenant suites is via unenclosed exterior corridors, which could not be measured under the 1996 standard. There are many other new features, definitions and illustrations, all in full color.

The new office standard will be available later this year. In the works are new standards for measurement of retail and multi-unit residential buildings, and down the pike, multi-use buildings. Be sure to check the BOMA Internet Store frequently as you will want to start using these new resources as soon as they become available.

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