



Office Use Occupant Load Calculation

Building Division Interpretations and Procedures

Index Number:	IBC-2021-003
Issue Date:	6/15/21
Code:	2018 IBC
Section:	1004

Background

In the 2018 edition of the International Building Code (IBC), the occupant load factor for general business uses increased from 100 gross to 150 gross. In addition, the IBC now contains section 1004.8 for determining an occupant load for concentrated business areas. This policy is intended to provide clarity for how Bellevue will determine occupant loads for Business Use areas and replaces the previous Conference Room Occupant Load policy (IBC-2019-001).

Occupant load factors are based on use of the space as indicated below.

Note: In some cases, seating plans may be required by the city to determine occupant load.

General business areas shall be taken at an occupant load factor (OLF) of 1:150 gross. Per the IBC definition of “Floor Area, Gross” this shall include all area within the inside perimeter of the exterior walls excluding vent shafts and courts. General business areas include, but are not limited to:

- Open office seating
- Office circulation areas
- Corridors and aisles
- Elevator lobbies
- Small rooms up to 150 square feet used as offices, huddle rooms, or conference rooms.
- Restrooms

Conference Rooms greater than 150 square feet but less than 450 square feet shall be given an OLF as indicated below. This section also applies to huddle rooms, team rooms, break rooms, and similar small assembly areas.

- 1:15 Net for determining egress requirements from the room/space.
- 1:30 Net for contributing to the total occupant load of the floor/tenant space.

Assembly Areas without fixed seats (unconcentrated tables and chairs) shall be taken at an OLF of 1:15 Net. Per the IBC definition of "Floor Area, Net" area deductions can be made for any permanent, built-in furnishings like cabinets, counter tops, or planters. These areas include, but are not limited to:

- Conference rooms greater than 450 square feet
- Kitchenettes/Break rooms greater than 450 square feet
- Assembly/Multipurpose rooms
- Game rooms
- Dining areas
- Occupied roofs/decks

Mechanical and Storage areas may be taken at an OLF of 1:300 gross. These include, but are not limited to:

- Tenant storage spaces
- Server rooms
- Mechanical/elevator rooms
- Janitor closets

Training Rooms and rooms used primarily for education shall be taken at an OLF of 1:20 net. Per the IBC definition of "Floor Area, Net" area deductions can be made for any permanent, built-in furnishings, like cabinets.

Concentrated Business Use areas – Where indicated by the designer, or when the plans indicate densely packed seating, and the number of desks/seats in the business area exceeds the occupant load as calculated above for the total floor/area, the occupant load shall be determined in one of the following ways:

1. Using an OLF of 1:50 for the areas of dense seating on the floor, with other areas calculated as indicated in this policy above. (Note: If the number of desks/seats is higher than this calculated number, the building official may determine a higher OL is required per IBC 1004.5.1)
2. The actual number of seats for the floor/area for the business areas, with other areas calculated as indicated above.
3. Provide supporting documentation to justify the actual occupant load if different from the above items.

Signature Gregg Schrader Date: 06/15/2021
Gregory H. Schrader, PE, SE, Building Official

Attachments Supersedes: IBC-2019-001