



NYC Buildings Department
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BUILDINGS BULLETIN 2013-XXX

Zoning Interpretation

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Purpose: This document is to clarify the extent to which floor space used for mechanical equipment may be excluded from the sum of a building's zoning floor area as defined by Zoning Resolution (ZR) Section 12-10.

Related Code Section(s): ZR 12-10 "floor area" (8)
BSA Cal. No. 315-08-A

Subject(s): Zoning, floor area
Zoning, mechanical equipment
Zoning, mechanical deductions

"Floor Area" is defined within Zoning Resolution (ZR) Section 12-10 as "...the sum of the gross area of the several floors of a building or buildings, measured from the exterior faces of exterior walls or from the center lines of walls separating two buildings...." The definition also provides items that shall not be included as "floor area." Floor space devoted to mechanical equipment, as specified by ZR 12-10 (8) of "floor area," shall not be included as "floor area."

The purpose of this Bulletin is to clarify what types of equipment qualify as "mechanical equipment" as well as establishing size criteria for "floor area" deduction. In doing so, the Department shall interpret that in order for floor space devoted to mechanical equipment to be excluded from "floor area," such equipment must be necessary for the operation of a building or portion thereof and not only to support a particular type of occupancy or use within the building. Please note that this Bulletin does not address ZR 12-10 (2) of "floor area" related to bulkheads, water tanks and cooling towers.

A. Limitations on "floor area" deductions

(1) Floor spaces occupied by the following mechanical equipment may be excluded from "floor area"

- a) Heating, ventilation, air conditioning equipment including, but not limited, to chillers, pumps and heating exchange equipment (HX) except those specified within Part B(1);
- b) Boilers and domestic hot water heating equipment;

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- c) Domestic water pumps and equipment;
- d) Emergency generators and related equipment including automatic transfer switches provided such equipment is used in connection with the occupancy, components, equipment or systems specified in BC Chapter 27, whether required or voluntary;
- e) Uninterrupted power supply (UPS) system supplying emergency back-up power to essential building systems including fire alarm and egress lighting systems;
- f) Fire sprinkler pump and system;
- g) Mechanical shafts including enclosure;
- h) Plumbing and gas pipe risers and chases including enclosure; *
- i) Horizontal piping and ducts lower than 6'-0" above the floor level; *
- j) Chimneys and boiler flues;*
- k) Electrical service panels, conduits, risers, chases and related equipment;
- l) Refuse chutes* (In addition to "refuse disposal room" exclusion where ZR 28-23 is applicable);
- m) Refuse compactor rooms; ~~when not located in the cellar~~ [removed as superfluous]
- n) Tanks including fuel tanks, water storage tanks and storm water retention tanks;
- o) Cogeneration equipment; and
- p) Elevator machine rooms not above roof in a bulkhead.

*See paragraph 2 below

- (2) Floor space directly adjacent to mechanical equipment necessary for the purpose of access and servicing of such equipment (except as otherwise noted in Part C). Such areas shall be determined in accordance with either (a) or (b), unless an asterisk appears after equipment listed above signifying that no adjacent service area can be deducted:
 - a) 1 : 1 ratio of equipment area-to-adjacent service area; or
 - b) Manufacturer's recommendation for accessing and servicing area for a particular equipment item or clearance specified by NYC construction and electrical codes.

B. Floor spaces that must be included as "floor area"

The following items are ~~examples~~ of floor spaces that cannot be deducted from "floor area" and is by no means an exhaustive list. ~~Such examples are provided so that similar instances or circumstances of like kind or character are also included in "floor area."~~

- (1) Spaces containing individual radiators, convectors and air conditioning units (including portable, window box, in-wall or packaged terminal air conditioning units);
- (2) Rooms and/or spaces containing computer servers and related equipment;



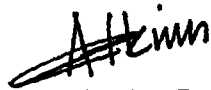
- (3) Rooms and/or spaces containing telecommunication equipment except where such equipment only supports a required emergency voice/alarm communication system (i.e. fire command station) pursuant to BC 907.2.12.2; and
- (4) Rooms and/or spaces containing cable television / broadband equipment.

C. Criteria for excluding incidental, non-occupied floor space from "floor area" for rooms and floors

Notwithstanding floor space that is identified in Paragraph B, if rooms or portions of an open floor layout meet the criteria set forth below, then such rooms or spaces may be excluded from "floor area including interior walls and exterior walls"

- (1) If 90 percent of a room contains floor space that may be excluded by applying Part A(1) and Part A(2) and the remainder of such room is non-occupied, then the entirety of such room, including interior walls, may be excluded from "floor area";
- (2) If 90 percent of an open floor layout (i.e. no partitions) contains floor space that may be excluded by applying Part A(1) and Part A(2) and the remainder of such floor is non-occupied, then the entirety of such open floor, including exterior walls, may be excluded from "floor area"; and
- (3) When a floor is wholly devoted to mechanical space either by applying C(1) or C(2), then the stairwell and elevator shaft at that floor may also be excluded from "floor area" pursuant to BSA Cal. No. 315-08-A.

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