

- Quick Notes -

Residential Square Footage Guidelines

NOTE: Student should download the Residential Square Footage Guidelines as published by the North Carolina Real Estate Commission. This link is available elsewhere in the Student Resource Section.

- Living are, heated living area, and heated square footage are considered interchangeable terms.
- To be considered as heated square footage the area must be:
 - **Heated** by a conventional heating system, not a portable heater.
 - **Finished** with generally accepted finish materials on floor, walls and ceiling.
See later notes regarding ceiling height requirements.
 - **Accessible** from other heated living areas.
- Heated living area is determined by utilizing the exterior dimensions. The thickness of the exterior walls is irrelevant.
- Chimney Rule – If the chimney base is located within the heated living area it is counted. If the chimney is located outside of the heated living area it is not counted but the hearth area does count.
- Stairway Rule – The square footage that is allocated for the stairs is applied to the floor from which they descend. If the stairway opening exceeds the area occupied by the stairs the excess should be deducted. If the opening is the same width as the stairs and the stairs equal or exceed the length of the opening then the stairs should be ignored and calculations should proceed as if no stairs existed.
- Concealed Area – Areas containing ductwork, piping and small utility closets (i.e. hot water heater, electric furnace) should not be deducted. This rule does not apply if the water heater/furnace are in a storage area accessible only from outside or another unheated area.
- Sloped ceiling rule – Room must have at least 50% of floor area with at least seven (7) feet of height. Square footage calculations should only count areas that have a minimum of five (5) feet of height.
 - If a room with a sloped ceiling has a “knee wall” that is at least five (5) feet high the calculations should proceed as though the sloped ceiling did not exist. You would apply the 6” wall thickness as appropriate.
 - If a room with a sloped ceiling has a “knee wall” with less than five (5) feet of height you should determine the point where you would have 5 feet and calculate from that point without adding for 6” thickness of the wall.
- The presumed thickness of an exterior wall is 6” inches

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