



## EL PASO COUNTY SPACE ALLOCATION AND BUILDING STANDARDS POLICY

### SPACE ALLOCATION

The Public Works Department is responsible for the management and allocation of space throughout the County, as approved by Commissioners Court on May 15, 2014.

For the purpose of this policy, "space" includes all offices, suites, courtrooms, meeting rooms, general purpose rooms, public areas, and common areas within a building, assigned by Commissioners Court to a specific department, for the purpose of carrying out the responsibilities of the department. The Public Works Department oversees the process by which space is initially allocated through new construction, and all subsequent allocation, assignment, and designation of space, as well as the renovation, modification, or alteration of existing space. Once space has been allocated and assigned by Commissioners Court, it is managed by the Public Works Department, and remains in effect until changed by order of Commissioners Court.

All requests for the allocation, assignment, designation, renovation, modification, alteration, or expansion of existing space, and any changes thereof, must be processed through the Facilities Management Division of the Public Works Department. No Department Head or Elected Official has the authority to transfer space from their department to another department without following the established process and obtaining Commissioners Court approval.

The Public Works Department has the authority to make appropriate decisions regarding space based on compliance with applicable building codes including fire, plumbing, electrical, accessibility, and all federal, state, and local regulations and ordinances, as well as decisions that impact a building's infrastructure, preservation, value, usefulness, and future occupants.

The Public Works Department has the authority to establish standards and guidelines for new building construction, renovations, alterations, infrastructure, equipment, fixtures, design, color palettes, and quality of products to ensure uniformity, consistency, compatibility, efficiency, sustainability, and longevity of the initial investment. Whenever possible, the Public Works Department will utilize the IFMA/BOMA: A Unified Approach for Measuring Office Space for Use in Facility and Property Management in determining office standards for in-house renovation projects.

The highest priority is placed on the preservation of existing buildings and practicing a conservative approach to expansion, therefore requests for additional space or the renovation of existing spaces will only be considered when all other solutions to the current conditions has been exhausted. Departments Heads and Elected Officials are expected to demonstrate that they have considered other appropriate solutions to alleviate the problem or improve the current environment such as the purchase of technology, furniture, or equipment; addressing inefficient or insufficient storage or archive practices; reducing or eliminating unnecessary equipment or bulky furniture; relocate staffing, making operational changes, or consolidating services; re-designing existing layouts; and/or establishing procedures that limits or reduces redundancy or maximizes efficiencies.

All department heads and elected officials requesting space allocation, assignment, relocation, remodeling, renovating, or otherwise modifying existing space, fixtures, or equipment must submit a **Space Allocation Form** to the Facilities Management Division of the Public Works Department.

**ALL RENOVATION, MODIFICATION, AND ALTERATION TO EXISTING SPACE, FIXTURES, OR EQUIPMENT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, REGARDLESS OF WHERE THE FUNDING COMES FROM.**

**It is never permissible for a Department Head or Elected Official to proceed with a project without authorization because they have adequate funding within their own budget, they are paying for it out of their own pocket, by donation, or because there is no cost to the County.**

The space allocation review process is as follows:

1. Complete the Space Allocation Request Form and submit it to the Facilities Manager. The department is encouraged to submit supplemental information and justification for the review to include pictures, growth statistics, and all efforts that have been made to accommodate the current condition without requesting additional space, or modifying an existing space.
2. Facilities Manager will review the request, which will include:
  - a. Validation of the proposed request for consideration.
  - b. Performing a needs assessment.
  - c. Comparing similar conditions in other offices, within the County, and externally if appropriate.
  - d. Identifying options to resolve current conditions.
  - e. Analyzing operational and organizational impacts.
  - f. Determining short and long terms impacts of project.
  - g. Performing cost analysis and return on investment.
  - h. Determine project execution options, usually in-house vs. outsourcing.
  - i. Develop a timeline and project plan.
  - j. Identifying appropriate funding source.
3. Facilities Manager and Public Works Director will review the assessment and make a formal recommendation that will be presented to CIP or Commissioners Court, as appropriate.
4. Approved projects less than \$500.00 do not require Commissioners Court approval as long as the department has sufficient funds to cover the cost.
5. Approved projects exceeding \$500 requires Commissioners Court approval, regardless of funding source.
  - a. Operational Budget/Special Funds: If the department has sufficient funds to cover the cost of the approved project within their operational budget or special funds, the Public Works Department will present the project to Commissioners Court for approval.
  - b. Capital Improvement Funding: If the department does not have sufficient funding to cover the cost of the approved project, the Public Works Department will present the request to the Capital Improvement Committee for approval. If approved, the project will be submitted to Commissioners Court for approval through the CIP plan.
6. Once project funding is awarded, the Facilities Manager will assist the department in executing the project as appropriate.

## **BUILDING STANDARDS**

It is important to remember that all employees of government are essentially *temporary* occupants of an office and the County has an obligation to itself and its tax payers to ensure responsible decisions are made that will endure for *decades*, not just the number of years one person holds an elected or appointed position.

### **ACCESS CONTROL**

The Facilities Management Department is responsible for access control in all County buildings, as assigned by Commissioners Court. Access control includes mechanical locks, cylinders, keys, padlocks, as well as all electronic locks, access card systems, digital keypads, etc.

No Department Head or Elected Official may install their own locks, change the existing locks, remove locks, rekey, or otherwise alter or modify any lock on any door on County property. All locks must be installed by the Facilities Management Department and all keys will be issued by the Facilities Management Department. If a department installs an unauthorized lock or replaces any lock on County property, the Facilities Management Department will report the incident to the County Sheriff's Department for investigation, the unauthorized lock will be removed, and a County-approved lock will be installed. The Facilities Management Department will seek reimbursement through Commissioners Court for all expenses associated with the lock replacement.

Department Heads and Elected Officials located at leased facilities must comply with the terms of their lease agreement. Once landlord authorization is obtained, the Facilities Management Department will assist the department in changing or installing locks upon request.

The Facilities Management Department shall have a master key and/or set of keys to all County Facilities, with the exception of detention facilities. If an area is considered "high security", the department head or elected official may install an electronic access lock with audit trail, at their expense, however FMD must have an entry code to access the area in case of emergency.

All County departments are required to abide by the County Access and Key Control Policy.

### **SECURITY DEVICES & EQUIPMENT**

The security of government buildings and protecting employees from harm a high priority, and departments are permitted to make improvements to their offices at their own expense. However, it is important that security features do not impede life safety, ADA accessibility standards, or access by the general public where appropriate, therefore all proposed security upgrade plans must be submitted to the Facilities Management Department for pre-approval before purchase. If a department installs a security feature that violates fire code, ADA regulations, or denies access to the general public where inappropriate, the Facilities Department has the authority to remove the equipment or device.

## **OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS**

Departments are prohibited from painting their own offices, replace flooring, remove or install new wall paper, tint windows, replace light fixtures, replacing sinks, plumbing fixtures, increasing the size of refrigerators, removing or replacing built-in cabinets or shelving.

Supplemental office furniture/fixtures brought in to the building by any employees are the sole responsibility of the employee. The Facilities Management Department will not supply expendable items such as batteries or light bulbs for personal items, nor will the items be maintained, repaired or cleaned at County expense. Upon end of employment, the employee is solely responsible for removing all personal items brought in and large items may not be disposed of in County waste containers at County expense.

All County employees are expected to respect the government property provided to them to perform their duties and take care not to cause unnecessary damage or neglect. Employees have a personal responsibility to clean up after themselves and take appropriate care to maintain their offices and equipment in good condition.

All County employees are responsible for cleaning the following areas within their departments:

1. Dusting employee desks, cubicles, and cubicles, and shelving.
2. Office equipment, i.e. computers, copiers, printers, fax machines, phones, etc.
3. Microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, dishes, kitchen cabinets/drawers, and break tables.
4. All personal decorative items, plants, figurines, and wall mountings.

## **FURNITURE, FIXTURES, & EQUIPMENT**

The County Purchasing Department is responsible for the inventory and asset management of all furniture, fixtures and equipment. While the Facilities Management Department is not responsible for FF&E assigned to specific departments, there is sometimes a logistical overlap that is addressable in the context of Building Standards.

All departments are required to return unwanted or broken furniture they no longer want through County Purchasing. It is never acceptable to abandon unwanted furniture in hallways, stairwells, lobbies, or other public places. Departments may not trade, exchange, or give their furniture to another department. If Departments are moving from one location to another, they must notify County Purchasing to determine what furniture will move with them and what furniture will stay. The Facilities Management Department will not move furniture from one location to another without authorization from Purchasing.

## **SPACE HEATERS**

Space heaters are **prohibited** for personal use in County offices. Not only do space heaters pose a serious fire hazard, the use of space heaters sends a false reading to the thermostat that the area is warm, thereby forcing the air conditioner to work harder and consume more energy to cool an area. Any space heater found by maintenance staff during the course of their normal work will be confiscated and held at the Facilities Management office on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor. Employees have five days to pick up their heaters and take them home. Any heater not picked up within three days will be disposed of.

## **WALL MOUNTINGS**

In order to preserve the County's walls and ensure that the appropriate hardware is used, all County departments must go through the Facilities Management Department to have items mounted on the wall. The use of tape or any other type of adhesive on walls, doors, and granite is prohibited. Departments located at leased facilities shall abide by the terms of their lease agreement in regard to mounting items on the wall.

## **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS / POSTINGS**

The posting of flyers, posters, advertisements, announcements, propaganda, decorations, or any form of written or graphic communication is prohibited within interior public lobbies, elevators, hanging from light fixtures or ceiling tile grids. Departments should avoid taping items to wood doors, wall paper, and painted surfaces.

The posting of flyers, posters, advertisements, announcements, propaganda, decorations, or any form of written or graphic communication is prohibited on exterior building surfaces, doors, trees, plants, bushes, planter containers, fire hydrants, building signage, etc.

Due to the high volume of traffic at the security checkpoint, announcements may not be displayed on the skywalk.

Unauthorized postings found in the building will be removed by the Facilities Management Department.

Only County departments and elected County officials may utilize public lobby space to set up an easel, exhibit, or any form of display or information booth for a limited period of time.

In general, the use of lobby space to make public announcements of County or government-related business does not require approval by Commissioners Court.

All non-county related displays or activities must contact the Facilities Management Department for prior approval, and are subject to Commissioners Court approval.