

INFORMATION
BULLETIN

146

April 2022

School Fees

The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to explain how the City of San Diego determines the assessable space for residential buildings and chargeable covered and enclosed space for commercial or industrial buildings for the purpose of assessing school fees. School fees are charged per Section 65995 of the California Government Code as authorized under Section 17620 of the Education Code.

I. Definitions

- A. Construction is defined as new construction and reconstruction of existing building for residential, commercial or industrial facilities.
- B. Building area is defined as the area included within surrounding exterior walls (or exterior walls and fire walls) exclusive of vent shafts and courts. Areas of the building not provided with surrounding walls shall be included in the building area if such areas are included within the horizontal projection of the roof or floor above. The area within the thickness of exterior walls is included in the calculation of the building area.

II. Residential Construction

For residential single-family and multi-dwelling unit construction, the school fee is determined based on the assessable space. The California Government Code defines the assessable space as all of the square footage within the perimeter of a residential structure, not including any carport, walkway, garage, overhang, patio, enclosed patio, detached accessory structure or similar area. The assessable space is determined by calculating the building area for the building under consideration, excluding the following areas:

- A. Balcony, Deck, Patio (enclosed, unenclosed), Porch
- B. Carport, Garage
- C. Court
- D. Exterior exit balcony (per California Building Code, Chapter 10)
- E. Gazebo
- F. Laundry room (detached)
- G. Pool equipment room (detached)
- H. Shaft Floor Opening (elevator, vent, trash chute, dumbwaiter)
- I. Shed or Storage room (detached)
- J. Solarium
- K. Swimming pool, shower, spa (detached- outdoor/indoor)
- L. Utility room not within building envelope (cable, electric, gas and telephone services)
- M. Unenclosed ground floor walkways

III. Commercial or Industrial Construction

For commercial or industrial (non-residential) construction, the school fee is determined based on the chargeable covered and enclosed space. The California Government Code defines the chargeable covered and enclosed space as the covered and enclosed space determined to be within the perimeter of a commercial or industrial structure, not including any storage areas incidental to the principal use of the construction, garage, parking structure, unenclosed walkway, or utility or disposal area.

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The California Government Code further states that commercial or industrial construction includes, but is not limited to, any hotel, inn, motel, tourist home or other lodging for which the maximum term of occupancy does not exceed 30 days, but does not include any residential hotel. Residential hotel is defined as any building containing six or more guest rooms or efficiency (dwelling) units, intended or designed to be used, or which are used, rented, or hired out, to be occupied, or which are occupied, for sleeping purposes by guests, which is also the primary residence of those guests. The chargeable covered and enclosed space is determined by calculating the building area for the building under consideration, excluding the following areas:

- A. Court
- B. Disposal area
- C. Equipment room (housing mechanical / electrical equipment providing service to the building)
- D. Exterior exit balcony (per California Building Code, Chapter 10)
- E. Garage, Parking structure
- F. Shaft Floor Opening (elevator, vent, trash chute, dumbwaiter)
- G. Storage (incidental to the principal use)
- H. Utility room (cable, electric, gas and telephone services)
- I. Unenclosed walkways

IV. Mixed Residential and Commercial Occupancies

Where the building is a mixed occupancy and includes both residential and commercial/industrial occupancies, the school fees shall be based on the summation of assessable space for the residential occupancy and, chargeable covered and enclosed space for the commercial/industrial (non-residential) occupancy. In multi-family residential facilities, spaces such as the leasing office, laundry rooms, recreation rooms, exercise rooms, or similar spaces which are incidental uses of the residential occupancy, are considered as assessable space.

V. Change of Occupancy

Where the occupancy classification of a space is changed to residential occupancy from commercial/industrial (non-residential) occupancy, the school fees shall be considered as assessable space for the residential occupancy.

VI. Residential Care Facility for the Elderly

Any development project for the new construction of senior citizen housing, a residential care facility for the elderly, or a multilevel facility (residential facility with an intermediate care facility, a skilled nursing facility, or a general acute care hospital) for the elderly, is subject to the limits and conditions applicable in the case of commercial or industrial development.

VII. Phasing of Permits (Partial Permits)

When the applicant proposes to phase the construction of a development, the school fees shall be paid upon issuance of the permit for the first phase that includes the building, such as frame. The chargeable square footage will be reconfirmed and may be adjusted on future phases of the project.

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VIII. Exclusions

The following facilities are exempt:

- A. Any facility used exclusively for religious purposes that is thereby exempt from property taxation under California law.
- B. Any facility used exclusively as a private full-time day school as described in Section 48222 of the California Education Code.
- C. Any facility that is owned and occupied by one or more agencies of federal, state, or local government.
- D. Residential construction with a resulting increase in assessable space that does not exceed 500 square feet. (California Education Code, Section 17620(a)(1)(C)).

IX. School Fee Credit and Exemptions

The City will report to the appropriate school district the applicable assessable space or, the chargeable covered and enclosed space for the new development in accordance with this bulletin. When the scope of development includes demolition of an existing building in its entirety, and a Demolition Permit is issued, the school fee is based on the new construction of the assessable space or chargeable covered and enclosed space, as applicable. Credits of the school fees for the demolished building may be issued by the appropriate school district. When the scope of development includes demolition of portion of an existing building, the school fee is based on the net increase in area of the assessable space or chargeable covered and enclosed space, as applicable. Issues concerning credits, exemptions, or adjustment of school fees shall be addressed directly to the appropriate school district by the applicant.

X. School Fee Rate

The City of San Diego determines assessable space for residential buildings, and chargeable covered and enclosed space for commercial or industrial buildings (non-residential), for the purpose of assessing school impact fees. The fee amounts are calculated by and paid to the appropriate high school and elementary school districts, or unified school district.

To calculate the fee, the school district will need a City of San Diego Approval Report which documents the chargeable square footage. This report may be printed from the Permit online by logging in to your Online Permitting Account. The chargeable square footage breakdown for Residential/Non-Residential is displayed in the approval information scope and is shown as "(SC SF R/NR: XXXX/XXXX)." For questions about your user account or assistance with getting the report, contact 619-446-5000.

Please contact the applicable school district (s), www.sdcoe.net/schools/finder for instruction on paying school fees. For San Diego Unified School District, refer to <https://sandiegounified.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=27732478&pageId=28486210>

Once the school fees are paid, you will need to digitally upload a receipt or Certificate of Compliance from the respective school district (s) to your [Online Permitting Account](#) at the time of Permit Issuance.

Reference Table

- **California Government Code, Section 65995**

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