



Guide to the Residential Measurement Standard in Alberta



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The Residential Measurement Standard is for real estate professionals authorized by the Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA) when measuring residential properties.

RECA would like to thank UrbanMeasure Inc. for many of the diagrams in this Guide.

Disclaimer

This Guide does not include every possible residential measurement situation.

The Real Estate Council of Alberta may periodically update the Residential Measurement Standard. To obtain the current version of the Guide to the Residential Measurement Standard, please visit the RECA website at www.reca.ca.



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Introduction To The Residential Measurement Standard (RMS)

APPLYING THE RMS

The Residential Measurement Standard (RMS) comprises the principles that real estate professionals licensed by the Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA) must follow when measuring residential properties to arrive at the RMS area. The RMS area of a property is the sum of its above grade levels.

A residential property includes:

- any property intended for residential use consistent with the land on which it is located
- any residential property regardless of whether it is detached, semi-detached, or attached
- any residential property containing up to four dwelling premises
- any residential property that may be part of a rural property, such as a farm or ranch

The RMS does not apply when real estate professionals measure non-residential properties, such as commercial, industrial, or retail premises.

BENEFITS OF THE RMS

Property measurement is the process of identifying and quantifying the physical area of a property. A measurement standard is a consistent methodology to determine an area. Such standards are based on transparent, uniform principles and protocols.

A measurement standard gives consumers and industry professionals accurate and consistent property measurements, which they can use to compare properties and determine their suitability.

The RMS benefits all consumers and licensees that rely on the accuracy of residential property measurements because:

- real estate licensees need accurate and comparable property measurements
- sellers want their property size accurately described
- buyers want to ensure the property size meets their needs
- landlords want to accurately describe their rental property's size
- tenants want accurate information regarding their leased space size
- lenders take into consideration a residential property's size when evaluating the property as security for the loan

This Guide explains the RMS and provides a resource for real estate professionals when measuring residential properties in Alberta.

RMS DEVELOPMENT

When developing the RMS, RECA reviewed the residential measurement standards that other Canadian jurisdictions use. RECA also consulted with stakeholder groups interested in residential property measurement. RECA considered the challenges and complexities of measuring the various types and styles of residential properties, including what is measurable and what measurements are objectively verifiable. These considerations led RECA to develop the RMS principles. As a result, the RMS applies to all residential properties and resolves measurement constraints and unique situations without affecting data reliability.

PRINCIPLES-BASED STANDARD

Consistent with RECA's Statement on Self-Regulation, RECA developed the RMS using a principles-based approach. This approach enables real estate licensees and the public to understand the intent and spirit of the RMS. The principles-based approach also enables real estate licensees to explain to clients how real estate licensees measure residential properties. The RMS relies on clear and precise principles that real estate licensees must apply consistently.

Proper application of the RMS ensures real estate licensees provide reliable and verifiable property size and dimensions. This discussion between the real estate licensees and the client informs clients about the RMS. The discussion also is essential for the licensee to act in the client's best interests.





Discussing The RMS With Clients

Real estate licensees must make every effort to ensure their clients understand the RMS and its implications. They must discuss the RMS with clients so the client can make an informed decision about property size and measurements. A thorough and documented discussion between real estate licensees and clients fulfills the real estate licensees' fiduciary obligations.

The correlation between a property's size and its asking price or selling price should be a key component of a discussion about price. Some sellers and buyers may think there is a direct correlation and proportional relationship between the sale price and the size of the property, but this is often not the case. The precise correlation depends on the specific circumstances of the transaction.

When sellers list their residential property for sale, they may think size is the only factor affecting the asking price. As a result, they may want to set the asking price exclusively based on the size of comparable properties. However, sellers and their real estate licensees must consider the other factors that differentiate the comparable properties from the seller's.

When buyers purchase newly built residential properties, there is often a direct and proportional correlation between the property size and sale price. This correlation is based on the dollar amount per square foot of the builder's costs. Thus, builders often base their asking and/or sale price directly on the property size.

When buyers purchase resale residential properties, there is often a correlation between the property size and the sale price, but the correlation is not proportional. The property's size is only one of many factors that influence the sale price. Other factors include the property's location, layout, style, modernization, finishing, amenities, etc. While some buyers are concerned with property size, others make their price decisions on multiple variables that may determine the property's suitability. Small size differences between properties may not affect the sale price.

Real estate licensees have a duty to explain the correlation between property size and price to their buyer clients. As property size is critical to some buyers, their real estate licensee needs to advise them of their options to address any property size concerns. These could include measuring the property prior to submitting an offer to purchase or adding a measurement condition in the offer to confirm the property size is as represented.

Although buyers typically purchase resale properties based on multiple variables, in the absence of a size-to-price ratio discussion buyers will assume a direct and proportional size-to-price correlation. Most civil actions relating to property size assume a direct and proportional size-to-price correlation and seek damages based on a ratio relating to the difference between the represented size and the actual property size.

Consider the following: a buyer purchased a residence represented as 2,000 sq. feet for \$500,000. She then realizes it was only 1,900 sq. feet. She argues she paid \$250 per sq. foot ($\$500,000/2,000$ sq. feet). Therefore, she claims \$25,000 for the 100 sq. feet she did not get (100 feet at \$250 a sq. foot). This may not have happened if the buyer's representative had discussed the relationship between size and price and sought her direction.

A real estate licensee's best way to reduce civil liability associated with property size discrepancies is to:

- measure properties using the RMS
- ensure their clients understand the relationship between property size and price
- document these discussions with the client

DUE DILIGENCE FOR SELLER REPRESENTATIVES

Real estate licensees representing sellers must explain the relationship between property size and price, the role of the RMS, what it entails, and information such as above grade and below grade measurements. They should also be able to answer any measurement-related questions the seller may have about their property.

Real estate licensees must discuss the following with the seller:

- the relationship between property size and asking price
- the RMS:
 - what is included and excluded in the measurements
 - how licensees take measurements and calculate them
 - how size descriptors in marketing materials must follow the RMS
- if the property is a condominium:
 - the difference between the RMS area and the condominium unit registered size
 - what is included and excluded in the RMS area
 - what is included and excluded in the condominium unit registered size
- sellers are not required to represent the size of their property, however:
 - property size is often important to buyers and other real estate professionals
 - the listing service/property database may have a mandatory property size field
- if the seller wants to represent the size of their property, they need to use the RMS
 - sellers and their professionals may

- provide additional information, if it's not misleading and it meets RMS requirements
- if the real estate licensee will measure the seller's property or engage another qualified person to measure it based on the RMS and who will pay the cost

DUE DILIGENCE FOR BUYER REPRESENTATIVES

Real estate professionals representing buyers must explain the relationship between property size and price, the measurement the seller is representing, what it entails, and information such as above grade and below grade measurements.

Buyers should be aware that many residential purchase contracts contain clauses placing the onus on the buyer to verify the property size. Real estate professionals must advise the buyer that if property size is important to them, they may want to verify the size, rather than relying on the represented size.

If the buyer wants to verify the measurements, their real estate licensee must explain that they can hire a property measurement company, or the buyer and their real estate licensee can measure the property together. If the buyer wants to hire a measurement company, the real estate licensee should discuss with the buyer whether this should occur before an offer to purchase or as a condition of their offer, and who will pay the cost for this service.

Real estate licensees must discuss the following with the buyer:

- how property size factors into the buyer's decision to purchase
- the relationship between property size and selling price
- the RMS:
 - what is included and excluded in the measurements
 - how licensees will take measurements and calculate them
- if the property is a condominium:
 - the difference between the RMS area and the condominium unit registered size
 - what is included and excluded in the RMS area
 - what is included and excluded in the condominium unit registered size
- the buyer's options to determine property size, and their instructions



Key RMS Definitions

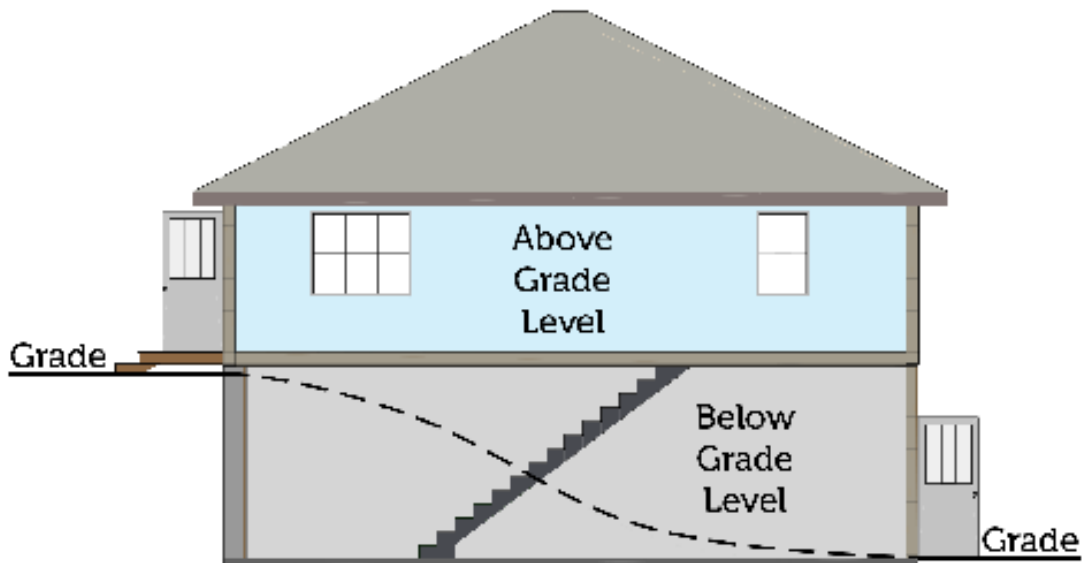
Grade: Grade is the level of the ground around the exterior of the residence. The grade can be horizontal, sloped, or a combination of both. In Alberta, most residential properties contain above grade and below grade areas. Real estate licensee professionals must be able to distinguish between them in order to measure residential properties in accordance with the RMS.

Levels: Levels are areas of the residence that are in the same horizontal plane. A level must meet the minimum ceiling height requirements to be counted towards the RMS calculation.

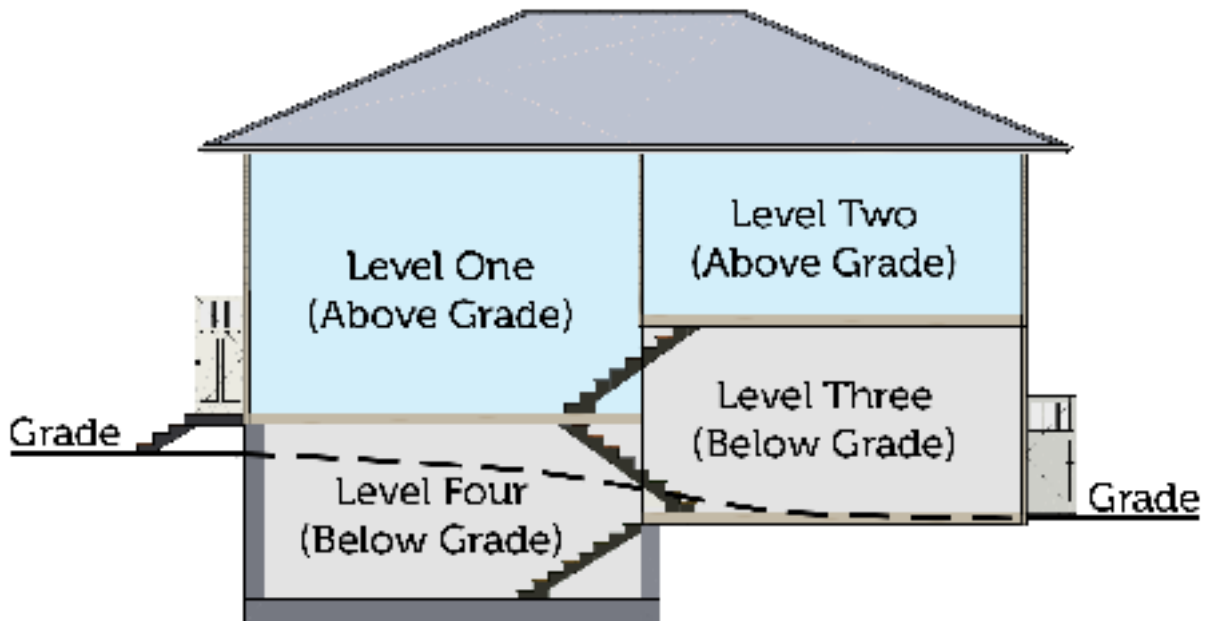
Above Grade Levels: Above grade levels are the levels of a residence that are entirely above grade. The RMS area of a residence is the sum of its above grade floor levels.

Below Grade Levels: Below grade levels are the floor levels of a residence that are partly or fully below grade. If any portion of the level is below grade, the entire level is below grade. Below grade spaces include lower levels and basements. Below grade levels are not included in the RMS area. Examples of residential styles with lower levels include raised bungalows, bi-levels, split levels, and properties with walkout or walk-up basements.

EXAMPLES OF BELOW GRADE LEVELS



Example: the total above grade area of this bungalow only includes the main level because the walkout basement is partly below grade.



Example: the total above grade area of this 4-level split only includes the top 2 levels because the 2 lower levels are partly below grade.

Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.



The Residential Measurement Standard (RMS)

Real estate professionals need to know which areas of a residential property to measure and how to measure them using the RMS. The following information explains the high-level principles on which RECA bases the RMS. These principles guide real estate professionals when measuring residential properties and when advising their clients about what these measurements represent.

RMS PRINCIPLES

1. Real estate professionals must use the RMS.
2. Identify if the measurement system is metric or imperial, and apply it consistently. Measurements must be calculated to within 2% of the RMS size.
3. For detached properties, measure the property using the exterior wall at the foundation.
4. For semi-detached and townhouse properties, measure the property using the exterior wall at the foundation. If the thickness of the demising wall(s) cannot be determined the thickness of an exterior wall shall be used.
5. For apartment style condominiums, measure the interior perimeter walls (paint-to-paint) at floor level. An additional area representation may be made assuming exterior measurements.
6. Include floor levels that are entirely above grade and exclude floor levels if any portion is below grade. Below grade levels may be measured, but the area must not be included in the RMS area.
7. Include all additions to the main structure and conversions of above grade areas within the structure if they are weatherproof and suitable for year-round use.
8. The property must have a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of 2.13 metres (7 feet). If the ceiling is sloped, the area with a floor-to-ceiling height of at least 1.52 metres (5 feet) is included in the RMS area, provided there is a ceiling height of 2.13 metres (7 feet) somewhere in the room.
9. Include extensions from the main structure that have a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of 1.5 metres (5 feet), such as cantilevers, bay and bow windows, and dormers.
10. Exclude open areas that have no floor, such as vaulted areas.

RMS PRINCIPLE 1

Real estate licensees must use the RMS.

When a seller wants to communicate the size of their residence to potential buyers, or a buyer wants to measure a residence they may consider purchasing, their real estate professional must communicate the RMS area.

Real estate licensees may engage persons to calculate the RMS area of a property, such as property measurement companies or real estate appraisers. If the real estate licensee engages a person to measure the property, the real estate licensee must ensure the person is able to competently measure the property using the RMS. To determine if a person can competently measure a residence using the RMS, the real estate licensee may ask them the following information:

- the person's familiarity with the RMS
- how were they/their staff trained in the RMS
- the number of properties they/their staff measured using the RMS
- the equipment, processes, and software they use to calculate the RMS
- references from other real estate professionals who have used their service

Real estate licensees are responsible for all property measurement representations. If a real estate licensee is not interested in measuring the residence, they may discuss with the seller engaging a measurement service and who will bear the cost. Regardless of who pays for the property measurement, the real estate licensee must be the individual engaging the person or measurement service in order to ensure the person engaged measures the residence using the RMS. In addition, the real estate professionals should ensure the person or service has Errors and Omissions (E&O) insurance regarding their measurement activities.

If it is not possible to measure the residence (e.g. the residence is not yet built or access is denied due to a difficult tenant or a difficult foreclosure), the real estate professional may deviate from measuring the property using the RMS provided:

- the measurements represented do not imply they are in accordance with the RMS
- they include an explanation as to why the property could not be measured using the RMS
- they must apply the RMS to blueprints
- they must disclose the measurement methodology used (i.e. area size calculated by applying the RMS to the blueprints provided by the builder)

Example: a real estate licensee is representing a builder who wants to sell a not-yet-built residence. The measurement representation may be as follows:

Builder/Seller will build a 220 sq. metre residence. The area size was determined by applying the RMS to the blueprints.

RMS PRINCIPLE 2

Identify if the measurement system is metric or imperial, and apply it consistently. Measurements must be calculated to within 2% of the RMS size.

Property measurements must indicate the measurement system used (metric or imperial) and licensees must take all measurements for a particular property using the same system. The real estate licensee must decide, in consultation with the seller or buyer, which measurement system is appropriate. A key factor in determining which measurement system to use is which system the applicable listing service or property database uses.

Measurement errors are less likely to occur if the real estate professional uses one measurement system, and only converts the final calculation to a different measurement system, if needed. (See Appendix 3 for measurement conversion tables).

While the RMS provides a 2% tolerance, real estate licensees must attempt to measure the property accurately.

Report the RMS size to the nearest 0.1 square metre or the nearest whole square foot.



RMS PRINCIPLE 3

For detached properties, measure the property using the exterior wall at the foundation.

Real estate licensees must take the measurements at the outside of the foundation.

Example: measure the exterior wall at the foundation.

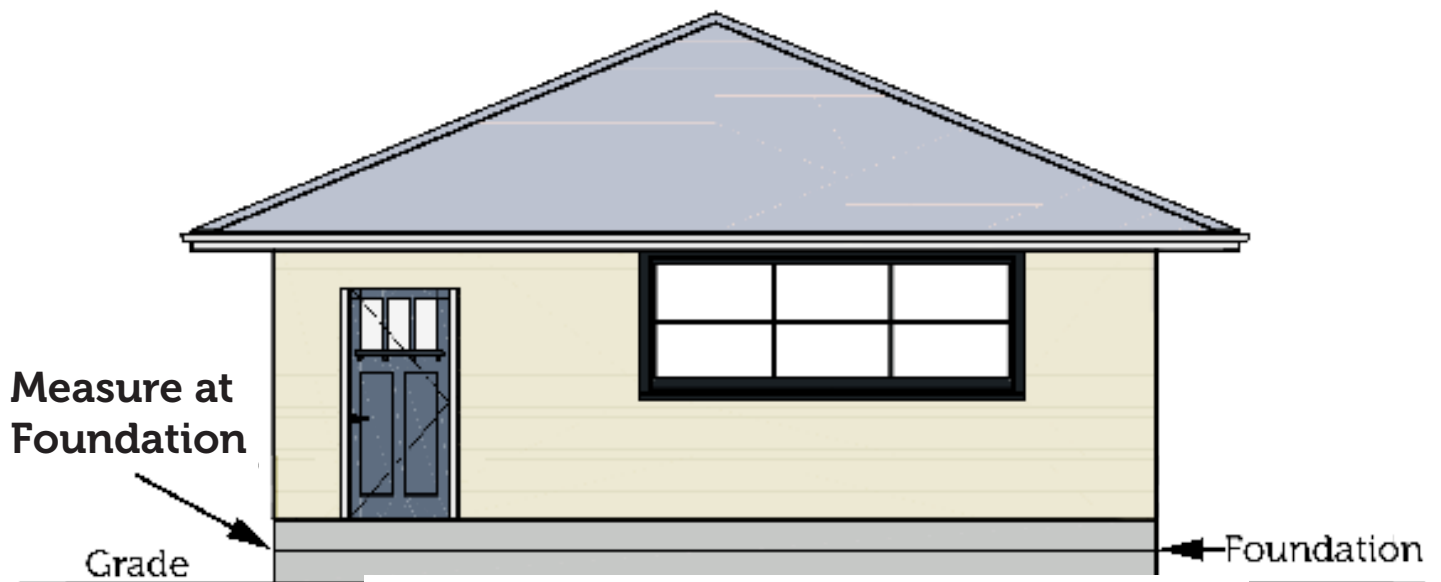


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

The real licensee may encounter circumstances where direct measurement of the exterior wall at the foundation is not possible due to the terrain, structures, landscaping, or other obstacles. When this occurs, real estate professionals may extrapolate exterior measurements by measuring the interior surface of the perimeter walls and adding the exterior wall thickness. Real estate licensees can extrapolate the exterior wall thickness using the thickness of exterior door or window casings.

Real estate licensees can extrapolate exterior measurements as long as they disclose how they extrapolated the measurements. As property measurements developed using indirect means may be less accurate, real estate licensees must include a declaration describing how they extrapolated the exterior measurements of the property.

Example: obstacles along the foundation of this property make it impossible to take some exterior measurements at the foundation.

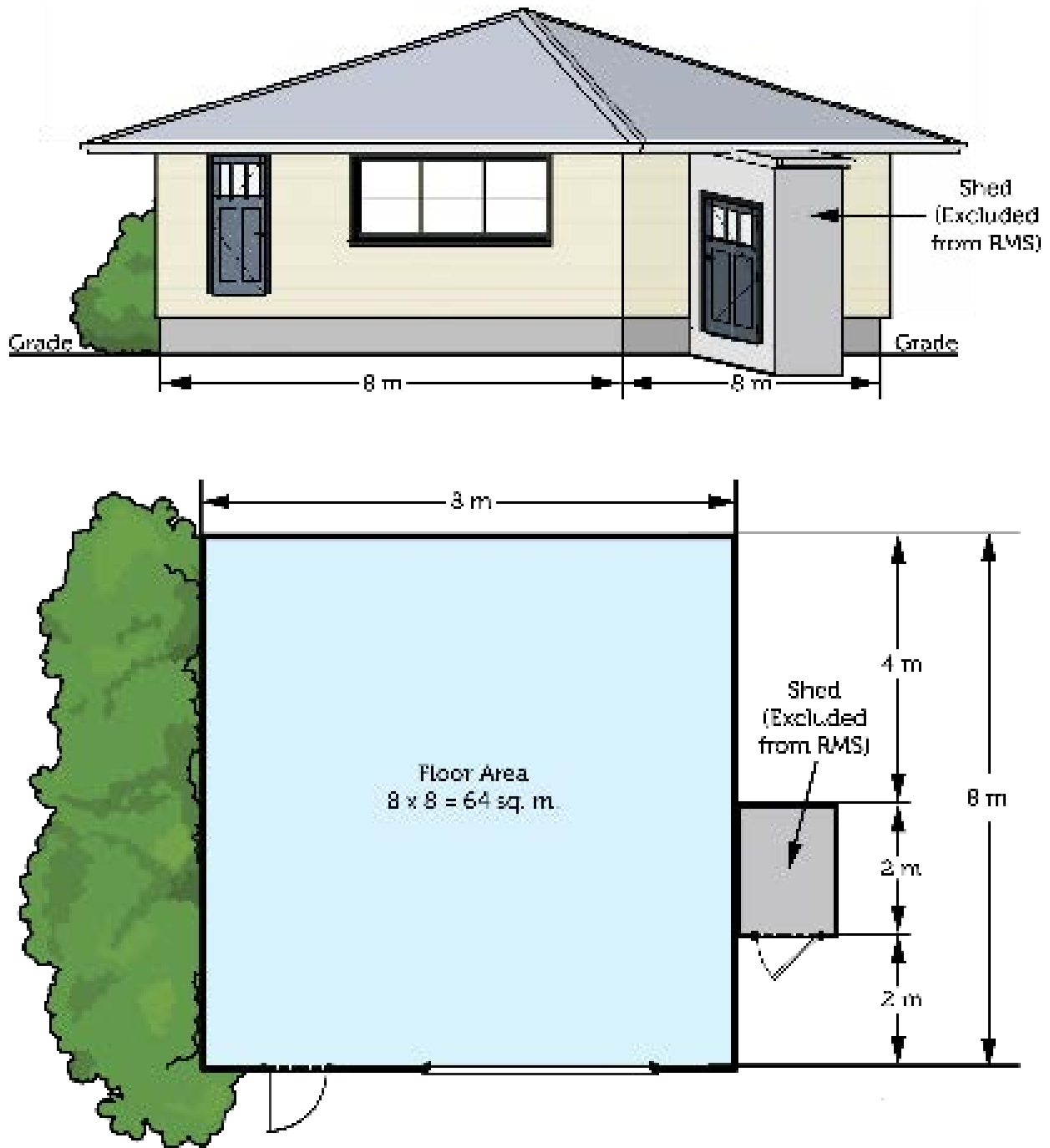
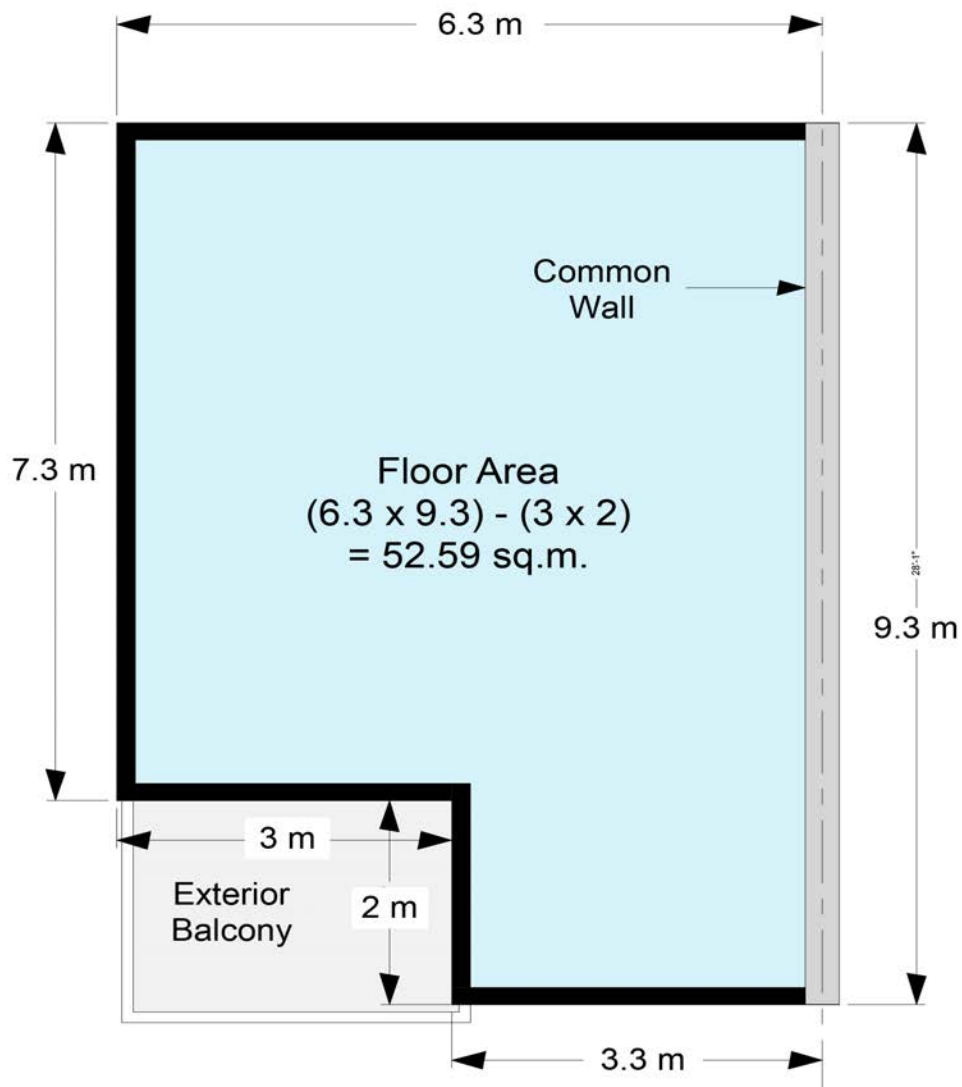


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

RMS PRINCIPLE 4

For semi-detached and townhouse properties, measure the property using the exterior wall at the foundation. If the thickness of the demising wall(s) cannot be determined the thickness of an exterior wall shall be used

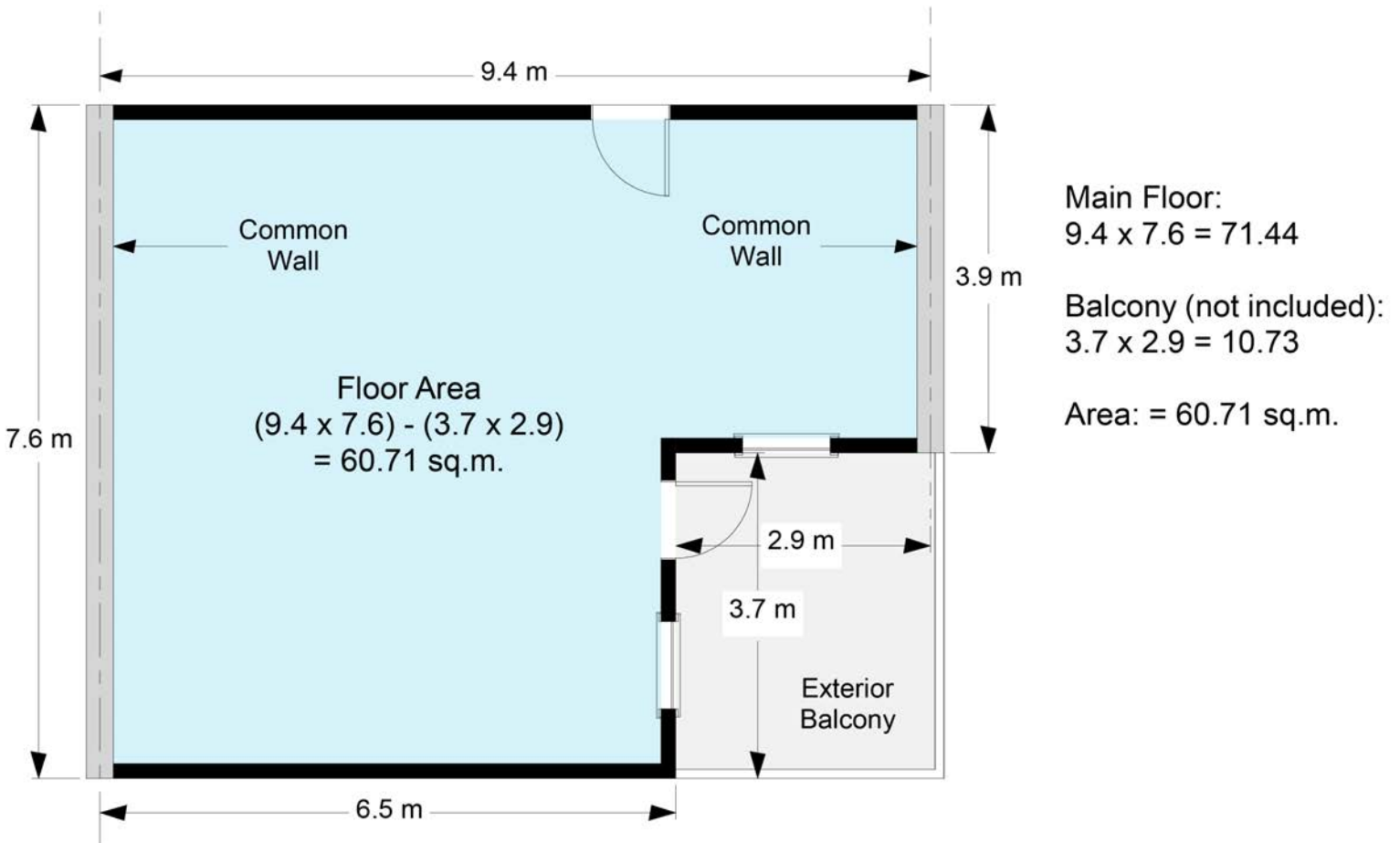
Common walls separate attached and semi-detached properties. People often refer to common walls as party walls or demising walls. Examples include semi-detached and townhouses. Real estate licensees must measure the above grade exterior foundation walls.



Sellers and/or buyers may want to compare their property to other detached, semi-detached, or attached properties. It is easy to compare these three styles of residential properties as all are measured using the exterior measurements to establish the square footage.

Principle 4 applies regardless of whether the property ownership is fee simple or condominium. If the property is a condominium, real estate professionals must not confuse the RMS area with the condominium unit's registered size. For a detailed explanation, see the RMS Area and Condominium Unit Registered Size section of this Guide.

Example: how to measure an attached townhouse using the interior surface of the perimeter walls. Although the balcony is covered, it is not suitable for year-round use. Therefore, real estate licensees must exclude it from the total above grade floor area (explained in Principle 7).

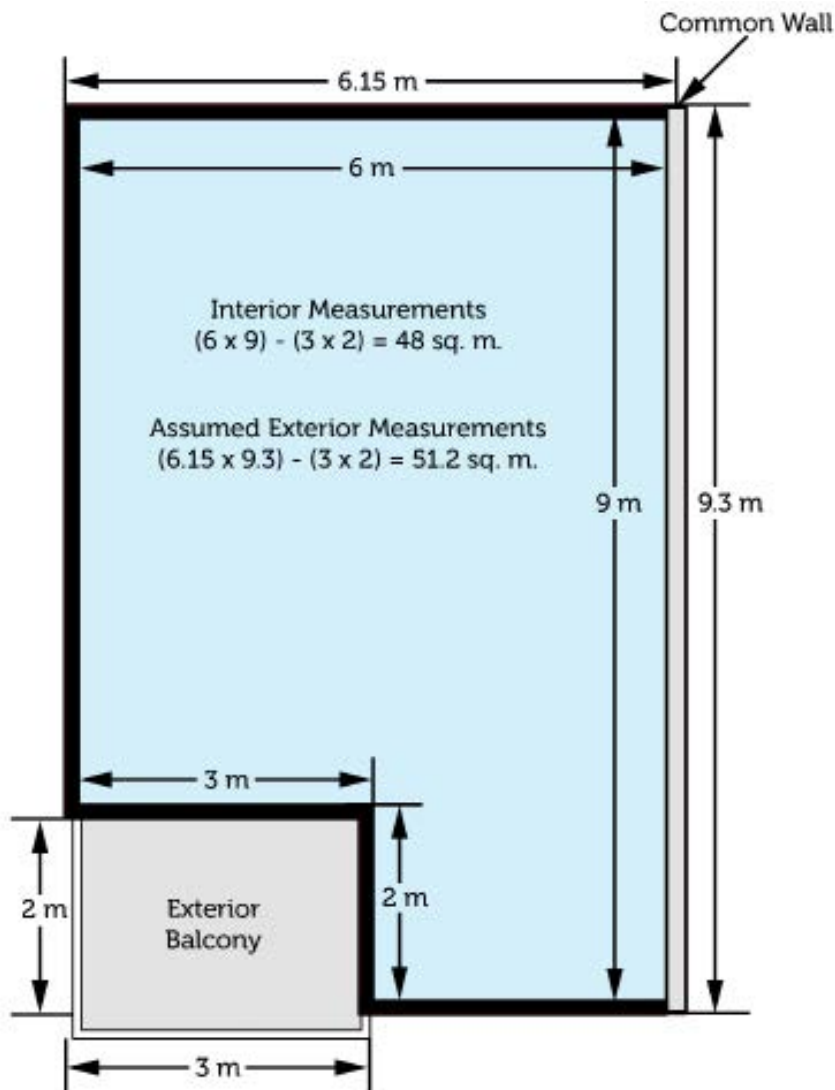


RMS PRINCIPLE 5

For apartment style condominiums, measure the interior perimeter walls (paint-to-paint) at floor level. An additional area representation may be made assuming exterior measurements.

Common walls separate attached properties. People often refer to common walls as party walls or demising walls. Real estate licensees must measure the above grade levels of properties with common walls from the interior surface of the opposing exterior walls. This may be known as taking paint-to-paint measurements.

Example: a licensee measured the attached condominium and determined the exterior door casings were 15 cm thick and added 0.15 metres to the area. The licensee then describes the RMS area as 48 sq. metres and states that, assuming a wall thickness of 0.15 metres, the exterior measurement is 51.2 sq. metres.



Sellers and/or buyers may want to compare their property to other attached properties. It can be difficult to compare measurements, as the RMS requires detached properties to be measured differently than attached properties.

To compare different types of residential properties, real estate licensees can provide an additional measurement that includes the property's exterior. Real estate licensees must base this additional measurement on reasonable assumptions about the exterior wall thickness. Real estate licensees can extrapolate the exterior wall thickness from the thickness of the exterior door casings and/or exterior window casings. If real estate licensees provide additional measurements based on exterior assumptions, they must make it clear that it is not the RMS area for the property and explain their assumptions. The assumed exterior measurements allow consumers to compare the different types of residential properties.

Real estate licensees must not confuse the RMS area with the condominium unit's registered size. For a detailed explanation, see the RMS Area and Condominium Unit Registered Size section of this Guide.

RMS PRINCIPLE 6

Include floor levels that are entirely above grade and exclude floor levels if any portion is below grade. Below grade levels may be measured, but the area must not be included in the RMS area.

Real estate licensees calculate the RMS area by adding the floor area of all levels of the residence that are completely above grade. Stairs leading to a level above ground are exempt from the application of this Principle. The Guide discusses stairs in more detail in Principle 10.

Example: this bungalow with a walkout basement must only include the 95 sq. metres above grade area in the RMS area.

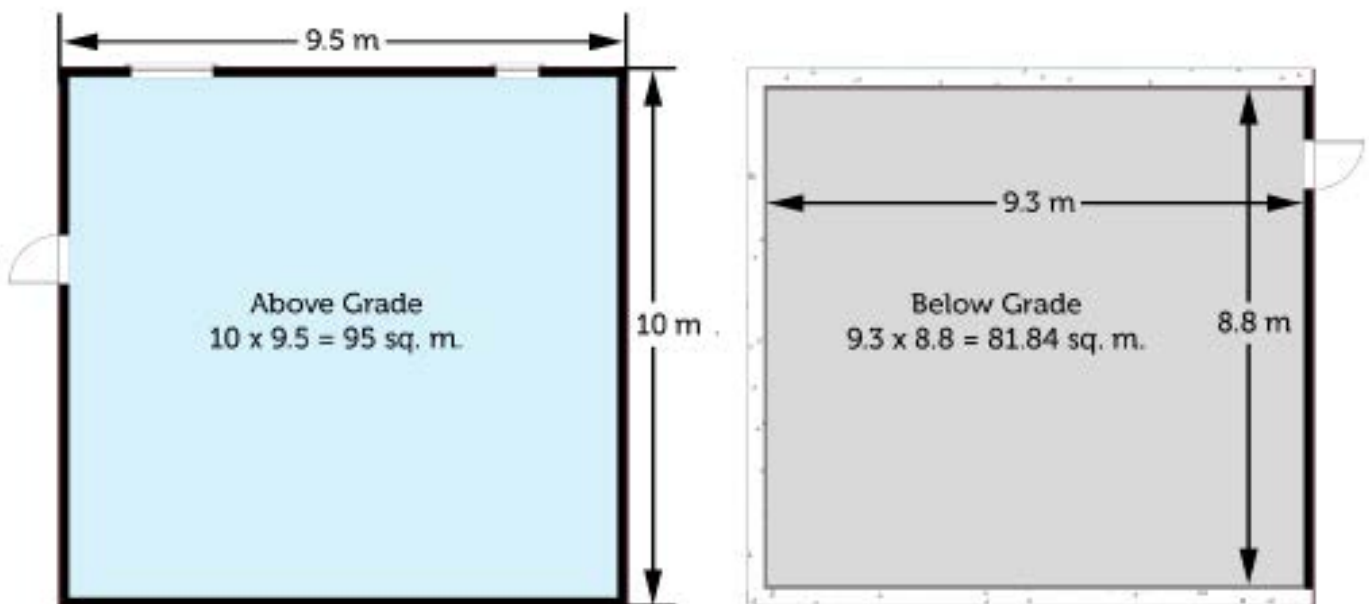
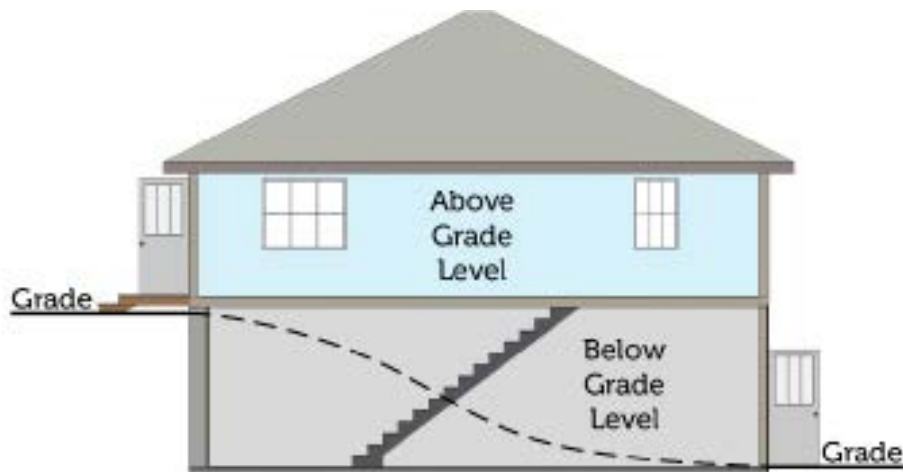
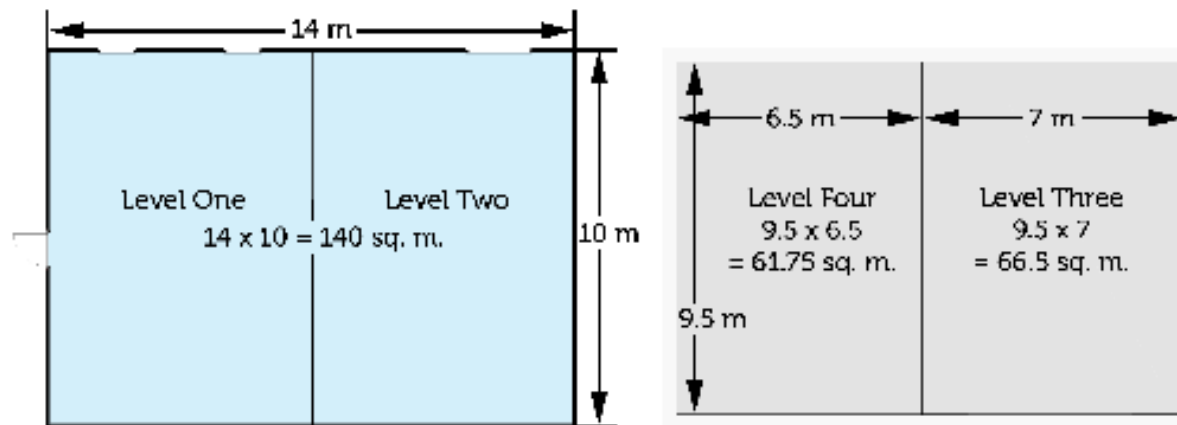
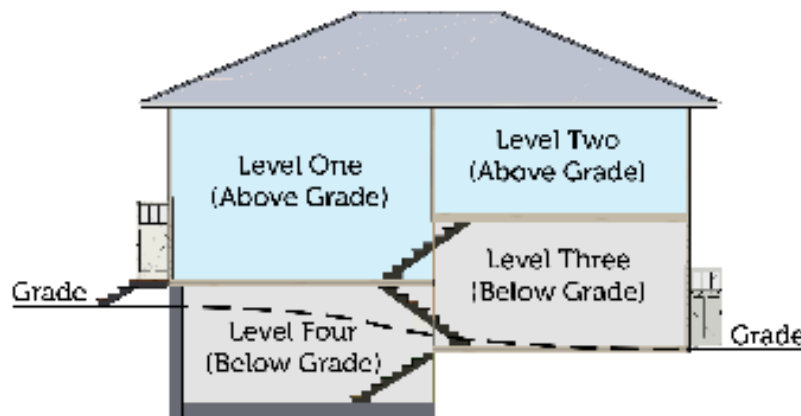


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

Below grade levels typically add value to a property. Although real estate licensees exclude below grade levels in the RMS area, they may measure and communicate below grade levels, including utility or mechanical areas, separately from the RMS area, provided:

- the below grade area was measured using the Below Grade Measurement Standard (Appendix 4)
- the communication clearly indicates the area measurements are for below grade levels
- any representation of finished vs. unfinished space must not be misleading
- they include a disclosure statement if the below grade area does not meet the minimum 2.13 metres (7 feet) ceiling height requirement (discussed in Principle 7)

Example: how to measure the above grade levels of a 4-level split. Because the developed 3rd and 4th levels are partly below grade, real estate licensees must exclude these levels from the RMS area.



Some properties are entirely below grade. However, some listing professionals to represent an above grade area. To allow for this, the real estate professional may enter the area of the level closest to grade with a clarification that all of the property is below grade.

Property with unusual grades can be challenging to market. The seller's real estate licensee should discuss including additional descriptive information with the seller to ensure buyers understand the property.

Example: a real estate licensee may make the representation, "70 sq. metre 4-level split with 201.75 sq. metres of additional space on 3 below grade levels. The first below grade level is only one foot below grade and the second below grade level is a walkout. Total above and below grade living area is 271.75 sq. metres."

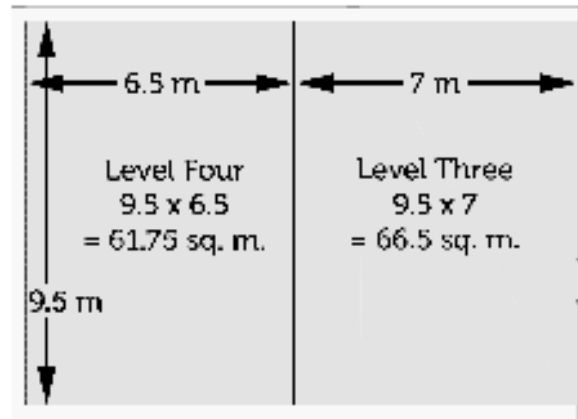
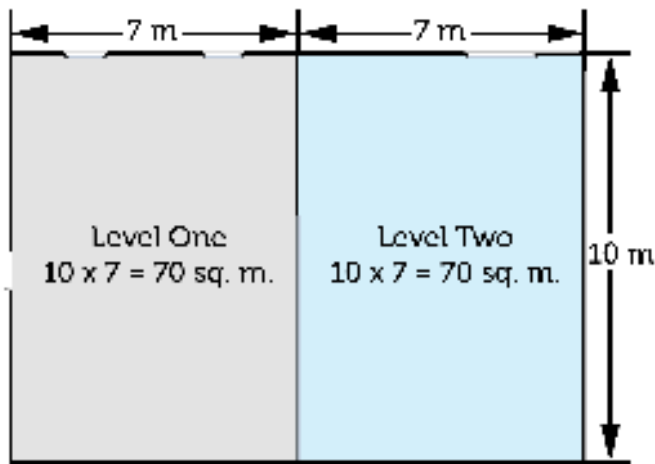
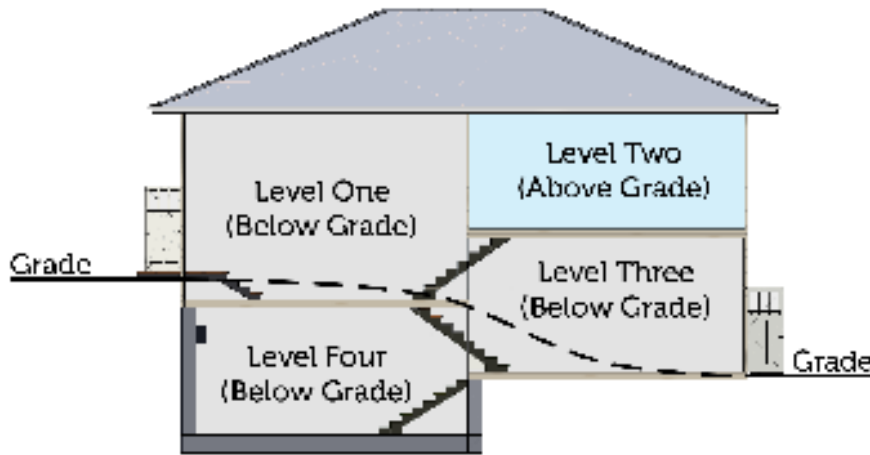


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

Example: a real estate licensee must disclose that the basement of this property is substantially smaller than the above grade area of the residence.

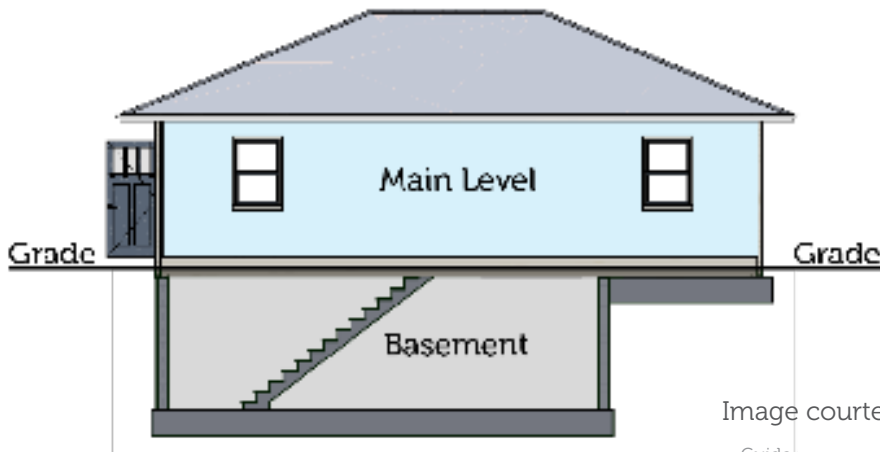


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

RMS PRINCIPLE 7

Include all additions to the main structure and conversions of above grade areas within the structure if they are weatherproof and suitable for year-round use.

The RMS area includes any additions and conversions to the main residential property when the addition or conversion meets the following criteria:

- the structure is permanent and has a foundation or footings
- the structure or conversion is connected permanently to the main electrical service
- the main heating system heats the structure or conversion or has its own permanent heating system. The heating system is able to heat the space to 22°C year-round. The real estate licensee must use their judgement as to whether the heating system is reasonably able to heat the space to 22°C in winter. If unsure, they may clarify their decision when communicating about the property. For example, they may state 180 sq. metre residence with a 20 sq. metre sunroom that is suitable for year-round use.

The permanent heating appliance in the addition does not need to use the same energy source as the heating appliance in the main structure. It may be a natural gas furnace, electric (baseboard heating, in-floor heating), wood burning stove, heat pumps, radiant, etc. Temporary mobile space heaters or extension cords are not suitable sources of heat or electricity.

Examples of above grade additions and conversions that meet Principle 6 requirements include:

- a kitchen eating area or family room addition to the main floor of a residence where the main heating and electrical systems were extended or incorporated into the addition
- a renovated porch built on footings or a foundation converted to a year-round sunroom with electric baseboard heating connected to the main electrical service
- an attached garage converted to a bedroom with a separate but permanent gas furnace

Examples of additions or conversions that do not meet Principle 6 requirements include:

- an attached converted 6 metre x 7.6 metre garage used as a games room where one duct was extended from the main heating system into the garage (one furnace duct without a cold air return duct is not sufficient to heat a room of that size to 22°C in the winter)
- an addition built on a foundation and connected to the main electrical system with a mobile heater as the only heating source a sunroom built on a foundation, connected to the main heating system, but without electrical service
- a sunroom built on a foundation, connected to the main heating system and electrical service, but has no interior access from the residence (access is from outside the residence)

Example: a bungalow has a 3 season sunroom addition that is not connected to the main heating system and does not have electrical service or its own heat source. The sunroom does not meet the requirements of Principle 6 and is not included in the RMS area.

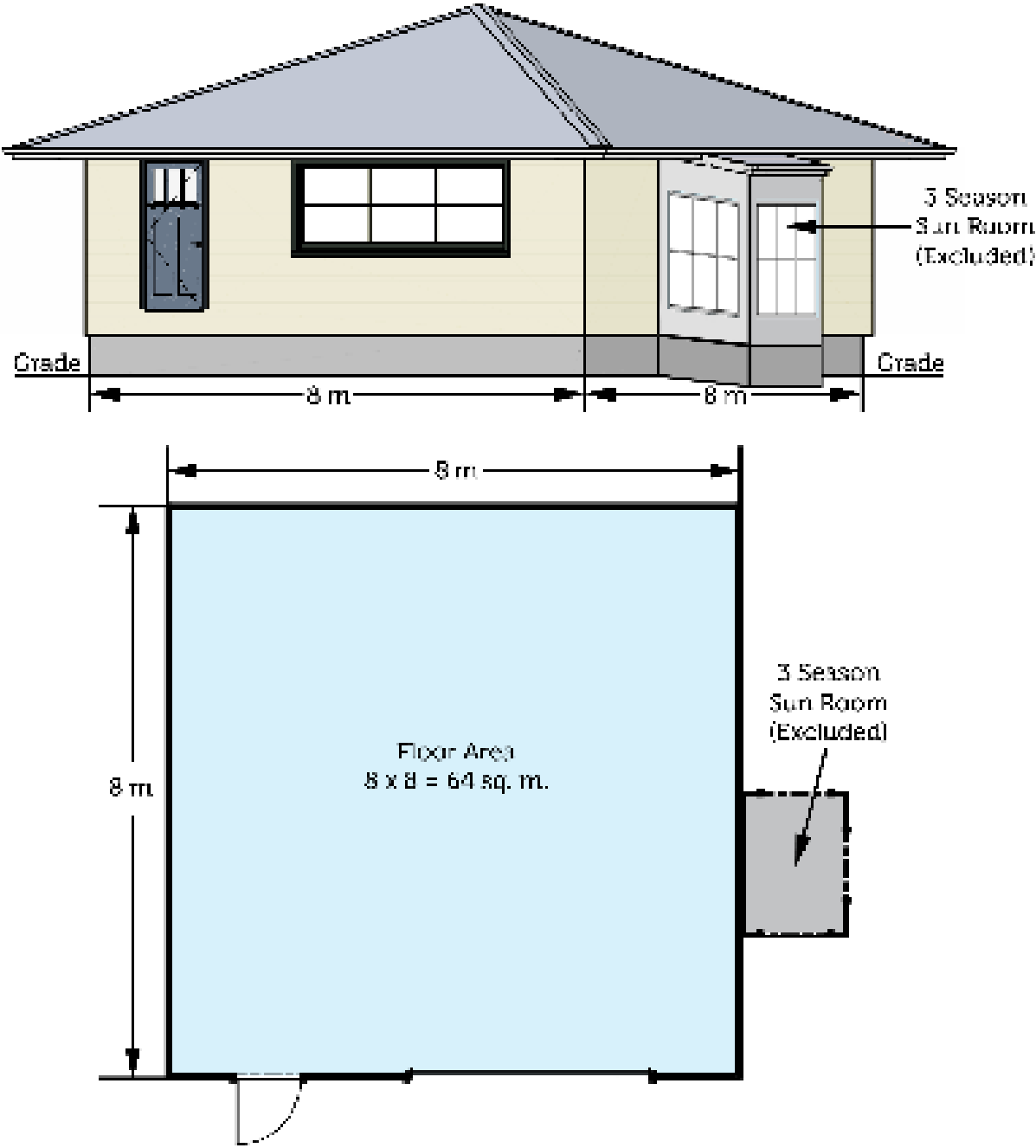


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

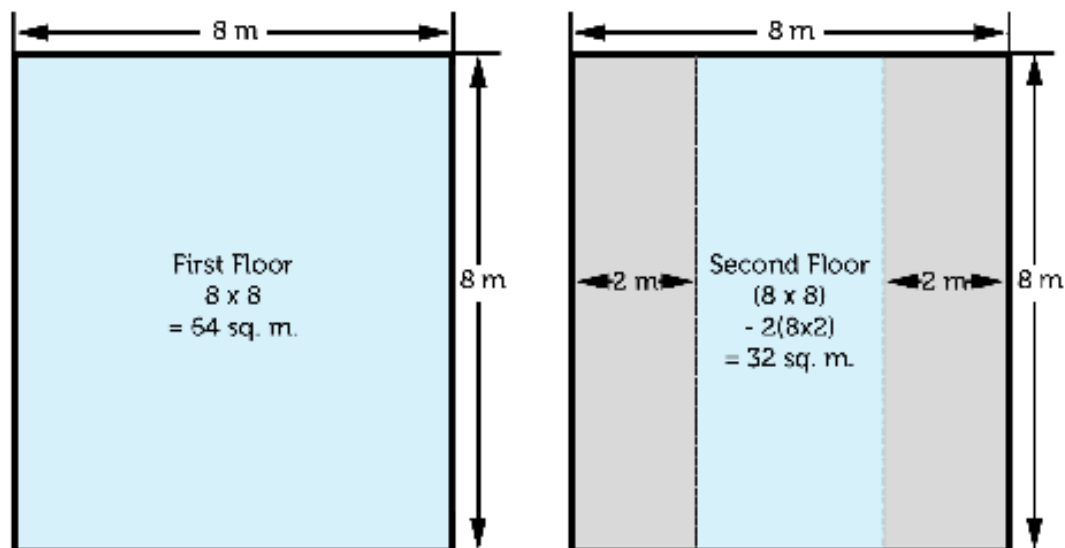
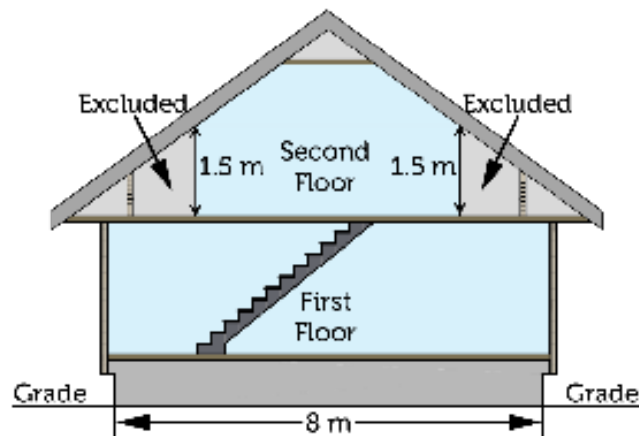
RMS PRINCIPLE 8

The property must have a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of 2.13 metres (7 feet). If the ceiling is sloped, the area with a floor-to-ceiling height of at least 1.52 metres (5 feet) is included in the RMS, provided there is a ceiling height of 2.13 metres (7 feet) somewhere in the room.

The minimum ceiling height for rooms is 2.13 metres (7 feet). Ductwork, beams, and other obstructions are included in the level, provided the floor-to-ceiling height to the ductwork, beams, and other obstructions exceeds 1.52 metres (5 feet).

For rooms with sloped ceilings, the floor area with ceiling height over 1.52 metres (5 feet) is included in the RMS area provided there is a ceiling height of 2.13 metres (7 feet) somewhere in the room. The RMS area must exclude the portions of the floor area with a ceiling height below 1.52 metres (5 feet). These areas are excluded to ensure the RMS calculation is consistent with exterior measurements.

Example: sloped ceiling on the second floor has areas above and below 1.5 metres in height.

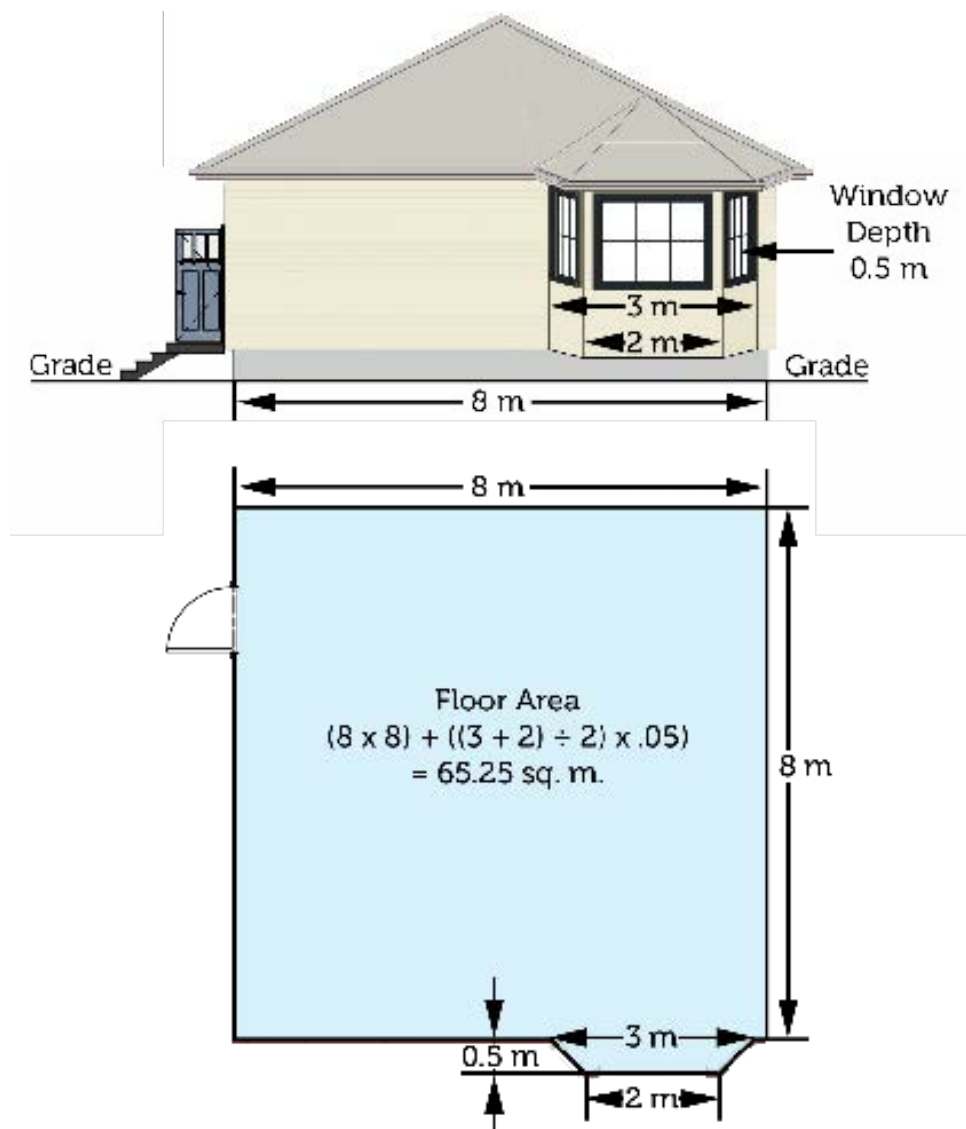


RMS PRINCIPLE 9

Include extensions from the main structure that have a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of 1.5 metres (5 feet), such as cantilevers, bay and bow windows, and dormers.

The RMS area includes extensions from the main structure that have a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of 1.52 metres (5 feet). The 1.52 metres (5 feet) minimum height must start at floor level. Examples include cantilevers, bay windows, bow windows, box windows, dormer windows and other above grade extensions that meet the minimum floor-to-ceiling height requirement. Real estate licensees must add these above grade areas to the RMS area for the residence. However, real estate licensees must exclude areas that do not start at floor level, even if they meet the minimum floor-to-ceiling height requirement.

Example: how to measure a bungalow with a bay window that has a floor-to-ceiling height of 1.5 metres (5 feet). The real estate licensee must include the bay window area in the RMS area because it meets the minimum floor-to-ceiling height.



Example: how to measure a bungalow with a bow window that has a floor-to-ceiling height of 1.5 metres (5 feet). Real estate licensees must include the bow window area in the RMS area because it meets the minimum floor-to-ceiling height.

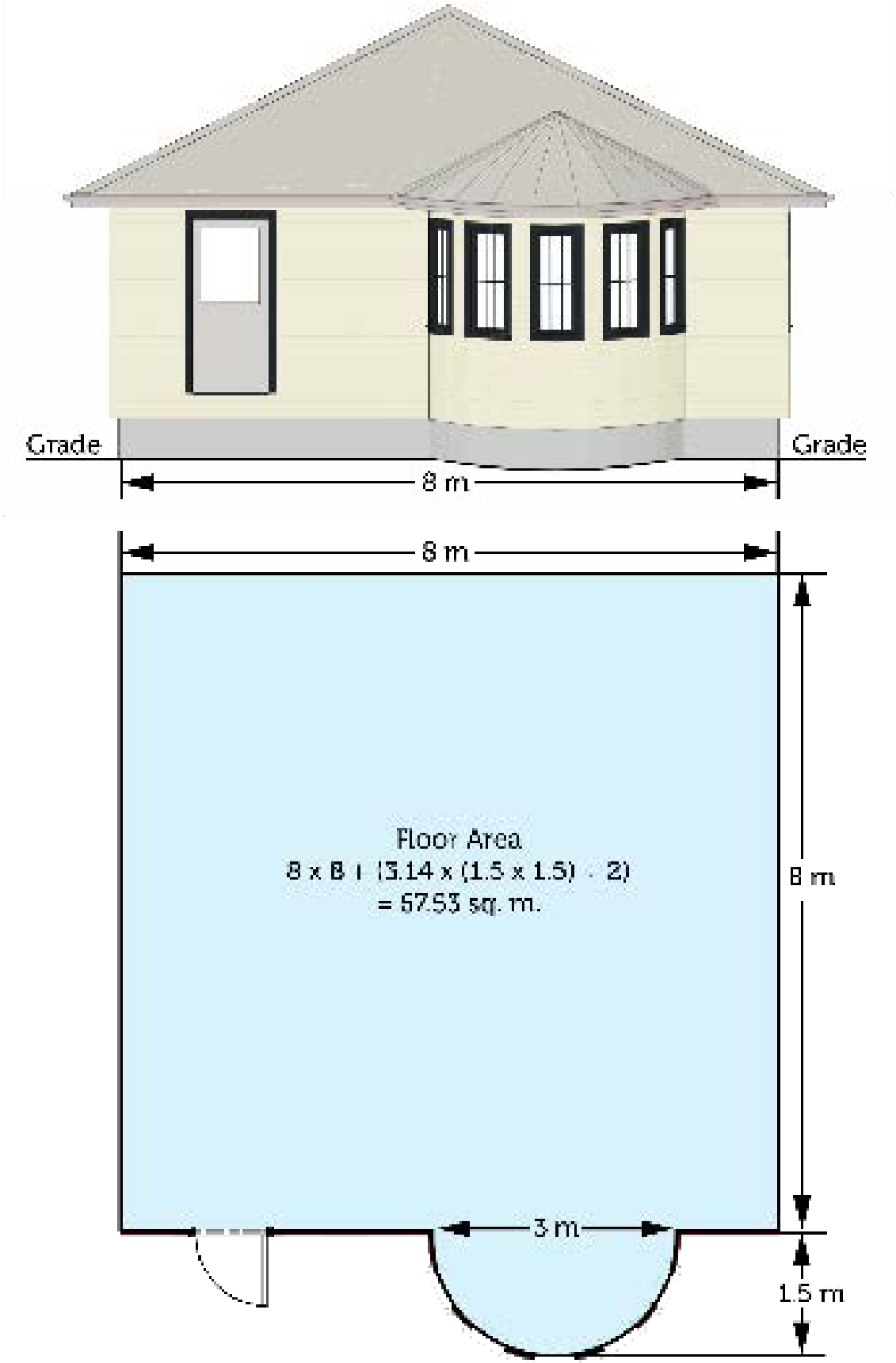


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

Example: include this bay window in the RMS area, as it meets the minimum floor-to-ceiling height and starts at floor level.



Example: exclude this bay window from the RMS area. Although it meets the minimum floor-to-ceiling height, it does not start at floor level.



RMS PRINCIPLE 10

Exclude open areas that have no floor, such as vaulted areas.

The RMS area excludes open areas that have no floor associated with them, such as vaulted ceilings. Real estate licensees must not include these open areas when calculating the RMS area of the residence. When measuring detached properties, real estate licensees must always deduct the open areas and vaulted areas from the upper level measurements so that they are consistent with exterior measurements.

The following information describes how to treat open areas with stairs:

- the stairs are counted in the above grade level they lead to
- the stairs are counted in the above grade level they lead to even if part or all of the stairs are below grade (exception to Principle 5)
- the portion of the stair opening that is larger than the area of the stair treads and landings must be deducted from the floor level

Example: this property has a stairwell to the upper level. Because the area of the stairwell opening equals the area of the stair treads, there is no open area to exclude from upper floor measurements.

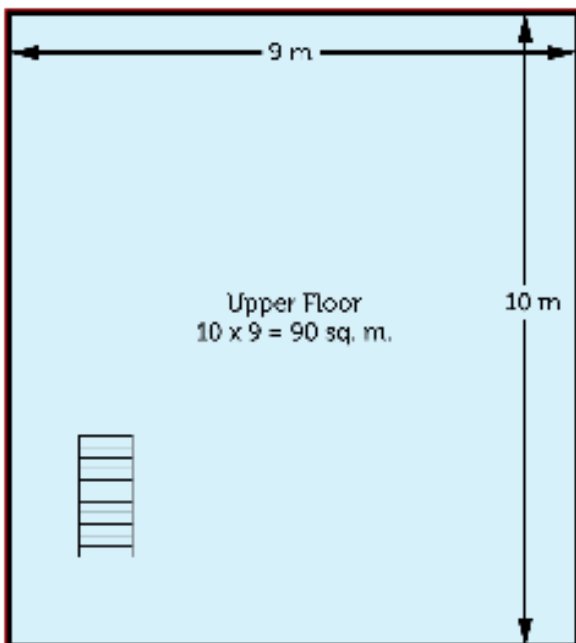


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

Example: this property has a stairwell with an open area that is larger than the area of the stair treads and landing. The open area that is greater than the area of the treads and landing is deducted from the upper floor measurements.

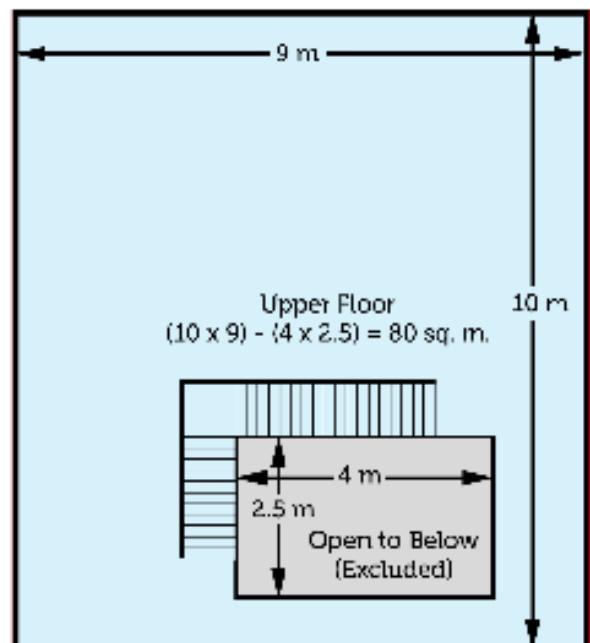


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

Example: how to measure a residential property with an open area. The 2-storey split has an open ceiling area between the 1st floor and the 2nd floor on one side. Real estate professionals must measure the open area and exclude it from the RMS area.

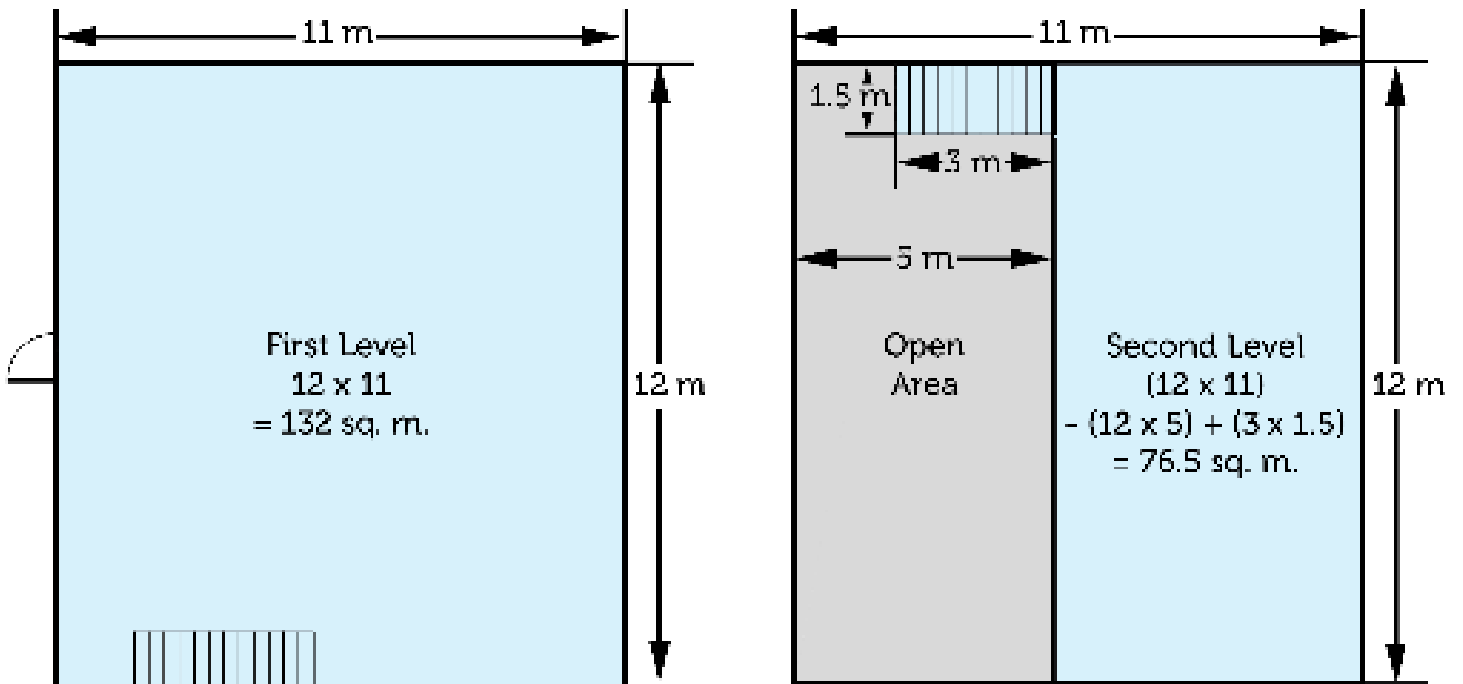
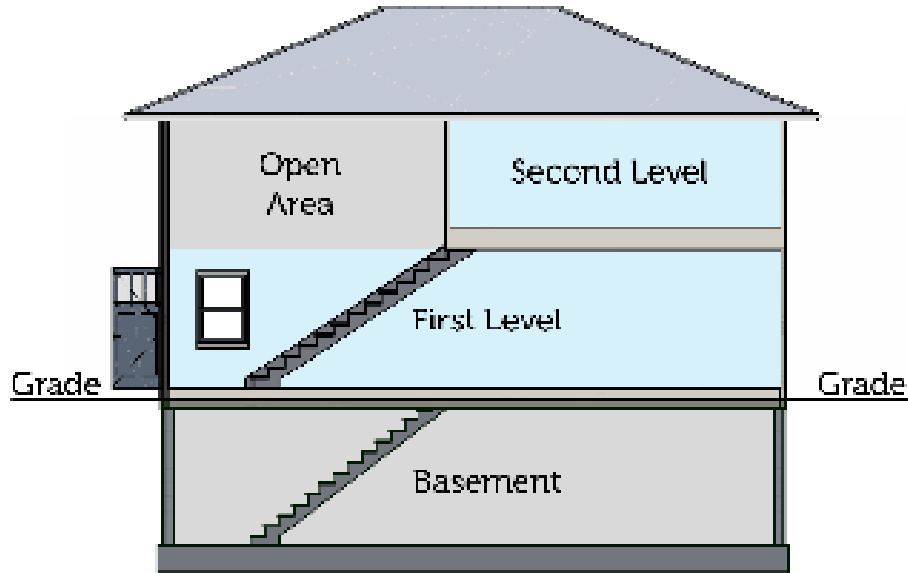


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.



Structures Not Connected To The Residence

Real estate licensees may provide area measurements for structures not connected to the main residential property. These measurements must be separate from the RMS area and:

- be communicated clearly that the structure is not connected to the main residential property
- explain how they calculated the measurement (i.e. using exterior or interior measurements)
- not mislead as to whether the space is finished, unfinished, or suitable for year-round use

Examples: do not include structures not connected to the main structure of the residence in the RMS area (such as suites or bedrooms built on the second floor of a detached garage, or a shed converted into a rec room).

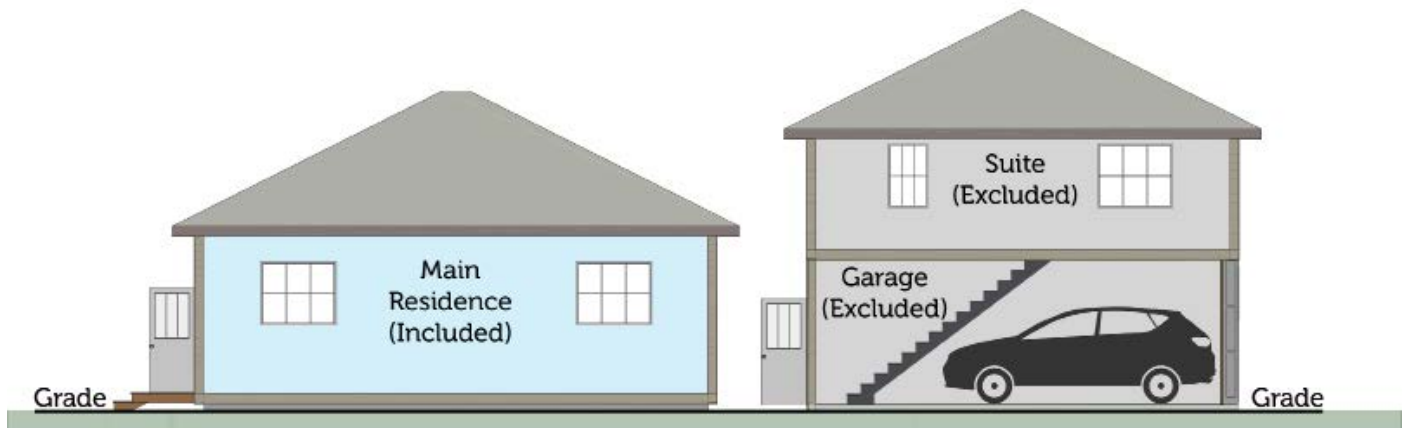


Image courtesy of UrbanMeasure Inc.

RMS Area and Condominium Unit Registered Size

The RMS applies to residential properties with fee simple and condominium ownership. However, properties with condominium ownership will have a condominium unit registered size. The unit registered size is not the same as the RMS area and should not be confused or used interchangeably.

The condominium unit registered size is not often used for comparison purposes, as it requires having to deduct areas that are below grade, not connected to the residential unit, or not suitable for year-round use (e.g. balcony, storage locker, parking stall, or garage). For these reasons, real estate professionals and consumers prefer to use the RMS area to make comparisons between condominium properties.

Because condominium units have an RMS area and a registered size, real estate professionals must clearly indicate which area or size they are communicating. For example:

- real estate professionals must calculate the above grade floor area of a condominium unit using the RMS. If including the unit registered size, they must communicate it separately
- real estate professionals must clearly detail what areas they included in their calculations when communicating the unit registered size



List Price: \$349,500


Conveniently located apartment-style condominium unit. Granite countertops and engineered hardwood floors. Delightful neighbours. Call today to view!

Size: 79m²

Condominium Unit Registered Size: 87m²

Note: Condominium unit registered size includes balcony and storage locker.

Example: a real estate professional is listing a half-duplex condominium unit at 242 Fake Street. He obtains the condominium unit registered size and notes it included the basement. He then discusses the RMS and the unit registered size with the seller, as well as the implications. He enters the RMS measurement in the applicable field (Total A.G.) and the unit registered size in the applicable field (Registered Size) as required by his board. He clarifies in the Remarks section that the unit registered size includes a below grade area.

| Residential | | 242 Fake Street | | A | | LP: \$ 399,500 | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|--|
|  | Prop Class: | Condo | | MLS#: | G1120209 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Area: | Glenumbria | | Postal Code: | 90210 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Community: | COLDHARBOUR | | Zone: | Zone 7 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Type: | Half Duplex | | Year Built: | 2005 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Style: | Bungalow | | Legal Plan: | 0520818 | Blk: | Lot: | Unit: 13 UF: | | | | | | |
| | Line #: | 001101733 | | Title to Land: | FREEH | | Ownership: | PRIV | | | | | | |
| | Exclusion: | N | SRR: N | Disc: | Conform: | | | | | | | | | |
| | Warranty: | | | Restrictions: | N-ONW | | | | | | | | | |
| | Thank you for showing! | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Remarks | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Beautiful bungalow half duplex condominium in sought after Coldharbour. Excellent condition. Large bedrooms. Develop the basement your way. Single attached garage. Majestic ravine view. Condominium unit registered size of 167 m2 includes below grade area. Residential measurements are 83.5 m2 above grade. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Baths: | 1Pc | 2Pc | 3Pc | 4Pc | 5Pc | 6Pc | 2Pc | 3Pc | 4Pc | 5Pc | 6Pc | Finish Lvl: | 1 | |
| Add Rms: 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | Ensuite Bth: | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Level | Mtr2 | |
| Living Room: | 5.8x4.5 | | M | Total Bdrms: | | 2 | Master Bedrm: | 4.3x3.5 | | M | Main Lvl: | 83.5 | SqFt | |
| Dining Room: | 2.8x3.1 | | M | Bedrm 2: | | 2.9x3.1 | M | Upper: | | | Above Grd: | | | |
| Kitchen: | 4.3x3.4 | | M | Bedrm 3: | | | | Lower Lvl: | | | Below Grd: | | | |
| Family Room: | | | | Bedrm 4: | | | | Total A.G.: | | 83.5 | 899.00 | | | |
| Den: | | | | Bonus Rm: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fin FP/Rgh-In: | Fpl Fuel: | | | | Fireplace: | | | | | | | | | |
| Heating: | 1P-A NGAS | | | | Roof Type: | | Asphalt Shingles | | | | | | | |
| Construction: | Wood Frame | | | | Foundation: | | Concrete | | | | | | | |
| Exterior: | Vinyl | | | | Basement: | | Full | | | | | | | |
| Features: | | | | | Bemt Dev: | | Unfinished | | | | | | | |
| Goods Incl: | DRYER, DWBLT, MWKC, REFRG, STVCL, WASHR | | | | Flooring: | | Carpet, Linoleum | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Goods Excluded: | | | | | | | | | |
| Site Infr: | FENCE, LANE, LANEP, LNCSA, PARK, PLAY, SCHLS, SHOP, TRANS | | | | Lot Shape: | | | | | | Front Exp: | | East | |
| Amenities: | FENCE, LAUNS, PRKEX | | | | Fmtg X Dpth: | | TTL: 415 m2 | | | | Unit Exp: | | N | |
| Parking: | Single Attached Garage | | | | Zoning/Land Use: | | RFS | | | | | | | |
| Virtual Tour: | | | | | Tax Amt/Yr : | | \$1,500/ 2014 | | | | | | | |
| Elem School: | | | | | Brochure: | | | | | | | | | |
| 2r/Mid Schl: | | | | | High Schl: | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Other Schl: | | | | | | | | | |
| Condo Name: | Shady Pines | | Condo: \$250.00 | | Incl: | | NGMT, RESRV, XTHNT, LN-SN | | | | | | | |
| Prk Encl/Unit/Type: | /Assigned | | Prk Plan Desc: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Floors: | Registered Size: 167 | | IAQR | | BLWGR | | Total Units: | | Floor Location: | | Floor #: | | | |
| HOA: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seller: | Rosewater | | Appt: GO | | TEXT | | | | | | | | | |
| List Realtor: | Joe Realty | | ID: realty | | Ph: 555-555-5555 | | Appointment Ph: 555-555-5555 | | List Date: 09/11/15 | | | | | |
| List Realtor Email: | joe@joerealty.com | | List Realtor Web: | | http://www.joerealty.com | | | | | | | | | |
| List Firm: | Red Blazer Realty | | Ph: 555-555-5555 | | Fax: 555-555-7777 | | Occupancy: VACNT | | DOM: 19-days | | | | | |
| List Realtor2: | | | | | | | Possession: /Immediate | | | | | | | |
| List Firm2: | | | | | | | Comm: 3.5%/100000 1.5%/Balance | | | | | | | |

Unit Registered Size

A unit's registered size refers to the approximate dimensions of the unit. However, the registered size may include measurements for below grade areas and areas that are at the unit owner's exclusive use, such as parking stalls, garages, balconies, and storage lockers. The unit registered size is listed in the Schedule of Unit Factors and Unit Areas, which appears in the Condominium Plan. The following table provides an example:

| CONDOMINIUM PLAN No. 7725220 | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Schedule of Unit Factors and Unit Areas | | |
| Unit Number | Unit Factor | Approx. Floor Area (m ²) |
| 1 | 375 | 139.4 |
| 2 | 325 | 120.8 |
| 3 | 300 | 111.5 |
| 4 | 300 | 111.5 |

Condominium Plans

A Condominium Plan partitions a property into units and common property. The *Condominium Property Act* requires all Condominium Plans to indicate:

- the boundaries of each individual unit
- any exclusive use areas of the common property

Unit Boundaries

The Condominium Plan identifies the boundaries of each unit. A Condominium Plan typically depicts titled units using bolded, solid lines (e.g. _____). What constitutes a unit's boundaries is determined by the type of Condominium Plan:

- Conventional Condominium Plans: These unit boundaries are defined as the interior finish on floors, walls, and ceilings unless otherwise stipulated on the Condominium Plan. However, for Conventional Condominium Plans registered prior to January 1, 1979, unit boundaries were considered to lie in the center of floors, walls and ceilings
- Barely Blended Condominium Plans: These unit boundaries are defined as the interior finish on floors, walls, and ceilings unless otherwise stipulated on the Condominium Plan
- Bare Land Condominium Plans: These unit boundaries are defined by the width and depth of the parcel of land

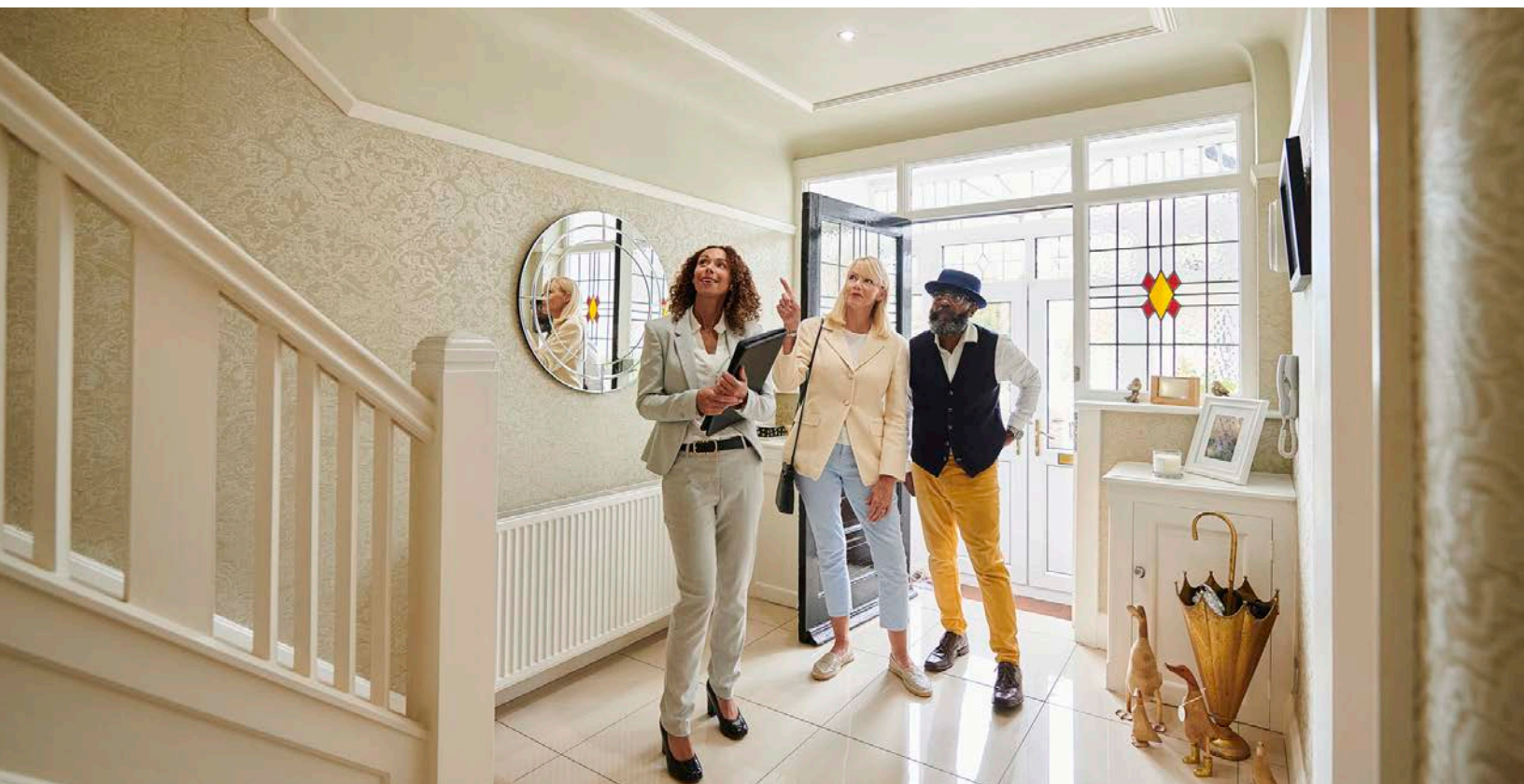
Exclusive Use Areas

The Condominium Plan depicts exclusive use areas using dashed lines (e.g. - - - - -). Exclusive use areas are owned by the condominium corporation but are for the sole use of the applicable unit owners. Condominium Plans registered before September 1, 2000 were not required to differentiate exclusive use areas from the general common property of the condominium.

Example: a real estate professional lists a 2-storey townhouse condominium unit. She measures the unit according to the RMS, and obtains the Condominium Plan. She notices the unit registered size differs from her RMS area calculations. She realizes the unit registered size includes the below grade area. She carefully enters both sizes into the corresponding fields in her local property database.

| Level | Mtr2 | SqFt |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Main Level: | 45.00 | 484.38 |
| Upper: | 50.00 | 538.20 |
| Below Grade: | 43.00 | 462.84 |
| RMS Area: | 95.00 | 1022.58 |
| Unit Registered Size: | 138.00 | 1485.42 |
| Unit Registered Size Includes: | Above Grade Area & Below Grade Area | |

Example: a real estate licensee lists an apartment condominium unit. He measures the unit according to the RMS and obtains the Condominium Plan. The unit registered size of 120 sq. metres. He measures the unit as 110 sq. metres using the RMS. He notes the unit registered size includes the unit's exclusive use balcony.





Best Practices When Measuring Residential Properties

Best practices help real estate licensees avoid the potential challenges of property measurement and calculation. Best practices relate to competent service. They also rely on the ability of real estate licensees to apply the RMS and concepts associated with measurement calculations. Clients expect real estate licensees to consistently apply property measurement best practices. They must also ensure their clients clearly understand the information that property measurements represent. This Guide provides the following best practices to help real estate professionals measure residential properties:

Discuss RMS with your client: Real estate licensees must discuss the RMS principles with sellers and buyers so they can make informed decisions regarding property measurements and RMS area. They must make every effort to ensure their clients understand property measurements and their implications.

Perform due diligence: Measure the property or engage competent persons to calculate the RMS area of the property. Do not guess at measurements, do not copy measurements from previous property listing information, and do not rely on area size provided by builders.

Create measurement records: Sketch the property's floor plan(s) and grade levels. Record all measurements, calculations, and relevant notes, including property address, seller's name, and measurement date. Retain the records for the client's brokerage file.

Handle open areas and vaulted areas correctly: For detached properties, real estate professionals must subtract open and vaulted areas from the upper level measurement to ensure the outcome is consistent with exterior measurements. This also applies to areas that do not meet the minimum ceiling height requirements.

Know how to operate the measurement tools: Read the measurements, and record the data. If using a tape measure, clients may hold the end of the tape measure under your direction. Consider taking advantage of newer technology, such as laser measurement devices and CADD (computer-aided design and drafting) software.

Requests to use another standard: Real estate licensees must use the RMS. However, they may provide additional information to meet client objectives, as long as the information is consistent with the disclosures the RMS requires, and is not misleading.

Decide on the measurement system: Avoid measurement conversion errors by taking measurements in the measurement system the listing services/property databases use. If engaging a person/service to measure the property, indicate the measurement system they should use.

Identify measurement systems: Identify your preferred measurement system and take all measurements for that property in the same measurement system (i.e. imperial or metric).



Make measurement conversions carefully:

If you must convert measurements from one system to another, do the calculations competently, check for errors, and note the conversion date. Retain the records for the client's brokerage file.

Get lot measurements from RPR: Ask the seller for a copy of their Real Property Report (RPR) and rely on the lot measurements illustrated on the document. Qualified land surveyors prepare RPRs. Do not attempt to measure residential lots, as fences may not be on the actual boundaries of the property.

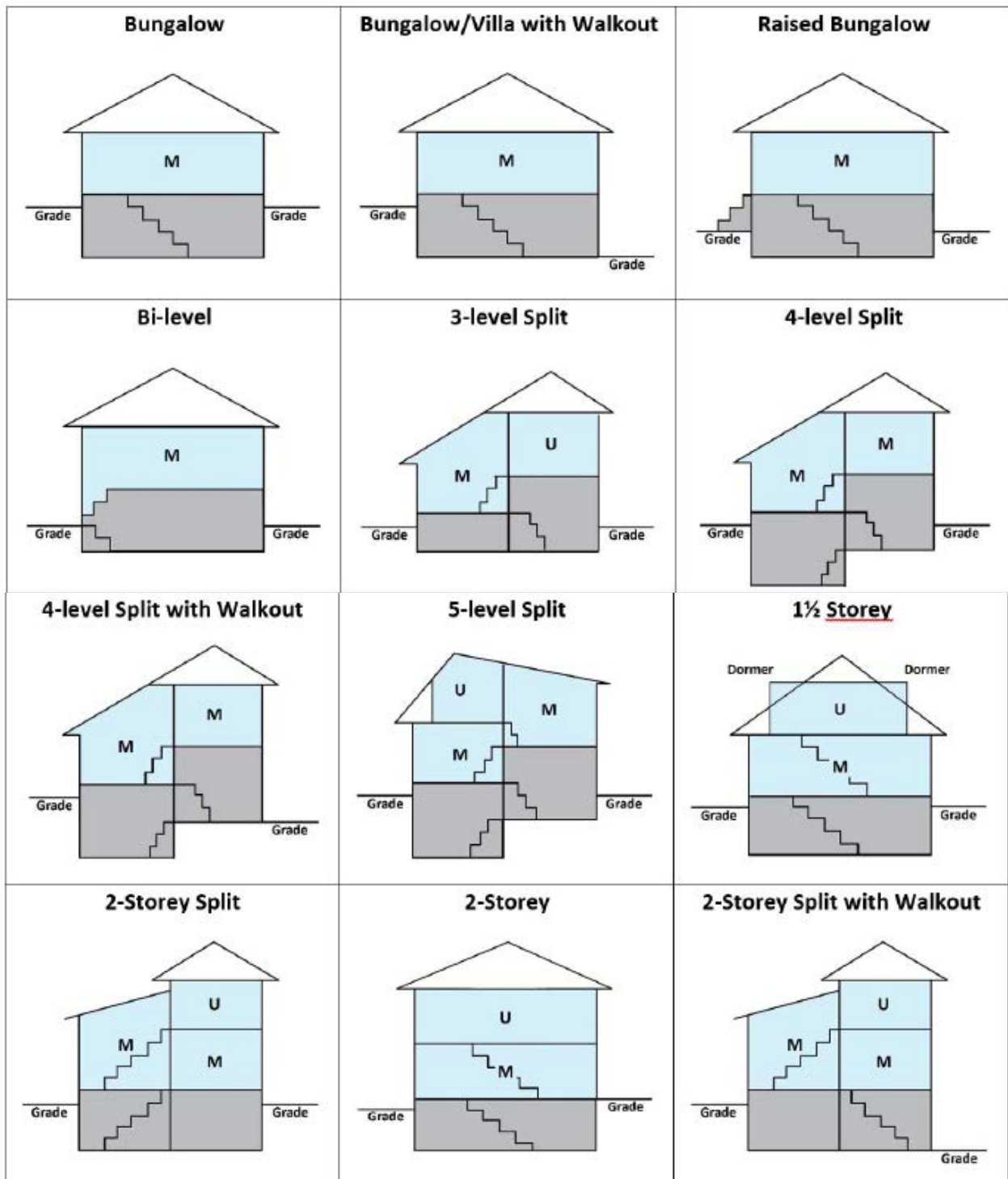
Disclose condominium unit registered size:

For condominiums, provide the registered unit size in addition to the RMS area. Differentiate them properly and ensure clients understand the difference between them. When disclosing the unit registered size, indicate what the measurement includes. All property information and communications should disclose this information.

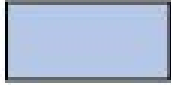
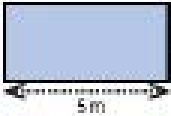
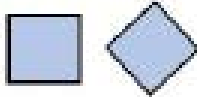

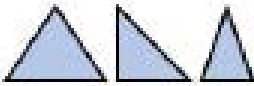


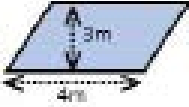
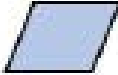


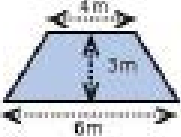


Engage a measurement service: If engaging a property measurement company, real estate professionals must ensure the person is able to measure the property competently according to the RMS. Look into the person's reputation and determine whether they carry E & O insurance.

APPENDIX 1 COMMON RESIDENTIAL STYLES

| Legend | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| M: main floor area(s) | U: upper floor area(s) |
| Grade: ground level | Blue: above grade floor area |
| White: area under roof/attic | Gray: below grade floor area |



APPENDIX 2 CALCULATING FLOOR AREAS

| Shapes | Formulas for Calculating Area |
|---|---|
| <p>Rectangle</p>  | <p>Area = width x length Note: Most floor spaces can be broken down into rectangles</p>  <p>Area: $5 \times 3 = 15\text{m}^2$</p> |
| <p>Squares</p>  | <p>Area = width x length</p>  <p>Area: $3 \times 3 = 9\text{m}^2$</p> |
| <p>Triangles</p>  | <p>Area = (width x perpendicular length) ÷ 2</p>  <p>Area: $3 \times 3 \div 2 = 4.5\text{m}^2$</p> |
| <p>Parallelogram</p>  | <p>Area = width x perpendicular length</p>  <p>Area: $3 \times 4 = 12\text{m}^2$</p> |
| <p>Rhombus</p>  | <p>Area = width x perpendicular length</p>  <p>Area: $3 \times 3 = 9\text{m}^2$</p> |
| <p>Trapezoid</p>  | <p>Area = (sum of parallel sides ÷ 2) x perpendicular length Note: Use this formula to calculate the floor area of a bay.</p>  <p>Area: $(4 + 6) \div 2 \times 3 = 15\text{m}^2$</p> |
| <p>Half Elliptical</p>  | <p>Area (half elliptical) = (length x width ÷ 2) x 3.14 ÷ 2 Note: Use this formula to calculate the floor area of a bow</p>  <p>Area: $(6 \times 3 \div 2) \times 3.14 \div 2 = 14.13\text{m}^2$</p> |

Note: Assume all shapes are lying flat on the ground

APPENDIX 3 MEASUREMENT SYSTEM CONVERSIONS

Formulas for Converting Measurements

| Conversion | Formulas for Calculating Area |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Imperial to Metric | Feet to metres: Multiply feet by 0.3048 Sq. ft. to m ² : Multiply sq. ft. by 0.0929 |
| Metric to Imperial | Metres to feet: Multiply metres by 3.281 m ² to sq. ft.: Multiply m ² by 10.76 |
| Inches to Feet in Decimals | Multiply inches by 0.0833 |

Converting Imperial to Metric

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear (Feet to Metres): Multiply the number of feet by .3048 • Area (Square Feet to Square Metres): Multiply the number of square feet by .0929 | | | |
| Examples | Imperial | Conversion Formula | Metric |
| | 3 feet | (3 x 0.3048) | 0.91 metres |
| | 6 feet 6 inches | (6.5 x 0.3048) | 1.98 metres |
| | 9.5 feet | (9.5 x 0.3048) | 2.90 metres |
| | 1200 sq. ft. | (1200 x .0929) | 111.48 m ² |

Converting Metric to Imperial

| | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear (Metres to Feet): Multiply the number of metres by 3.281 • Area (Square Metres to Square Feet): Multiply the number of square metres by 10.76 | | | |
| Examples | Metric | Conversion Formula | Imperial |
| | 3 metres | (3 x 3.281) | 9.84 feet |
| | 6.5 metres | (6.5 x 3.281) | 21.33 feet |
| | 50 m ² | (50 x 10.76) | 538 sq. ft. |
| | 75.5 m ² | (75.5 x 10.76) | 812.38 sq. ft. |

| Conversion Table – Inches to Decimals | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Inches (") | 0'1" | 0'2" | 0'3" | 0'4" | 0'5" | 0'6" | 0'7" | 0'8" | 0'9" | 0'10" | 0'11" | 0'12" |
| Expressed as Decimal | 0.08 | 0.17 | 0.25 | 0.33 | 0.42 | 0.50 | 0.58 | 0.67 | 0.75 | 0.83 | 0.92 | 1.00 |
| Feet (') and Inches (") | 1'1" | 1'2" | 1'3" | 1'4" | 1'5" | 1'6" | 1'7" | 1'8" | 1'9" | 1'10" | 1'11" | 1'12" |
| Expressed as Decimal | 1.08 | 1.17 | 1.25 | 1.33 | 1.42 | 1.50 | 1.58 | 1.67 | 1.75 | 1.83 | 1.92 | 2.00 |

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APPENDIX 3

BELOW GRADE MEASUREMENT STANDARD

PRINCIPLES-BASED STANDARD

Consistent with RECA's Statement on Self-Regulation, RECA developed the Below Grade Measurement Standard (BGMS) using a principles-based approach. This approach enables industry professionals and the public to understand the intent and spirit of the BGMS. The principles-based approach also enables real estate professionals to explain to clients how real estate professionals measure residential properties. The BGMS relies on clear and precise principles that real estate professionals must apply consistently.

Proper application of the BGMS ensures real estate professionals provide reliable and verifiable below grade floor area. This discussion between the real estate professional and the client informs clients about the BGMS. The discussion also is essential for the real estate professional to act in the client's best interests.

Below grade floor areas are not to be included in RMS measurements, which only apply to above grade floor areas. It is acceptable for the below grade floor areas to be added to the RMS square footage to indicate a separate total finished living space square footage of the property.

In order for below grade floor area to be included as finished living area the following requirements must be met to calculate the floor areas:

BGMS PRINCIPLE 1

The BGMS only applies to floor levels below grade.

Any areas that are below the highest elevation/grade of the property is deemed below grade. With the exception that if any level below the highest elevation is completely at or above the grade for that level. See diagram #1.

BGMS PRINCIPLE 2

All measurements are to be taken at the exterior of the foundation.

For walls that are not accessible from the exterior, interior measurements may be used and the thickness of the wall added to the interior measurement.

BGMS PRINCIPLE 3

The floor area to be included must be completely developed.

Finished living area is described as an enclosed area in a house suitable for year-round use, including walls, floors, and ceilings that are similar in finishing to the rest of the home.

BGMS PRINCIPLE 4

Undeveloped floor areas must not be included in the BGMS.

All areas that are not fully developed such as storage rooms, utility areas, undeveloped open areas, garages, and crawl spaces are not to be calculated as part of the below grade developed area.

BGMS PRINCIPLE 5

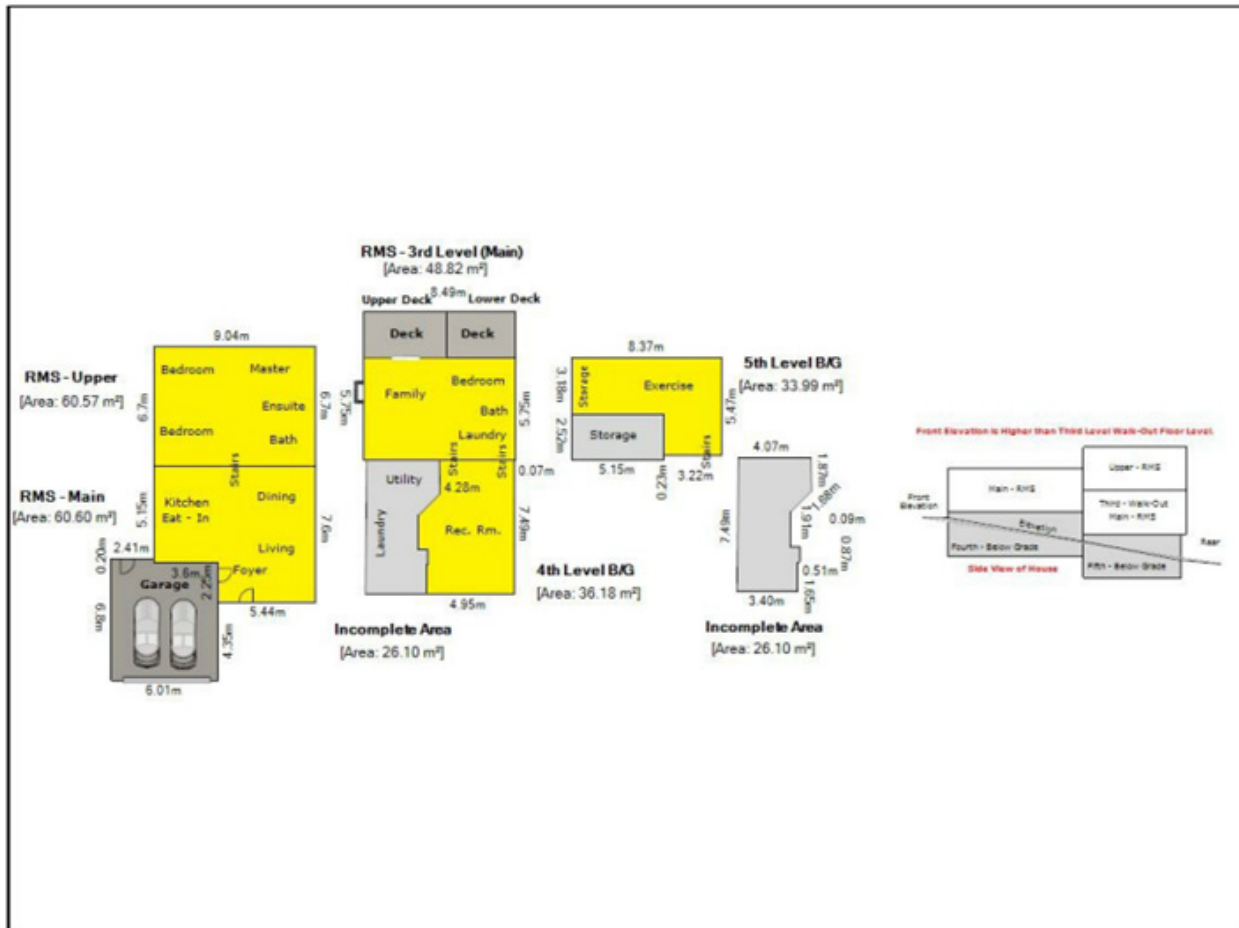
All developed floor areas included in the measurements must have a ceiling height of no less than 60 inches or 1.52 meters.

The ceiling height is measured from the floor, not from any raised area. Floor areas with a ceiling height less than the minimum must not be included in the floor area.

BGMS PRINCIPLE 6

All measurements must be clearly shown on a diagram, with the excluded areas identified. Below grade diagram/measurements must form part of the listing file.

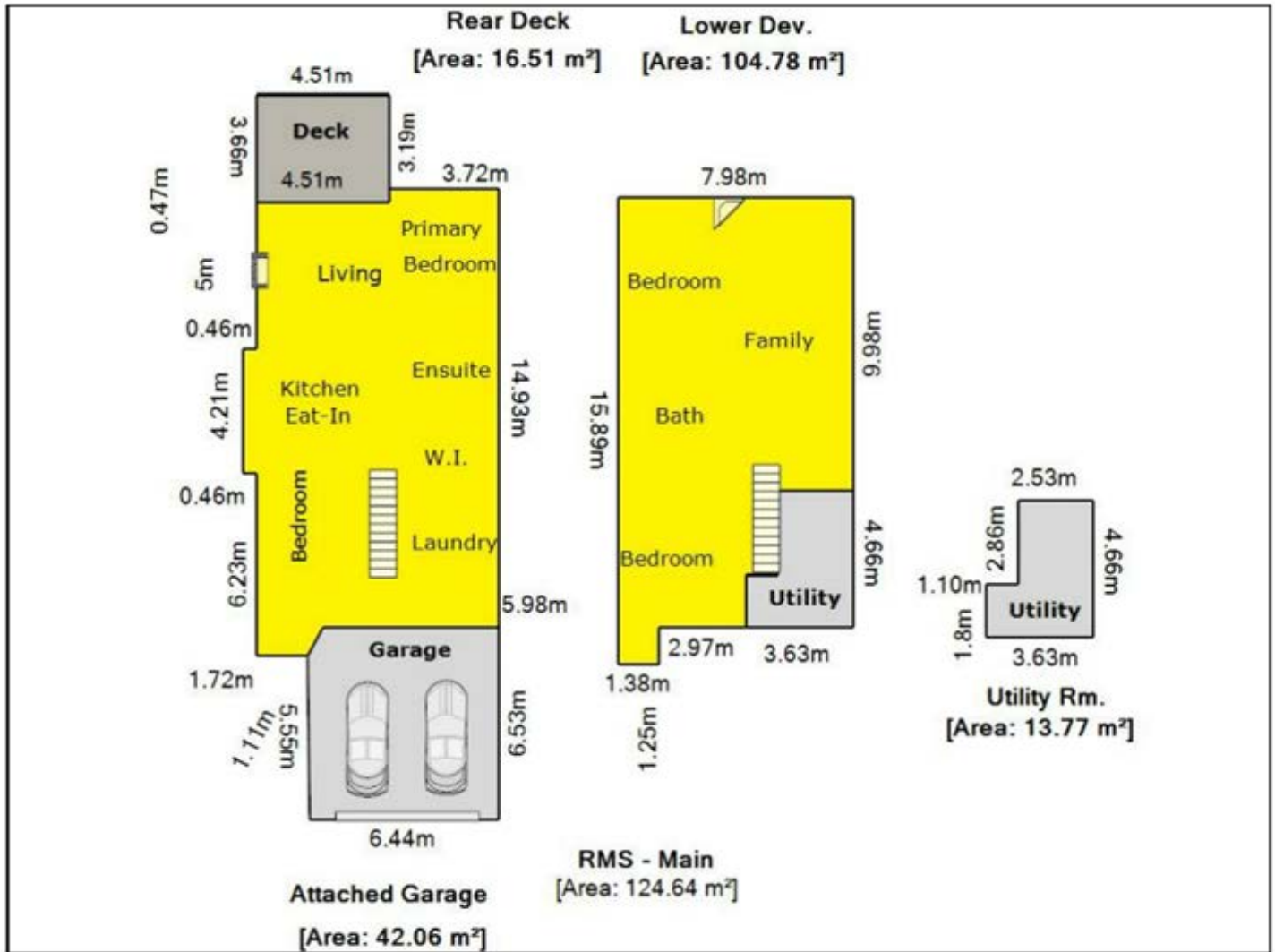
Diagram #1



Gray Shaded Areas "Not" Included in Floor Area Sizes

"References to the degree of below grade development such as fully or partially developed, shall be reasonably accurate. The threshold for reference to fully developed being the majority of the available lower area, leaving a minor amount of space undeveloped. Any less than the majority of developable space, must be referred to as partially developed."

Diagram #2



Gray Shaded Areas "Not" Included in Floor Area Sizes