



INFORMATION SHEET

NO. IE-02

DATE : June 17, 2015

CATEGORY : Interior Environment

TITLE : **Sizing of yards and courts adjacent to exterior openings that provide required natural light or ventilation**

PURPOSE : The purpose of Information Sheet IE-02 is to clarify the size of yards and courts.

REFERENCES : San Francisco Building Code
Section 1206, Yards or Courts

DISCUSSION : SFBC Section 1206 specifies the minimum requirements for courts and yards, including area width, accessibility for cleaning and the location of air intakes when natural light or natural ventilation is the chosen design option.

To provide adequate natural light and ventilation, each yard or court must have a minimum width of three (3) feet. In addition, courts with required windows on opposite sides shall have a minimum width of six (6) feet. The length of court shall be a minimum of 10 feet, unless one end opens to public way or yard.

For buildings more than 2 stories above grade plane, the minimum width of the *yard* shall be increased at the rate of 1 foot (305 mm) for each additional story. For buildings exceeding 14 stories above grade plane, the required width of the yard shall be computed on the basis of 14 stories above grade plane. For buildings more than 2 stories above grade plane, the *court* shall be increased 1 foot (305 mm) in width and 2 feet (610 mm) in length for each additional story. For buildings exceeding 14 stories above grade, the required dimensions shall be computed on the basis of 14 stories above grade plane. (See Table 1)

For consistency, use the short dimension as the width and the long dimension as the length for yards and courts. Opposite windows generally do not need to be lined up, but exceptions may occur. This applies only to required windows for natural light and ventilation.

Table 1: Window Locations and Dimensions of Yard or Court

Number of Stories	Yard	Court: Windows on Opposite Side in Short Dimension		Court: Without Windows on Opposite Side or With Windows on Opposite Side in Long Dimension		Court: Open on One End to Public Way or Yard	
		Minimum Width	Minimum Length	Minimum Width	Minimum Length	Minimum Width	Minimum Length
1 or 2	3	6	10	3	10	3	N/A
3	4	7	12	4	12	4	N/A
4	5	8	14	5	14	5	N/A
5	6	9	16	6	16	6	N/A
6	7	10	18	7	18	7	N/A
7	8	11	20	8	20	8	N/A
8	9	12	22	9	22	9	N/A
9	10	13	24	10	24	10	N/A
10	11	14	26	11	26	11	N/A
11	12	15	28	12	28	12	N/A
12	13	16	30	13	30	13	N/A
13	14	17	32	14	32	14	N/A
14	15	18	34	15	34	15	N/A
15 or more	15	18	34	15	34	15	N/A

N/A: Not regulated by SFBC Section 1206.3

For windows not required for light and ventilations:

1. If less than 3 stories high, will not trigger horizontal air intake requirements.
2. If 3 stories or more and fixed, will not trigger horizontal air intake requirements.
3. If 3 stories or more and operable, will trigger horizontal air intake requirements.

NOTE: Other conditions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Supervisors or Managers.

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Date

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