



All Square Footage Fields to be Required

Starting August 4, 2020, the following square footage fields will become required entries for all listings in the property types Single Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential and Farm.

- **Above Ground Total Square Feet**
(The total of any upper plus main floor square feet. Bonus room above garage included only if accessible from interior of house.)
- **Below Ground Total Square Feet**
(The total of all lower square feet. Do not include tuckunder garage.)
- **Main Floor Total Square Feet**
(Total square feet on the main floor only. For a 1, 1.5, or 2-story, or split, include foundation size plus any overhang. Do not include 3-season porches, or any outside amenities, even if covered—porches, decks, patios, etc. For a split level, include the entry/foyer area.)
- **Garage Square Feet** (not required for Condominium styles)
(Total square feet of the entire garage. Do not include add-on portions, such as loft or upper level. The purpose is to help buyers determine the number and size of vehicles/items that will fit.)

These “Total” square footage fields count both finished and unfinished square footage.

A reminder on already required square footage fields:

- **Above Ground Finished Square Footage:** Total finished square footage measured at and above ground level; ground level as it appears from the front view of the building. Includes all floors and levels above this line.
- **Below Ground Finished Square Footage:** Total finished square footage measured below ground level. For appraisers, that’s any area below ground, even if it’s only one wall, means the whole level is below ground. Finished area must have flooring, wall covering (trimmed) and ceiling.

Appraiser TIP: When you describe above/below, look at where your feet are at any place in a level – if your feet are below the ground outside the wall (at ANY place in that level), the level is regarded as being below grade (i.e., basement).

Why is NorthstarMLS going to start requiring these fields?

The new requirement to complete these fields is based on continued feedback that we need to provide the most accurate information about currently finished areas as well as possible expansion of living areas. It helps to sell the house if buyers know how much additional space could be finished.

What should be included in the unfinished portion of the Total Square Footage?

Any unfinished portion that has the potential to be finished should be included. Do not include crawl spaces, cellars or other similar spaces that could not be made livable. Areas with mechanicals (furnace, a/c, laundry, etc.) may be included.

Where can I find these square footages?

Depending on the County, they may be available in the public tax record (available here through Realist or the County website). Please note that quality and accuracy can vary by County or even within a County. Your best bet is to conduct your own measurements.

How do I measure square footages?

- NorthstarMLS has a couple popular measuring videos featuring a local appraiser. These are a webinar on [The Basics of Measuring](#), a [measuring demo of a 1920s bungalow](#), and a [measuring demo of a 4-level split](#).
- Review how-to guides from Standards organizations such as [ANSI](#) and [AMS](#).
- Hire a licensed appraiser to do the measurements. Many experienced appraisers offer this service and can save you the trouble and uncertainty.
- Monitor your Association's course offerings in case square footage measurement courses are offered.

What about current listings where I have not completed these fields?

The fields will not become required until August 4, allowing you time to obtain or measure them for your existing listings. Starting August 4, you will not be able to make and save changes to existing listings until the new required fields are also completed.