

Bow-Front Desks

These are the 5 most commonly asked questions about bow-front desks for commercial office environments, with straightforward answers to help you make a confident, well-informed purchase decision.

Top 5 Questions — Bow-Front Desks

1

What makes a bow-front desk different from a regular straight desk?

A bow-front desk has a convex (outward-curving) front edge that projects 4–6 inches at its center point while the back edge remains straight. This adds usable depth directly in front of the seated user — the primary work zone — without increasing the desk's overall width. The practical results are more room for a keyboard, documents, and wider monitor placement at center; a gentler forearm resting surface compared to a sharp straight edge; and better monitor positioning since screens can sit slightly further back for proper viewing distance. The bow also gives the desk a more refined executive appearance.

2

How do I measure the room for a bow-front desk?

The catalog depth listed for a bow-front desk is typically the side depth — the depth at the left and right edges. The center depth (with the bow) is 4–6 inches deeper and is what extends furthest into the room. A 72-inch bow-front desk with 30-inch side depth actually extends 34–36 inches at its center. Plan room clearance based on the center depth, not the catalog measurement. A 60-inch bow-front fits comfortably in a 9.5' × 8' room; a 72-inch model works best in 10.5' × 8.5'. Also plan 48 inches minimum behind the chair position — bow-front users naturally sit slightly further from the desk at center, requiring more pushback room than a straight desk.

3**Who benefits most from a bow-front desk?**

Bow-front desks provide the most value for private office users who work 6+ hours daily, executives and managers who meet with visitors across the desk, dual-monitor users whose second screen benefits from the center curve positioning, and users who work extensively with printed documents (the extra center depth places papers between the keyboard and monitor). Bow-front desks are also the standard premium main surface in L-shaped and U-shaped suite configurations. They are not a good fit for open-plan benching environments, training rooms, or shared hoteling stations where the orientation-specific curve creates unequal spacing between adjacent users.

4**What storage configurations are available for bow-front desks?**

Bow-front desks use the same pedestal configurations as straight desks. Single-pedestal options place a BBF (box/box/file) or FF (file/file) pedestal on the specified left or right side. Double-pedestal configurations provide maximum storage and structural stability, most common on 72-inch bow-front models. Mobile pedestals can supplement any configuration. In private office setups, bow-front desks are frequently paired with a matching straight-front credenza or lateral file placed behind the user — this provides secondary storage and a surface for printers and reference materials. When a bow-front is the main surface in an L-shaped suite, confirm total drawer count across all surfaces.

5**What should I inspect when a bow-front desk is delivered?**

The curved front edge is the most quality-sensitive area of any bow-front desk and the most common location for manufacturing defects. The convex curve requires flexible or pre-formed edge banding, and poor-quality banding on the bow will peel, gap, or show seams within months of use. Inspect the full length of the curved front edge carefully before accepting delivery. Also confirm that the bow faces toward the user's seating position — some installers orient bow-front desks backward, placing the curve toward the wall. Verify the desk height is correct and the leveling glides are adjusted so all four contact points are firm on the floor.

Have more questions? Our office furniture specialists are ready to help.

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