

Conference Room Seating

These are the 10 most commonly asked questions about conference room seating for commercial office environments, with straightforward answers to help you make a confident, well-informed purchase decision.

Top 10 Questions — Conference Room Seating

1

How many chairs do I need for my conference table?

Calculate seats based on table length divided by 30–36 inches per chair along each side. A 30-inch allocation is appropriate for internal meetings with laptops; 36 inches is the standard for boardroom comfort. At standard spacing: a 6-foot table seats 4–6, an 8-foot table seats 6–8, a 10-foot table seats 8–10, and a 12-foot table seats 10–12. Always add 2 additional chairs per table for overflow — meetings consistently exceed planned headcount. Overflow chairs should match or closely coordinate with the primary set and be stored on a nearby dolly or in a closet rather than scattered across the office.

2

What is the difference between conference chairs and task chairs?

Conference chairs are designed for 1–4 hours of intermittent use in meetings, while task chairs are designed for 6–8 hours of continuous daily use at a workstation. Conference chairs prioritize visual consistency across a coordinated set, with moderate adjustability (seat height, tilt); task chairs prioritize individual ergonomic fit with a full range of adjustments. The most common mistake is placing task chairs in a conference room — they roll away from the table during meetings, look mismatched when different users have adjusted them differently, and are more expensive than purpose-built conference chairs. Use conference chairs in conference rooms and task chairs at workstations.

3**Will my conference chair arms fit under the table?**

Arm height clearance is the most commonly overlooked conference seating specification. Conference chair arm height must clear the table apron (the structural rail running under the table edge, typically 3–5 inches below the surface) to allow the chair to be pushed flush to the table. Standard conference chair arm height is 26–27 inches, while table aprons sit approximately 25–26 inches from the floor. Always verify the specific arm height measurement against the specific table apron height before ordering. If the chair arms are even slightly higher than the table apron, the chair cannot be pushed flush to the table — a frustrating and expensive ordering error.

4**What upholstery material is best for conference chairs?**

Contract fabric (rated 250,000+ double rubs on the Wyzenbeek scale) is the most practical choice for high-use conference rooms — it offers a wide color and texture range, is durable, and can be vacuumed and spot-cleaned. Vinyl or PU leather is the best practical choice for boardrooms where the premium look of leather is desired, as it is visually indistinguishable from genuine leather at conversation distance, significantly more durable, wipe-cleanable with disinfectant, and requires no annual conditioning. Genuine leather is appropriate only for executive boardrooms with a maintenance plan. Polypropylene shell chairs offer very high durability and are appropriate for modern, lower-formality settings.

5**Should I use casters or glides on conference chairs?**

The choice is determined by floor surface, not preference. On commercial carpet, use standard hard casters — they roll smoothly and carpet prevents scratching. On hardwood, tile, or LVT (luxury vinyl tile), use glides (stationary feet) or soft polyurethane casters — hard casters on hard floors scratch the surface and roll uncontrollably, preventing chairs from staying in position during meetings. On polished concrete, specify soft polyurethane casters — hard casters damage concrete and glides are nearly immovable. If the conference room has mixed flooring (carpet in the center, hard floor at the perimeter), soft polyurethane casters are the safest choice for both surfaces.

6**What type of conference chair is right for a boardroom vs. a standard meeting room?**

Boardrooms and senior leadership meeting spaces call for executive conference chairs with a high back, padded arms, and leather or high-quality vinyl upholstery — these signal formality and provide full spine support for longer 2–4 hour meetings. Standard conference rooms used for daily team meetings are best served by standard mid-back conference chairs, which are practical, durable, and visually appropriate. Flex conference rooms that convert for training or events should use nesting or stacking chairs that store compactly. Back height and upholstery are the two most visible signals of formality — match them to the room's purpose and typical meeting duration.

7**How do I store nesting or stacking chairs when not in use?**

Nesting chairs store horizontally — each chair rolls under the next, with 10 nesting chairs fitting in approximately 6 linear feet of wall space. They do not require lifting, making them practical for single-person setup and teardown. Stacking chairs store vertically — stacked 4–12 high on a dolly — and require lifting each chair. A dolly is essential for stacking chairs; without it, stacking is a manual safety hazard and the chairs end up scattered rather than stored. Horizontal nesting chairs are generally the better choice for low-ceiling spaces since stacked chairs on a dolly can reach 7–8 feet. Both store substantially more compactly than standard caster-based conference chairs.

8**How do I make sure the conference chairs look consistent as a set?**

All chairs in a single conference room should be the same model, finish, and upholstery — even subtle differences in back height or seat color are immediately obvious when chairs are lined up around a table. Coordinate the chair frame metal finish (chrome, brushed aluminum, matte black) with the table base or leg finish. Select the upholstery color with wall paint and carpet in mind — the chair upholstery is the largest area of color in the room once the table is in place. Request a physical sample chair and test it at the actual table before bulk ordering to confirm proportions, arm clearance, and color accuracy.

9**What seat height do I need for a standard conference table?**

Standard conference chairs have a seat height range of 17–18.5 inches, which pairs correctly with the standard conference table height of 29–30 inches. At this pairing, seated users have proper thigh clearance under the table and comfortable arm height at the table surface. If the table is non-standard height — such as a counter-height table at 34–36 inches — standard conference chair seat heights will be too low and counter-height stools or adjustable-height chairs must be specified. Always confirm actual table height when ordering chairs, especially for specialty tables or custom furniture.

10**What weight capacity should conference chairs be rated for?**

Conference chairs should be rated for a minimum of 250 lbs under BIFMA commercial testing standards. Because conference chairs are used by the widest range of visitors and employees — not just assigned users — the full population range will use them. High-traffic rooms serving external visitors should have chairs rated 300+ lbs. BIFMA certification (ANSI/BIFMA x5.4 for lounge and guest seating) confirms the structural integrity under repeated load cycling and is the minimum standard for commercial-grade seating. Non-certified chairs fail faster under varied-user commercial conditions and typically have shorter warranty terms.

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