

Conference Tables

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

Top 10 Questions — Conference Tables

1

What size conference table do I need for my room?

Start with your required seating count: at standard spacing of 30–36 inches per seat, a 6-foot table seats 4–6 people, an 8-foot table seats 6–8, a 10-foot table seats 8–10, a 12-foot table seats 10–12, and a 16-foot table seats 14–16. Then verify the room can accommodate the table with proper clearance: allow a minimum of 48 inches from the table edge to the nearest wall on all seated sides for chair pushback and circulation (60 inches recommended for wheelchair accessibility). A common mistake is choosing a table that fits the room on paper but leaves insufficient clearance for chairs and movement.

2

What shape conference table should I choose?

Rectangular tables are the most space-efficient and work well for presentations with a clear presenter position. Boat-shaped tables (slightly wider at the center) are the most popular in commercial settings — the wider center improves sight lines so everyone can see each other clearly, and the tapered ends give a refined boardroom appearance. Racetrack (oval) tables soften the room aesthetic, eliminate sharp corners for safer movement, and improve traffic flow. Round tables eliminate head-of-table hierarchy and work well for small groups of 4–6 people but become impractical above 6 as the distance across makes normal conversation difficult.

3**What surface material is most durable for a conference table?**

High-pressure laminate (HPL) or thermally fused laminate (TFL) surfaces are used in over 95% of commercial conference tables and are the right choice for any high-use conference room. They resist scratches, heat, and stains from daily laptop bags, coffee cups, and cleaning chemicals while offering realistic woodgrain and solid-color finishes. The commercial-grade construction standard is a 1.5-inch thick top with 3mm PVC edge banding. Wood veneer is appropriate for executive boardrooms where the natural beauty of real wood is valued, but requires more careful maintenance and is vulnerable to heat marks and water rings from cups.

4**Should I include power grommets in my conference table?**

Yes — running extension cords to a conference table is a trip hazard, often a fire code violation, and an unprofessional appearance that undermines the room's purpose. Surface-mount power grommets with AC outlets, USB-A/C charging, and optionally HDMI or Ethernet should be installed at a rate of one grommet module per 2–3 seats. Place grommets evenly along the table so every seat has reasonable reach to an outlet — placing all power at one end is a common mistake. Plan for at least 50% more power capacity than your current needs, as technology demands at the conference table consistently increase over time.

5**What clearance does a conference table need from the walls?**

The minimum clearance from the table edge to the nearest wall on any seated side is 48 inches — this allows chairs to be pushed back and people to walk behind seated attendees. The absolute minimum in a pinch is 36 inches, but only against a wall where no one is seated. For rooms serving as wheelchair-accessible meeting spaces, 60 inches of clearance is required for a wheelchair turning radius. Measure the actual room including columns, built-in cabinetry, and door swings before specifying a table — a room that measures 18' × 14' on a floor plan may have only 16' × 12' of usable clearance once obstructions are accounted for.

6**Should I choose a fixed or modular conference table?**

Fixed (one-piece or permanently assembled) tables are stronger, more stable, have a seamless appearance, and are the right choice when the room has a single purpose and the table will not need to be moved. Most boardroom-quality tables are fixed. Modular tables consist of two or more sections that connect together — they can be separated into smaller breakout tables, reconfigured into a U-shape for training, scaled by adding sections as your team grows, and delivered through narrow corridors and elevators that a one-piece table cannot navigate. The tradeoff is potential visible seams and slightly less stability at connection points. Choose modular if flexibility, expandability, or delivery constraints are priorities.

7**What are the most common conference table finish colors and what do they look like?**

Espresso is a very dark near-black brown — like dark roast coffee — that reads almost black in low light and pairs well with silver or black bases. Walnut is a warm medium brown with visible grain character, popular in contemporary rooms with brushed metal bases. Cherry is a warm reddish-brown ranging from honey to deep red-brown, traditional and boardroom-appropriate. Gray ranges from silver-gray (Coastal Gray) to near-charcoal (Newport Gray) and suits modern conference rooms. White is a clean bright finish that shows wear more than darker options. When coordinating with existing furniture, request a color description because shades vary between manufacturers even when names match.

8**What base style should I choose for a conference table?**

Slab (two-panel) bases are the most common for 6–14 foot tables — clean modern look with good legroom and internal cable routing. Cube storage bases are practical for rooms without built-in cabinetry — each base unit has an access door for storing AV remotes, cables, and supplies. Boardroom metal column bases use dual posts set back from the table edges, providing excellent legroom and an executive aesthetic available in two-tone top/base color combinations. X-base pedestals are the standard for round tables. Modern tapered leg configurations suit contemporary 8–10 foot tables with excellent legroom. Cable routing capability should factor into base selection for any powered table.

9**How do I plan for delivery of a large conference table?**

Most commercial conference tables are made to order with lead times of 2–4 weeks for standard configurations. Conference tables ship via freight — confirm whether you have a loading dock or need lift-gate service. Measure all delivery access points before ordering: building entry doors, corridors, elevator interior dimensions, and the conference room doorway. Most tables ship in sections even if the assembled top is one piece; very large tables may require special logistics. Plan 1–2 hours for assembling a modular table and 2–4 hours for a large table with integrated power modules. Order at least 4–6 weeks before your deadline to accommodate lead time and installation.

10**What ADA requirements apply to conference tables?**

Conference tables must provide ADA-compliant accessible seating positions — at minimum two accessible positions per table. Knee clearance at accessible positions must be a minimum of 27 inches from the floor to the underside of the table apron, with 9 inches of toe clearance at least 17 inches deep under the table edge. Power grommets and shared materials at the table center should be within 24 inches of reach from accessible seating positions. The conference room itself must have a 60-inch wheelchair turning radius and a door with at least 32 inches of clear width (36 inches recommended). A single pedestal leg in the wrong position can block wheelchair access — verify accessibility during specification.

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

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