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Cubicles & Workstations

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Panel-based workstation systems — commonly called cubicles — remain one of the most widely deployed workspace solutions in commercial offices. OfficeFurniture2go brings 30+ years of experience helping businesses design, specify, and install the right cubicle system. This guide covers panel heights, materials, worksurface configurations, storage, acoustic performance, electrical integration, ADA compliance, and the critical comparison between cubicle systems and modern benching alternatives.

1. What Is a Cubicle / Panel System?

A panel-based workstation system uses interconnected vertical panels to create defined work zones. Panels serve multiple functions: defining personal space, providing visual and acoustic privacy, and acting as the structural framework for worksurfaces, storage bins, and accessories.

- High workstation density per square foot of floor space
- Consistent appearance across many workstations
- Reconfigurable layout by disconnecting and reconnecting panels
- Integrated electrical and data cabling within the panel infrastructure
- Easy scaling — new stations use the same components as existing ones

2. Panel Heights

Panel height is the most important specification in cubicle planning — it determines privacy, acoustic performance, and the overall feel of the office environment.

Height	Privacy	Best For
39"–42"	Minimal	Open-plan, collaborative offices
48"–54"	Moderate	General admin — most common spec
60"–66"	High	HR, finance, focused work
72"–85"+	Very High	Confidential work, private office equivalent

3. Panel Materials

Panel material determines acoustic performance, aesthetic, durability, and visual character.

Fabric Panels: Tackable surface; acoustic absorption (NRC 0.55–0.85); wide color range; field-replaceable fabric. The commercial standard.

Glass Inserts: Allow natural light through upper sections; clear, frosted, or tinted; reflect sound rather than absorbing it; higher cost.

Laminate Panels: Hard, durable, easy to clean; not tackable; lower acoustic performance. Common in healthcare and lab environments.

Painted Steel Panels: Cleanable and magnetically receptive; integrates with whiteboard surfaces.

4. Worksurface Types Within Cubicles

Panel-hung surfaces (no legs, maximum legroom) and surface-with-legs (more stable for heavy loads) are the two primary mounting approaches.

Layout	Dimensions	Notes
Straight run	60"–72" × 24"–30"	Single rectangular surface
L-shaped	Main + return	Most common single-station layout
Corner surface	24"–36" bridge	Fills the corner for usable area
U-shaped	3 surfaces wrap-around	Maximum workspace per station

5. Overhead Storage and Panel–Hung Components

Overhead bins recover vertical storage space without occupying desk or floor area. Flipper doors (slide up and back) are the most practical commercial option. Under-bin task lighting is an important ergonomic addition. Typical weight limit: 50–75 lbs.

Other panel-hung components include task lights, paper management trays, monitor arms, CPU holders, bag/coat hooks, whiteboard panels, and phone shelves.

6. Electrical Integration in Panels

Modern panel systems include integrated electrical raceways — base, mid-height, and top-cap — carrying power and data to each workstation without exposed cabling. AC outlets, USB ports, and data ports are positioned at worksurface height.

Power entry options: hardwired (licensed electrician, highest amperage) or cord-and-plug (plugs into wall outlet, faster but limited capacity). All systems must comply with NEC and be UL Listed.

7. ADA Requirements for Accessible Workstations

Requirement	Specification
Knee clearance	27" H × 30" W × 19" D minimum
Surface height	28"–34" above finished floor
Clear floor space	30" × 48" for wheelchair approach
Entry opening	36" minimum clear; 42" recommended
Reach range	Forward max 48"; Side max 54"

8. Cubicle vs. Benching: Comparison

Factor	Cubicle System	Benching
Privacy	High (panels absorb sound, block sight lines)	Very low (open, minimal separation)
Space/person	80–110 sq ft	40–60 sq ft
Acoustics	Good	Poor
Cost/station	Higher	Lower
Best for	Focused work, confidential tasks	Collaboration, hoteling

9. Common Cubicle Configurations

Config	Footprint	Description
Straight run	6×5 ft	Single surface, minimal privacy, lowest cost
L-shaped	6×6 or 8×6 ft	Main + return; most popular layout
U-shaped	8×8 or 9×9 ft	3 surfaces; max privacy & workspace
Cluster	Varies	Shared walls; 4–12 stations; most space-efficient

10. Installation Lead Times and Planning

Panel systems have longer lead times than freestanding furniture. Plan accordingly.

Product Type	Lead Time	Notes
In-stock commodity cubicles	2–5 business days	Fabric, standard sizes; + 1–3 days install
Made-to-order systems furniture	6–14 weeks	Custom; + 1–3 days install
Large-scale (100+ stations)	10–16 weeks	Requires coordination with electrician and IT

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Our team brings 30+ years of experience to help you make the right choice for your workspace.

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