

Mobile Pedestals and Personal Storage

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Mobile pedestals are the standard solution for personal storage at individual workstations — especially in open-plan benching environments where overhead bins and fixed storage are absent. This guide covers drawer configurations, locking mechanisms, caster types, sizing, materials, placement strategies, and quality indicators to help you specify the right pedestal for every workspace.

1. What Is a Mobile Pedestal?

A mobile pedestal is a small, freestanding cabinet unit — typically 15 to 20 inches wide, 20 to 28 inches deep, and 24 to 28 inches tall — mounted on casters that allow it to roll freely. It serves as the primary repository for a worker's documents, supplies, and personal belongings.

A mobile pedestal serves multiple roles:

- Personal document and supply storage
- Secure storage via a locking cylinder for confidential materials
- Occasional impromptu seating surface when topped with a cushion
- Spatial anchor — visually anchors the workstation as personal territory in open-plan environments
- Portable home base for hoteling users who roll it to their station of choice each day

2. Drawer Configurations

Mobile pedestals are classified primarily by their drawer configuration, reading from top to bottom.

Configuration	Drawers	Best Use
BBF (Box/Box/File)	2 shallow box drawers (pens, supplies) + 1 deep file drawer (25–35 hanging folders)	Most versatile; standard knowledge workers with moderate filing and supply needs
FF (File/File)	2 deep file drawers; combined capacity 50–70 hanging folders	Heavy filing roles — admin, legal, insurance
BF (Box/File)	1 box drawer + 1 file drawer; shorter unit (20–24 in.)	Low-profile needs; sit-stand desk adjacency; secondary unit
BBB (Box/Box/Box)	3 shallow box drawers; no file capacity	Supply-heavy, paperless environments — healthcare, labs, creative studios
Cushion-Top	Any configuration with factory-installed upholstered seat on top	Collaborative open-plan environments; informal guest seating

The BBF (box/box/file) configuration is the most common choice across commercial environments. The two box drawers handle daily supplies and personal items, while the file drawer accommodates hanging folders in letter or legal orientation depending on internal width.

3. Locking Mechanisms

Personal security is a primary function of mobile pedestals. Understanding lock types is essential for correct specification.

Lock Type	How It Works	Best For
Single-Key Master Cylinder	One keyed cylinder operates a shared locking bar across all drawers simultaneously	Standard commercial deployments; simple user operation
Keyed-Alike (KA)	All pedestals in an order open with the same key	Maintenance/facilities access; company-owned pedestals
Keyed-Different (KD)	Each pedestal has a unique key	Assigned pedestals where personal privacy is important
Master Key (MK)	Unique key per pedestal plus a single master key for facilities	Industry standard for large corporate deployments
Combination Lock	3- or 4-digit mechanical combination; user sets on first use	Environments wanting to eliminate key management entirely
Electronic / RFID	PIN keypad or proximity card tied to building access system	Hoteling environments; premium security; audit trail capability

Anti-Tip Mechanism: A safety feature (not a lock) that prevents more than one drawer from opening simultaneously, eliminating tipping risk. Standard on commercial-grade units; frequently absent on residential or budget products.

4. Caster Types and Selection

The caster set defines the mobility characteristics and floor compatibility of a mobile pedestal.

Caster Type	Material	Best Floor Type
Hard casters	Polyolefin / nylon	Carpet (rolls easily); avoid on hard floors (scratches)
Soft casters	Polyurethane / rubber	Hard floors (no marring, quiet); more friction on carpet
Dual-wheel casters	Two smaller wheels per caster	Most commercial applications; distributes weight evenly

When Casters Matter Most:

- Open-plan benching: High mobility essential; specify dual-wheel, all four lockable
- Hoteling environments: Rolled to station daily; ease of rolling and reliable locking critical
- Static under-desk placement: Caster quality less critical; standard specification adequate

5. Pedestal Height and Desk Clearance

The pedestal must physically fit under the desk surface without interfering with the user's seated position.

Configuration	Overall Height (incl. casters)	Width	Depth
BF (2-drawer)	21–24 in.	15–16 in.	20–22 in.
BBF (3-drawer)	24–27 in.	15–16 in.	20–24 in.
FF (2-file)	24–27 in.	15–18 in.	20–28 in.

Key Clearance Considerations:

- Standard desk (29–30 in.): 25–26 in. underside clearance; standard pedestals fit comfortably
- Sit-stand desk at lowest position (22–24 in.): clearance may be only 18–20 in.; standard BBF may not fit
- Executive desk with modesty panel: verify opening width; some allow only 14–15 in.
- Legal-size filing requires 18+ inch body width pedestals; standard 15–16 in. fits letter only

6. Materials and Finish Coordination

The pedestal is a visible element of the workstation and its finish must coordinate with the desk for a professional, unified appearance.

Material	Characteristics	Best Application
Steel (powder-coat)	Durable, consistent color matching, higher security, GREENGUARD-certifiable	Standard for commercial offices; specify chip-resistant polyester powder-coat for heavy use
Laminate (wood-body)	Particleboard/MDF core with HPL face; exact finish match with same-manufacturer desks	Executive and private office environments; not ideal for high-use hoteling
Veneer	Real wood veneer over composite core; aesthetic richness	Executive furniture suites; cost prohibitive for open-plan

Finish Coordination Best Practices:

- Confirm finish names and color codes from the workstation system being installed
- Source pedestal from the same manufacturer or one with closely matching standard finishes
- Request finish samples alongside desk/panel samples before finalizing
- Account for metamerism failure: finishes may match under fluorescent light but diverge under LED or daylight

7. Under-Desk vs. Freestanding Placement

Under-Desk Placement (Most Common):

- Does not consume floor space outside the workstation footprint
- Easy user access from seated position
- Recommended placement: to one side (dominant-hand side) of the knee well, not centered
- Reduces knee well clearance — verify user comfort for taller individuals

Freestanding Adjacent Placement:

- Does not restrict knee well space; allows taller units (26–28 in.)
- Can double as impromptu seating with cushion top
- Occupies floor space that may affect ADA clearance — keep pulled in to maintain 44 in. aisles

End-of-Run Integration: In benching systems, a pedestal at the end of a run serves as a visual termination element. Some manufacturers offer alignment connectors that affix the pedestal to the benching frame without blocking caster mobility.

8. Personal Storage in Open-Plan Environments

Traditional cubicles provide 30–40 cubic feet of storage. A benching station with a single BBF pedestal provides approximately 3–5 cubic feet — an 85–90% reduction. Successful implementation requires change management.

Change Management Essentials:

- Desk purge protocols: scheduled document shredding events before the move
- Clear communication of storage allowances per employee
- Transition from paper records to digital where policy permits
- Centralized shared storage for reference materials not needed at each station

Personal Lockers for Hoteling:

Size	Dimensions	Accommodates
Minimum	12W x 18D x 18H in.	Small bag, basic personal items
Standard	12W x 18D x 24H in.	Jacket, laptop bag, personal items
Tall	15W x 18D x 60–72H in.	Full outerwear, bags, equipment

RFID/proximity card locks are strongly preferred in hoteling environments. Locker-to-employee ratio: 1:1 for full hot-desking; 0.5–0.6 per assigned employee for 40% in-office models.

9. Quality Indicators in Pedestals

Not all mobile pedestals are constructed equally. Commercial environments require commercial-grade quality. These indicators distinguish durable products from budget alternatives.

Indicator	Commercial Grade	Avoid
Drawer Slides	Ball-bearing extension; 50,000–75,000 cycle rating; full-extension on file drawers	Friction slides (steel-on-steel); partial extension only
Weight Capacity	Box drawers 50 lb; file drawers 75–100 lb	Box under 30 lb; file under 50 lb
Cabinet Body	18- or 20-gauge cold-rolled steel; welded corners; welded base pan	22+ gauge steel; screwed/folded tabs; press-fit bottom
Drawer Fronts	Steel with baked-on powder coat	ABS plastic (cracks, yellows over time)
Lock Cylinder	5- or 7-pin tumbler; solid steel lock cam	3-pin tumbler; zinc die-cast cam (brittle)
Anti-Tip Interlock	Standard; prevents multiple drawers opening at once	Absent or unreliable on residential-grade units

10. Team and Zone-Level Storage

Beyond individual pedestals, open-plan environments need zone-level storage for shared materials, communal supplies, and reference documents.

Lateral File Cabinets as Zone Storage:

- Shared reference file and supply storage at the perimeter of benching zones
- Spatial dividers defining team territory boundaries
- Surface area for plants, printers, or decorative items
- 30–42 inch wide configurations at 29–30 inch height can double as bench seating with cushions

Storage Walls and Shelving:

- Typical depth: 15–20 inches; height: 65–72 inches (below ceiling, above standing eye line)
- Mix of open shelves, closed cabinet doors, and file drawers
- Functions as visual and mild acoustic divider between zones

Wardrobe and Coat Storage Options:

- Freestanding coat racks: mobile, zero-installation; adequate for 4–8 people
- Wall-mounted coat rails: install-once, integrates with locker banks
- Wardrobe towers: enclosed tall cabinet with interior rail and shelf; for environments with high-value outerwear

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