

Storage Cabinets

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Storage cabinets are among the most versatile furniture products in any commercial environment. Unlike filing cabinets — which are purpose-built for hanging file folders — storage cabinets hold a wide range of materials: office supplies, binders, reference books, media equipment, personal belongings, breakroom supplies, and general organizational storage. This guide covers every major storage cabinet type, their standard dimensions, construction specifications, door styles, and the right cabinet for each office environment.

1. Types of Storage Cabinets

Understanding the full range of storage cabinet types is essential to matching the right product to the customer's actual storage needs.

Type	Description	Best For
Tall / Wardrobe	65–72" tall, 30–36" wide; full-height double doors with adjustable shelves; some include garment rod	Breakrooms, mailrooms, supply rooms, employee coat storage
Low Storage	36–42" tall (counter height); two doors with 1–2 adjustable shelves; top doubles as work surface	Private offices, admin areas, under-window installations
Mobile Pedestal	27–28" tall on casters; drawer configurations (BBF, FF); central lock	Open-plan offices, hot-desking, any mobile workspace
Storage Credenza	60–72" wide × 29–30" tall; doors, drawers, and/or open shelves	Executive offices, reception counters, behind-desk storage
Display Cabinet	Glass door panels or open shelving; some with LED lighting	Reception areas, lobbies, conference rooms, executive offices
Media Cabinet	AV equipment housing with ventilation, cable management, and device shelving	Conference rooms, training rooms, reception areas
Storage Cubes / Cubbies	Modular 12–15" open compartments; stackable; accessory bins and doors available	Breakrooms, libraries, employee personal storage

For most commercial environments, a combination of tall storage and low storage cabinets provides the best balance of capacity and usability. Tall units maximize vertical storage in utility areas, while low cabinets preserve sight lines and serve as secondary work surfaces.

2. Standard Dimensions by Cabinet Type

Choosing the right cabinet requires matching physical dimensions to the available space and intended use. The table below summarizes typical dimensions and weight capacities across all major storage cabinet categories.

Cabinet Type	Width	Depth	Height	Capacity
Tall / Wardrobe	30-42"	18-24"	65-72"	100-150 lbs/shelf
Low Storage	30-48"	18-20"	36-42"	75-125 lbs/shelf
Storage Credenza	60-72"	20-24"	29-36"	75-100 lbs/shelf
Mobile Pedestal	15-18"	20-24"	27-28"	50-75 lbs/drawer
Display Cabinet	30-48"	12-18"	36-72"	30-60 lbs/shelf
Media Cabinet	30-60"	20-24"	36-66"	Varies
Storage Cubes	12-15"/cube	12-15"/cube	12-15"/cube	30-50 lbs/cube

Commercial-grade laminate cabinets with steel-reinforced shelving consistently outperform residential-grade particleboard units on load capacity and long-term durability. Always specify adjustable-shelf pin systems rated for the expected load before ordering.

3. Locking and Security Options

Security is a common requirement in commercial storage. Cabinet locking systems range from basic cam locks to high-security pin-tumbler cylinders. Understanding which lock type matches the security profile of the stored materials is essential.

Lock Type	Mechanism	Best For
Cam Lock	Single rotating cylinder engaging a cam behind the door/drawer	General office supply and personal item storage
Bar Lock / Interlock	Vertical steel bar engages multiple drawers from a single lock point	Tall cabinets with multiple drawers; one key secures all
Pin-Tumbler Cylinder	Higher pick resistance; more sophisticated locking mechanism	Regulated materials, confidential records, high-value items
Master Key System	One master key opens all cabinets; individual keys for assigned units	Large offices with many locking cabinets; facilities management
Electronic / Keypad	Digital code or RFID card access; access list changes without re-keying	Shared environments with changing authorized users

Always specify locking storage for HR offices, legal departments, healthcare clinical areas, finance departments, and executive offices. Locking is optional but often preferred for general administrative areas and open-plan supply storage.

4. Adjustable Shelving

Adjustable shelving is one of the most important features in any storage cabinet. Fixed shelves limit the cabinet's utility as storage needs change over time.

Shelf Adjustment Systems

- Steel pin system (most common): Rows of holes drilled in cabinet interior walls accept metal pins that support the shelf. Adjustment in 1–2" increments.
- Clip rail system: Horizontal metal rails accept shelf clips at any position. More flexible than pin systems and can support heavier loads per clip.
- Fixed shelf: Some cabinets include one or more fixed shelves as structural elements; remaining shelves are adjustable. The middle or bottom shelf is often fixed for integrity.

Shelf Construction

- Commercial-grade: Steel-reinforced laminate or formed steel shelves rated 75–150 lbs per shelf under evenly distributed load.
- Residential-grade: Particleboard without steel reinforcement; sags under sustained loads over 50 lbs. Not suitable for commercial use.
- Shelf depth should match cabinet depth — a shelf that is too shallow wastes cabinet space; too deep may prevent the door from closing.

When specifying adjustable shelving, identify the heaviest items to be stored and confirm the shelf rating exceeds that load. A ream of copy paper weighs approximately 5 lbs; 10 reams on one shelf equals 50 lbs. A shelf full of binders can reach 40–80 lbs.

5. Door Styles and Access

Cabinet door style affects daily usability, aesthetics, and the space required in front of the cabinet for operation.

Door Style	How It Works	Clearance Needed	Best Use Case
Hinged (Swing)	Swings outward on hinges; concealed or piano hinges	Full door width in front	Standard in most environments; most common
Sliding	Moves horizontally on a track; half the cabinet accessible at a time	None in front	Tight spaces, busy aisles
Tambour (Roll-Up)	Horizontal slats roll into housing above; full-face access	None in front	Credenzas, admin areas, reception desks
Glass	Tempered glass in aluminum/wood frame; clear, frosted, or tinted	Full door width	Display cabinets, reception, executive offices
Open (No Doors)	Open shelf access; no closure mechanism	None	Supply storage; immediate access priority

For high-traffic administrative areas, tambour doors provide the best combination of full-width access and zero swing clearance.

6. Mobile vs. Fixed Storage

The choice between mobile (caster-mounted) and fixed (floor-standing) storage depends on how often the cabinet needs to move and the stability requirements of the environment.

Fixed Storage Cabinets

Fixed cabinets are heavier, have greater load capacity per shelf, and present a more permanent, integrated appearance. Tall fixed cabinets (65"+ height) should be anchored to the wall with anti-tip hardware in virtually all installations.

Mobile Storage Cabinets

Mobile cabinets run on four casters (typically two locking) and can be repositioned quickly for office reconfigurations, hybrid work setups, and shared environments. They sacrifice some load capacity compared to fixed equivalents but are far more versatile in dynamic offices.

Caster Specifications

- Hard casters: For carpeted floors — harder surface rolls more easily on carpet fibers.
- Soft/rubber casters: For hard floors (wood, tile, polished concrete) — prevents scratching and reduces rolling noise.
- Standard sizes: 2–3" for under-desk pedestals; 3–4" for larger rolling cabinets.
- Locking casters: At minimum two of four casters should lock to prevent rolling when drawers are opened under load.

7. Storage Cabinet Selection by Space Type

Different departments and office environments have distinct storage cabinet needs. Understanding these needs allows precise product selection.

Space Type	Recommended Cabinets	Key Considerations
Breakrooms / Kitchens	Tall storage, low cabinets, open cubbies	Easy-clean laminate; locking for valuables; personal storage lockers
Mailrooms / Copy Rooms	Tall storage (36–42" wide), heavy-duty shelves	Rated for paper weight; durable edge banding; high traffic
Reception Areas	Low cabinets, credenzas, glass-door display	Finished on all sides if freestanding; lockable for forms
Private Offices	Credenza (60–72"), low storage under windows, wardrobe	Matching finish to desk essential; dual storage + surface function
Open-Plan Offices	Mobile pedestals, shared lateral files, perimeter low cabinets	Personal lockers or assigned cubbies for employees without fixed desks
Healthcare / Clinical	Laminate or painted steel; locking for medication/samples	Clean-edge construction; withstands clinical disinfectants

8. ADA Accessibility Considerations

For storage cabinets in ADA-accessible environments, several guidelines apply to ensure usability for employees and visitors with disabilities.

Reach Range Requirements

- Forward reach limit: No higher than 48" above floor for accessible storage.
- Low reach limit: No lower than 15" above floor.
- Commonly accessed items must be placed within the 15–48" range; reserve top shelves for infrequent items.

Floor Clearance and Hardware

- 30" × 48" clear floor space required in front of any accessible storage location.
- Hardware requiring tight grasping, pinching, or twisting is not ADA-accessible.
- Specify lever-style handles, D-ring pulls, or push-to-open mechanisms.
- For fully accessible environments, consider keypad or card-access locks instead of standard cam locks.

9. Seismic Anchoring and Safety

In seismically active regions, tall storage cabinets must be anchored to the wall to prevent tipping during seismic activity. This is a building code requirement in many jurisdictions, not merely a recommendation.

When to Anchor

- Any freestanding cabinet over 48" tall should be anchored to the wall.
- In California and other Zone 4 seismic areas, wall anchoring is required by code for commercial occupancies.
- Fully loaded tall cabinets can exceed 300–400 lbs — a tipping event is a serious life-safety risk.

Anchoring Methods

Method	Description	Security Level
Anti-Tip Straps	Heavy-duty nylon straps with two mounting points: cabinet back and wall stud	Basic — simplest, least intrusive
Steel L-Bracket	Metal bracket bolted to top rear of cabinet and through wall into stud	Moderate — more rigid than straps
Wall-to-Cabinet Bolt	Through-bolt or lag bolt through cabinet back panel into wall stud	Maximum — permanently anchors cabinet

Always anchor into studs or concrete anchors — drywall anchors alone are not adequate for the forces generated by a tall, fully loaded cabinet during seismic activity.

10. Finishing and Material Options

The surface material of a storage cabinet affects durability, maintenance requirements, aesthetics, and cost.

Material	Characteristics	Best For
Laminate (TFM / HPL)	Heat-bonded surface; scratch/stain resistant; dozens of woodgrain and solid-color finishes; PVC edge banding	Commercial standard; high-use environments; best value
Painted Steel	All-steel construction; wipedown cleanability; heavier than laminate; limited color range	Mailrooms, healthcare, education, government
Wood Veneer	Natural wood grain; requires more maintenance; susceptible to moisture; 30–50% premium over laminate	Executive environments, premium reception areas

For most commercial applications, thermally fused melamine (TFM) with 3mm PVC edge banding provides the optimal combination of durability, appearance, and cost.

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