

# Cubicles & Workstations

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

## Top 10 Questions — Cubicles & Workstations

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### What is the standard size for a commercial cubicle?

The most common commercial cubicle footprints are 6' x 6' (36 sq ft) for compact workstations and 8' x 8' (64 sq ft) for standard private-feel stations. 6' x 8' is a popular intermediate size that balances surface area with floor efficiency. Panel heights range from 42 inches (low — provides some privacy while preserving sight lines) to 53–65 inches (standard — seated privacy without full enclosure) to 85+ inches (full height — approaches private office enclosure). The right size depends on the role's privacy needs, the amount of equipment on the desk, and the floor plate density goals of the project.

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### What is the difference between systems furniture and open-plan benching?

Systems furniture (panel-based workstations) uses partition walls as the structural skeleton — surfaces and storage hang from the panels. Typical panel heights range from 42 to 85+ inches, providing varying degrees of visual and acoustic privacy. Benching systems share a central structural spine or beam with low panels (12–24 inches above the surface) that are purely functional dividers. Systems furniture delivers more acoustic and visual privacy, more built-in storage, and stronger personal territory signals. Benching is more space-efficient, less expensive per station, and better for collaborative cultures. The choice depends on the balance of deep-focus vs. collaborative work the team performs.

**3****How do I plan power and data for a cubicle installation?**

Cubicle power delivery connects to a base building electrical circuit at a power entry point and distributes through a raceway system integrated into the panel structure. Standard specification for a knowledge worker cubicle is 4 power outlets plus 2 data ports plus 1 USB-A/C combo per station. Higher-density power users (dual monitors, desktop PC, docking station, phone) should receive 6 outlets and 4 data ports. Power entry requires coordination with the building's electrical infrastructure — confirm floor box or wall outlet locations align with the cubicle run configuration before furniture is ordered. Retrofitting power feed locations after installation is significantly more expensive than planning ahead.

**4****What panel heights should I choose for my workstations?**

Panel height selection balances privacy with openness and natural light penetration. Low panels (42 inches) allow standing employees to see over them, promote a collaborative culture, and let daylight travel deep into the floor plate — best for highly collaborative teams in well-lit spaces. Standard panels (53–65 inches) provide seated visual privacy without full enclosure — the most common choice for mixed-role open-plan environments. Full-height panels (85+ inches) approach private office enclosure and are appropriate for roles requiring concentration, confidentiality, or phone-intensive work. Many installations use mixed heights — full or standard at panel faces, lower at interior dividers — to balance privacy and openness.

**5****What should be included in a fully specified cubicle workstation?**

A complete cubicle specification includes: the panel configuration (footprint, heights, finish, fabric); the work surface (size, laminate finish, with or without modesty panel); overhead storage (hutch or overhead bins — critical in cubicle environments to compensate for lack of closet storage); pedestal storage (BBF or FF under the work surface or as a mobile unit); tackable surface or whiteboard within the panel area; task lighting (overhead ambient lighting often insufficient within panel enclosures); cable management (raceway with grommets); and power/data (outlets, data ports, USB). Specifying an incomplete workstation — panels without storage or storage without power — produces an unusable station.

**6****How are cubicle panels typically finished?**

Cubicle panels are finished in fabric, laminate, or a combination. Fabric panels (the most common commercial choice) have a textile surface that absorbs sound, accepts pushpins, and coordinates with office color schemes — specify fabric with 50,000+ double rubs for commercial durability. Laminate panels have a hard surface for a clean, modern look but offer no acoustic benefit and are not tackable. Many commercial configurations use fabric on the upper panel sections (for acoustic and tackable benefit) and laminate on lower sections (for durability and cleaning ease). Panel frame colors are typically powder-coated aluminum or steel in black, silver, or white.

**7****What aisle and circulation clearances are required around cubicles?**

Primary circulation aisles between cubicle clusters should be 44 inches minimum (ADA requirement) with 60–72 inches recommended for comfortable two-way foot traffic. Secondary aisles between individual cubicles need 36 inches minimum for safe passage. The ADA requires a 60-inch turning radius within accessible areas, so cubicle configurations serving accessible workstations must provide this clearance. Egress aisles leading to emergency exits must be kept clear at all times — confirm cubicle run ends do not block exit routes per local fire code. All aisle widths should be documented in the floor plan and verified before furniture is ordered.

**8****How do I add or reconfigure cubicles as my team grows?**

One of the key advantages of systems furniture over freestanding desks is reconfigurability. Cubicle panels connect through standardized brackets and post systems, allowing stations to be added at the end of a run or the interior of a cluster without replacing the entire installation. When expanding, specify matching panel heights, fabrics, and frame finishes from the same manufacturer's line — mixing series or generations often produces visible size and finish discrepancies. Power connections must be extended when adding stations at the end of a run; confirm the electrical infrastructure can support the additional load. Budget for professional installation for any reconfiguration beyond a simple panel addition.

**9****What overhead storage options are available for cubicles?**

Cubicles support overhead storage mounted directly on the panel structure above the work surface, typically at 18–24 inches above the desk. Overhead bins (enclosed with doors) provide concealed storage for supplies, personal items, and reference materials. Open shelves allow quick access to frequently used binders and books. Tackable overhead surfaces provide a vertical work zone for pinned materials. Combination units offer a mix of enclosed and open storage in a single overhead component. The height of overhead storage must be coordinated with the panel height — full-height overhead units on low panels reduce the open, collaborative feel that low panels are chosen to create.

**10****What is a hoteling or hot-desking cubicle configuration?**

Hoteling and hot-desking configurations use unassigned workstations that employees book or claim on arrival rather than having a permanently assigned desk. These stations are typically benching or low-panel cubicle configurations with minimal personal storage — a small locker bank nearby substitutes for under-desk pedestals. The work surface is clear of personal items at end of day. Power and data specs for hoteling stations should be generous (4–6 outlets, 2–4 data ports, USB) since users arrive with varying equipment. Hoteling is well-suited for hybrid teams with fewer than 60–70% of employees in the office on any given day and requires a locker program to replace the personal storage that assigned workstations provide.

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

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