

Mobile Pedestals

Q1. What is the difference between a mobile pedestal and a fixed desk pedestal?

A: A mobile pedestal is a freestanding, wheeled storage unit that can be moved independently of the desk or workstation. It sits on locking casters that allow the unit to be repositioned, relocated to a different workstation, or moved out of the way when not needed. Mobile pedestals are self-contained units with their own structural frame; they are not fastened to the desk or workstation frame during normal use. A fixed desk pedestal — also called a modesty pedestal or integral pedestal — is built into the desk structure and is supported by or attached to the desk frame. It cannot be moved without moving the entire desk. Fixed pedestals are standard in many freestanding executive desk configurations and in some systems furniture platforms where the pedestal is a structural element of the workstation. Fixed pedestals typically provide a more solid, furniture-quality appearance and may have higher top-surface load capacities since they share structure with the desk, but they sacrifice all the flexibility of mobility. The choice between mobile and fixed depends on the work environment and expected future needs. For hoteling environments, open-plan layouts, or any situation where workstation reconfiguration is anticipated, mobile pedestals are the clear choice. For permanent private offices or executive suites where the desk is a long-term fixed installation, integral fixed pedestals may provide a more cohesive aesthetic. In benching or systems furniture installations, the manufacturer typically specifies whether mobile or fixed pedestals are compatible with the particular product line.

Q2. What does BBF, BF, and FF mean when shopping for mobile pedestals?

A: These letter designations describe the drawer configuration from top to bottom. "B" stands for Box drawer — a shallow drawer typically 3 to 5 inches in interior height, used for storing small supplies, pens, notepads, staplers, and similar accessories. "F" stands for File drawer — a full-depth drawer, typically 10 to 12 inches or more in interior height, designed to accommodate hanging file frames for letter- or legal-size documents. BBF (Box, Box, File) is the most common configuration in commercial office environments because it balances supply storage and file storage in a single unit. The two box drawers handle daily small items while the file drawer manages document filing. BF (Box, File) is a two-drawer variant appropriate where the pedestal height must be minimized or where filing is the primary function and supply storage is secondary. FF (File, File) is appropriate for users with heavy filing requirements and minimal supply storage needs. Additional configurations exist outside these three standards. A cushion-top pedestal replaces the standard flat top with an upholstered seat surface, converting the pedestal into occasional seating as well as storage. Some manufacturers offer a single-wide file-over-door configuration where the lower portion is a hinged door storage compartment rather than a drawer. When comparing specifications, always confirm the interior height and depth of each drawer type — "file drawer" dimensions vary between manufacturers and not all file drawers accommodate hanging files without a separately purchased frame.

Q3. How do I know if a mobile pedestal will fit under my desk?

A: The critical dimension is the pedestal height with casters installed versus the clearance height under the work surface. Standard commercial mobile pedestals with casters installed measure 24 to 28 inches in total height. Standard work surfaces are positioned at 29 to 30 inches above finished floor. This leaves approximately 1 to 6 inches of clearance between the pedestal top and the underside of the work surface — enough for the pedestal to slide under in most cases but not enough to add a monitor or other items on top of the pedestal while it is under the desk. If the pedestal will be positioned under the desk in the user's leg space, knee clearance becomes the governing constraint, not just pedestal height. ADA standards require 27 inches minimum clear height and 30 inches clear width under the work surface within the knee clearance zone. A pedestal measuring 15 inches wide placed within the knee clearance zone reduces available knee width from 30 to 15 inches — below the ADA minimum. Position the pedestal at the side of the knee clearance zone rather than in the center, or use a desk design where the pedestal bay is outside the knee clearance area by design. For height-adjustable desks, measure the clearance height at the desk's lowest intended sitting height, not at standing height. When the desk is at sitting height — typically 26 to 29 inches — a 28-inch-high pedestal may have only 0 to 1 inch of clearance, requiring the desk to be raised before the pedestal can be slid in or out. This compatibility issue is common in height-adjustable benching systems; verify the desk underside clearance at minimum height against the pedestal height with casters installed before finalizing specifications for any sit-to-stand environment.

Q4. What type of casters should I specify for different floor surfaces?

A: Caster selection for mobile pedestals depends primarily on the floor surface material and secondarily on the frequency of movement. On carpet, rigid nylon or polypropylene casters with a smooth or slightly ribbed tread work well — the resilient carpet surface provides some protection against scratching, and hard-tread casters roll easily across most carpet densities. Avoid very soft rubber casters on thick carpet, as they can sink into the pile and make the pedestal difficult to roll. On hard floor surfaces — luxury vinyl tile, polished concrete, wood, tile, or laminate flooring — specify polyurethane-tread casters. Polyurethane is softer than nylon, self-sealing against minor sharp debris, and does not mark or scratch finished hard floor surfaces. Hard nylon or polypropylene casters on finished hard floors will leave marks, particularly when pivoting (swiveling without rolling), and over time will create visible wear patterns in high-traffic areas around frequently moved pedestals. Dual-material casters with a nylon core and polyurethane tread are the best choice for environments with mixed carpet and hard surface flooring. Caster size matters for rolling performance on transitions between floor surfaces. Small-diameter casters (1.5 inches) catch on floor transitions, carpet edge protectors, and raised thresholds. Two-inch or larger diameter casters roll over minor floor transitions with minimal resistance. If the pedestal will regularly cross any floor transition — at door thresholds, between carpet and hard floor zones, over cable protectors — specify 2-inch minimum caster diameter. Larger casters also distribute weight more evenly, reducing point-load pressure on delicate floor surfaces.

Q5. Do mobile pedestals meet BIFMA standards, and why does that matter?

A: BIFMA (Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association) publishes ANSI/BIFMA X5.9, the standard for storage furniture including mobile pedestals. Testing under this standard covers drawer load capacity, rolling resistance and caster performance, tip-over stability with loaded drawers extended, lock durability, and structural integrity under normal use conditions. A pedestal that has been tested and verified to BIFMA X5.9 standards meets a defined minimum performance threshold for commercial applications. BIFMA compliance matters for commercial buyers because it establishes a verified quality floor above which all compliant products must perform. Without BIFMA compliance verification, you are evaluating quality based on manufacturer claims, visual inspection, and anecdotal references — none of which are as reliable as standardized third-party testing. In institutional and government procurement, BIFMA compliance is typically a mandatory specification requirement that can be cited in purchasing documents to establish the quality standard applied to the selection. When evaluating BIFMA compliance claims, ask for test documentation — the actual test report from an accredited testing laboratory — rather than a self-declared compliance statement. Some manufacturers apply BIFMA branding to their marketing materials without having formally tested or third-party verified their products against the standard. An accredited third-party test report from an organization like INTERTEK, SGS, or a comparable testing laboratory is the credible evidence of genuine BIFMA compliance. If a vendor cannot provide third-party test documentation, treat the compliance claim with appropriate skepticism.

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