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# Break Room & Lunch Room Furniture Layout

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## Space Planning Guide

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A break room or lunch room serves as the social hub of an office — a place where employees eat, decompress, and connect informally. Planning it correctly means selecting the right table-and-chair configuration for peak usage, maintaining the required clearances for emergency egress and ADA compliance, and creating a flow that keeps the entry path clear even when every seat is occupied. This guide provides the exact table sizes, chair densities, clearance requirements, and furniture specifications for a functional break room serving 15–50 employees.

### Room Dimensions & Available Floor Space

Break room size should be planned based on peak concurrent users — typically 15–20% of total employee headcount will use the break room simultaneously at lunch peak. For a 50-person office, plan for 8–12 concurrent users; for a 100-person office, plan for 15–25 concurrent users.

Standard deductions for break room planning:

- Kitchen counter/appliance zone (counter depth 24"–30" + 36" access aisle): A standard kitchen counter run of 96"×24" with a 36" aisle = 48 sq ft reserved along one wall
- Door swing (36"–42"): ~9–12 sq ft
- Primary aisle between table rows (48"): designated high-traffic path from door to counter and vice versa
- Perimeter clearances (HVAC, windows): ~10–15 sq ft

User Capacity	Table Seats Needed	Recommended Room Size
8–12 concurrent users	10–12 seats	12'×18' to 14'×20' (216–280 sq ft)
12–20 concurrent users	14–20 seats	16'×22' to 18'×24' (352–432 sq ft)
20–30 concurrent users	22–30 seats	20'×26' to 22'×28' (520–616 sq ft)

### Recommended Furniture Layout

For a 14'×20' break room serving 12–15 concurrent users:

- Three 36"×72" rectangular break room tables — each seats 6 (3 per long side), three tables = 18 seats total. At 72" long, each table occupies 36 sq ft footprint; three tables in a row (parallel) consume 3 × 72" = 216" (18') of length and 36" (3') of depth plus aisles.

- Tables arranged in a parallel row configuration with 48" aisles between tables and 36" between the end table and the wall
- Eighteen 18"×18" café/break room chairs — side chairs that stack 8–10 high; 3 per long side of each table, 1 per end
- Kitchen counter run along one 14' wall: 96"×24" laminate counter with under-counter cabinet storage below and wall cabinets above (storage for 15+ people's supplies)
- Appliance placement: microwave on counter at 14"–18" high (reachable from 54" standing height), refrigerator (30"×32") with 36" door swing clearance, coffee station

Per-person space allocation at tables: Each seated user needs 18"–24" of table width. At a 72" table with 3 per side:  $72" \div 3 = 24"$  per person — standard for a break room table, slightly less generous than a conference table (24"–30" per person) but appropriate for informal dining.

## Clearance Requirements

- Chair pullback and aisle clearance (table edge to next table edge = 60"–72" minimum): A break room chair requires 17"–18" depth when seated, plus 18"–24" of pullback to rise. Total: 35"–42" per side from table edge. Two facing table edges must be separated by 35"–42" + aisle + 35"–42" = minimum 70"–84" center-to-center table spacing, or approximately 48"–60" clear aisle between chair backs of two facing tables.
- ADA accessible table position (30"×48" approach space, 27" knee clearance under table): At least one table position must be ADA-accessible. Standard 29"–30" high break room tables with no center pedestal leg typically provide the required knee clearance. Position the ADA seat at a table end with an adjacent 30"×48" clear floor space.
- Kitchen counter access aisle (36" minimum; 48" preferred): The aisle between the counter front edge and the nearest table edge must be 36" minimum to allow one person to stand at the counter. 48" allows one person to stand at the counter while another walks behind them — recommended for peak-use break rooms.
- Refrigerator door clearance (36"): A standard refrigerator door swings 36" — this arc must be clear at all times. Position the refrigerator at the end of the counter run so its door swings along the wall or into a designated appliance niche, not across the main aisle.
- ADA 60" turning radius: Required at least once in the break room, typically in the center of the room between the table rows. With 60" aisles between rows in a 14' room, a 60" turning circle fits in the main traffic aisle.
- Emergency egress path (44" per assembly occupancy): A break room classified as dining/assembly occupancy requires 44"-wide aisles. Even if classified as office support space (more common), maintain 36"+ unobstructed path from farthest seat to exit.

## Option A: Round Tables Configuration

Three or four 48" round tables instead of rectangular tables create a more social, café-style break room. A 48" round table seats 4–5 people comfortably (36"–38" per person around the perimeter). Four round tables = 16–20 seats. Each 48" round table requires 108"×108" of floor space including pulled-back chairs — approximately 81 sq ft per table. Four tables = 324 sq ft occupied. In a 400–500 sq ft room, this is viable. Round tables are preferred when social interaction is a higher priority than maximum seating

density.

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## Option B: Counter Bar Seating

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In break rooms where floor space is limited (under 200 sq ft), replace rectangular tables with 12"–15" deep wall-mounted counter bars at 42" height (bar height) with bar stools. A 12'x16' room with a 10-foot bar counter along one wall seats 5–6 people on stools at 24" spacing, plus 4 people at a single 36"x36" café table — 10 seats in approximately 192 sq ft. Bar-height seating is space-efficient and informal, suitable for quick breaks rather than full lunches.

## Option C: Flexible/Folding Table Configuration

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For break rooms that double as training or meeting spaces: use folding 30"x72" rectangular tables (or flip-top training tables) that can be rearranged for different functions. Three folding tables store in a 6'x3' wall niche when folded, making the room available for standing events, training, or catered lunches without permanent furniture commitment. This hybrid approach requires planning a 6'x3' (18 sq ft) storage niche adjacent to the break room, typically in a shared storage room or corridor.