
Vertical File Cabinets

Q1. What is the standard size for a vertical file cabinet?

A: The two standard width options are letter-size (15" wide) for standard 8.5"×11" documents and legal-size (18" wide) for 8.5"×14" legal documents. Both sizes come in 2-, 4-, and 5-drawer configurations. Depth is typically 27" to 28" for most commercial models. Letter-size 4-drawer units are the most common format in modern offices, fitting the majority of standard business documents while occupying a compact floor footprint.

Q2. How many files does a vertical file cabinet hold?

A: Each drawer of a standard vertical file cabinet holds approximately 25" to 27" of linear filing space, which translates to roughly 25 to 35 standard hanging file folders with contents at comfortable file density. A 4-drawer cabinet holds approximately 100 to 140 hanging folders total, which accommodates thousands of individual documents. For planning purposes, a 4-drawer letter-size vertical cabinet is typically sufficient for 1 to 2 active employees' personal file storage needs.

Q3. Are vertical file cabinets still relevant in a digital office?

A: Yes — even primarily digital offices need physical storage for documents that require wet signatures, original regulatory filings, notarized documents, and confidential personnel records that must be maintained physically. The quantity has decreased, but the need hasn't disappeared for most organizations. A smaller number of 2- or 4-drawer cabinets, properly secured, covers the residual physical filing needs of organizations that have otherwise transitioned to digital workflows.

Q4. What is an anti-tip interlock on a file cabinet?

A: An anti-tip interlock is a mechanical system in a multi-drawer file cabinet that prevents more than one drawer from being opened at a time. When one drawer is open, the interlock locks the other drawers in the closed position. This prevents the cabinet from tipping forward under the weight of an open fully loaded drawer — a real safety hazard without this mechanism. All commercial-grade multi-drawer file cabinets should include this feature. Verify its presence before purchasing any 4- or 5-drawer cabinet.

Q5. What is a fire-rated file cabinet?

A: A fire-rated file cabinet is specifically insulated to protect its contents during a building fire. While a standard steel file cabinet offers no fire protection (the steel conducts heat quickly), a fire-rated cabinet uses insulating materials between the inner and outer walls to maintain an internal temperature below 350°F — the temperature at which paper ignites — for the cabinet's rated duration (typically 1 hour at UL Class 350). Fire-rated file cabinets are substantially heavier than standard cabinets and significantly more expensive, but are appropriate for storing irreplaceable documents.