Desk Space Planning

Q1. How much space do I need behind a desk?

A: 36" minimum for comfortable chair rollout and egress — this is the standard commercial building code requirement. For premium comfort, 48" is better. In executive offices with visitor seating behind or beside the desk, 48"–60" is ideal.

Q2. How do I plan an office with multiple workstations?

A: Start with the total square footage, subtract circulation paths, then allocate 80–100 sq ft per workstation for comfortable density. Plan chair clearances first — they drive everything else. Draw it on paper or use a free space planner before ordering any furniture.

Q3. Can I put a desk in front of a window?

A: Placing a monitor directly in front of a window creates problematic glare and eyestrain. Orient desks parallel to windows (side-lit) instead. If the only viable position is window-facing, a monitor hood or anti-glare screen can mitigate the problem.

Q4. What aisle width do I need between desk rows?

A: Primary walkways need 36" minimum. For ADA compliance in shared workspaces, 44" is the standard. Secondary aisles (accessed occasionally) can work at 28"–30" if space is truly limited.

Q5. How do I figure out if an L-shaped desk will fit?

A: Measure both wall lengths where the L footprint will sit. Add the two desk dimensions (e.g., 60" + 48") and check that both wall spans have enough room. Then confirm chair clearance behind the seated position — 36" minimum from the corner junction.

Q6. What's the right desk size for a 10x10 office?

A: A 60"x30" desk fits in a 10x10 room with a back-to-wall placement, leaving about 4' of space in front of the desk. A 72" desk is workable but tight. An L-shaped desk is not recommended in a 10x10 room — it will crowd out too much floor space.

Q7. How far should a desk be from a wall on the sides?

A: Side clearance isn't a functional requirement for the desk itself, but most people prefer 6"–12" of breathing room on each side. More importantly, check that the desk doesn't block access to electrical outlets or data ports on side walls.

Q8. What's the best desk orientation for productivity?

A: Facing a door is generally preferred for focus — you can see when someone enters without being surprised. In open-plan offices, positioning screens away from high-traffic paths reduces visual distraction. Facing a wall creates a focused tunnel environment — good for deep work, isolating for social types.

Q9. How do I plan space for a shared office?

A: Treat each occupant as needing their own chair clearance zone (36"–48"), plus shared aisle space between positions. In a 12x12 shared office, two desks positioned along opposite walls with an aisle between them is the standard approach.

Q10. Should I hire a space planner or can I do it myself?

A: For most private offices and small suites (under 10 workstations), a DIY layout with a room sketch and proper clearance standards is completely sufficient. For larger open-plan offices, a professional space plan helps optimize density, workflow, and code compliance. FOF offers complimentary space planning consultation for multi-unit orders.