
Reception Desks

Q1. What are the standard components of a reception desk configuration?

A: A full reception desk typically includes: a main transaction counter (the surface where visitors sign in or interact), a lower-height work surface for the receptionist's computer and daily work, transaction top or glass transaction shield, side return or storage returns, and often overhead storage or display panels. The transaction counter is typically 42" tall (ADA accessible for a standing visitor) while the receptionist's work area is 29-30" standard desk height. Understanding which components are needed before specifying saves significant time.

Q2. What's the ADA requirement for reception desk design?

A: ADA accessibility requires at least a portion of the transaction counter to be at 36" or lower height for wheelchair accessibility. If your reception desk has a uniform 42" counter height, add an ADA-accessible transaction lowered section. The lowered section must be at minimum 36" wide and no higher than 36". This isn't optional in most commercial environments — it's a legal requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Make sure any reception desk you specify either includes an ADA section or can accommodate one.

Q3. What size reception desk do I need?

A: Size depends on: the space available, the number of receptionists, and the function of the desk. For a single receptionist, a typical L-configuration measuring 72"W x 42"D or similar is common. For multi-receptionist desks, plan 60-72" of linear counter space per person. Also account for the approach space in front of the desk — visitors need at least 60" of clear floor space in front of the desk. Measure the entry space carefully before specifying any reception desk — the visual impact has to work with the room proportions.

Q4. What materials are most durable for reception desks?

A: High-pressure laminate (HPL) on a commercial substrate is the most durable and cost-effective choice for the work surface. Solid wood or wood veneer provides a premium appearance for executive environments. Glass tops for transaction surfaces are visually striking but high-maintenance. For the base and case construction, commercial-grade MFC or MDF with laminate is standard. Avoid particle board in high-contact areas where bumping and rolling chair impact is frequent. Powder-coat metal accents add contemporary industrial styling and are extremely durable.

Q5. What's the typical lead time for a reception desk?

A: Stock or modular reception desk programs can ship in 1-3 weeks. Custom or semi-custom reception desks — particularly curved, branded, or non-standard configurations — run 6-12 weeks lead time. If you're planning a new office opening or renovation, get the reception desk ordered first. It's often the longest lead-time item and the most visible element of the new space. Don't treat the reception desk as something you can order at the last minute.
