



Accounting & CPA Firms

Industry Guide

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Accounting & CPA Firms Office Furniture — What You Actually Need

Accounting firms have a furniture problem that's unique to the industry: you're furnishing for two very different work modes — the 40-hour-week pace of the off-season and the 60–80-hour pace of tax season. Get this right and you have a functional firm year-round without paying for square footage you don't use 8 months of the year.

The Must-Have Pieces for Accounting Work

Staff Accountant Workstations

Dual monitors are the standard — every staff accountant runs accounting software on one screen and spreadsheets or documents on the other simultaneously. That means desks with a minimum 60" wide surface and 30" depth. L-shaped desks with a return are ideal — the return holds the second screen or document work while the main desk stays clear for client files. Monitor arms free up significant desk space and allow better ergonomic positioning than monitor stands.

File storage at the workstation is critical in accounting — each accountant typically has 10–30 active client files at any point during busy season. Mobile file pedestals (3-drawer, with hanging file capability) are the workhorse solution. Two pedestals per workstation during busy season is not unusual.

Partner & Senior Accountant Offices

Partners need the full package: executive desk (72–84"), credenza behind the desk (for awards, reference books, and working files), lateral file cabinets in legal size, and client meeting chairs. The partner office doubles as a client meeting room — two quality client chairs positioned across from the desk create the right dynamic. Consider a small round table (42–48") for a less formal meeting option when partners prefer to sit at the same level as clients.

Tax Season Surge Area

If your firm brings in seasonal staff or has significant volume spikes, a flexible surge area prevents the overloading of permanent workstations. Folding or flip-top tables at 60–72" set up as temporary workstations, paired with stacking chairs or temporary task chairs, can accommodate 3–5× the permanent staff with minimal investment. Plan the room dimensions for this before you see the need — retrofitting surge space in a busy March is not fun.

Client Meeting Rooms

Client confidence in their CPA comes partly from the environment. A clean, organized conference room with a quality table (60–72" for 4–6 people), upholstered meeting chairs, and good lighting signals that you run a professional operation. Keep the conference room free of working file clutter — it's not a second office, it's a client-facing space.

The Storage Reality in Accounting

Accounting firms generate more document volume per employee than almost any other professional services sector. Plan aggressively:

- **Legal-size filing required.** Standard letter-size file drawers (12" interior depth) cannot accommodate legal-size documents (14" long). Lateral files in accounting must be legal-size capable (15" interior depth minimum).
- **Fireproof filing for original documents.** Any firm retaining original client tax returns, contracts, or permanent records needs UL-rated Class 350 fireproof filing cabinets. The loss of original records creates liability that far exceeds the cost of rated storage.
- **High-density storage options.** Mobile shelving (high-density filing systems on tracks) can double or triple the file storage capacity of a given room — worth evaluating if you're storage-constrained.
- **Secure locking.** Client financial records require locked storage. Specify locking bars across lateral file drawers or individual drawer locks.

What Most Buyers Get Wrong

- **Letter-size file cabinets in a legal-size practice.** This creates constant document folding and filing frustration. Verify your document size requirements before ordering any filing.
- **No surge capacity plan.** Firms that don't plan for seasonal volume spikes end up with staff working at conference tables or in hallways during tax season. Even a modest surge room makes a real difference.
- **Cluttered client conference rooms.** An accounting firm conference room with stacks of files and excess furniture signals disorganization to clients. Keep this space dedicated to client meetings and invest in proper file storage elsewhere.
- **Skimping on ergonomic seating for staff.** Tax season means 60–80 hour weeks in those chairs. Non-ergonomic seating at that intensity creates health problems and complaints. Budget appropriately for staff seating.
- **Ignoring document security.** Client financial data is sensitive — open filing in shared areas is a security and trust problem. Every staff workstation area needs locked filing options.

How to Stretch Your Budget

Category	Smart Range	Notes
Staff workstations (L-shaped)	\$500–\$1,200 ea.	With file pedestals included — budget for 2 per station
Legal-size lateral files	\$300–\$700 ea.	Always verify legal-size capability before purchasing
Partner executive desk package	\$1,200–\$3,000	Desk + credenza + at least 2 lateral files

Category	Smart Range	Notes
Fireproof filing (Class 350)	\$600–\$2,000 ea.	Not optional for original records — one per office minimum
Client conference table (4–6 person)	\$800–\$2,500	Quality matters — this is a trust signal
Temporary surge workstations	\$200–\$500/station	Folding tables + task chairs — functional is the goal here

Your Quick Shopping List

- 60–66" L-shaped workstations with file pedestals for staff accountants
- Monitor arms (single or dual) at every workstation
- Legal-size lateral file cabinets (15" depth, locking bar) — minimum 2 per accountant
- UL-rated Class 350 fireproof filing cabinets for original records
- Partner executive desk 72–84" with credenza
- Client conference table 60–72" with upholstered meeting chairs
- 60–72" folding tables + stacking/temporary task chairs for tax season surge area
- BIFMA-certified ergonomic task chairs with lumbar adjustment for all staff

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