



Break Room & Lunch Room Furniture Layout

Space Plan

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The break room is where your team actually recharges — and a poorly planned one sends everyone to the nearest café instead. Whether you're furnishing for 15 people or 50, the same principles apply: table sizes that make sense for actual group sizes, chairs people genuinely want to sit in for 20 minutes, and a layout that handles the lunch-rush flow without creating bottlenecks. Here's how to plan it properly.

What You're Working With

Break room sizing norms vary by company culture and local codes, but OSHA and most facilities standards target **15–25 sq ft per employee** for a break room when multiple shifts or overlapping lunch breaks are accounted for. A 50-person company with staggered breaks can function with a 400–500 sq ft break room.

Team Size	Recommended Break Room Size	Peak Simultaneous Users
15–20 employees	200–280 sq ft	8–10 people
25–35 employees	300–400 sq ft	12–15 people
40–50 employees	400–550 sq ft	18–24 people

The key planning factor: **design for peak simultaneous use (30–40% of team), not total headcount**. If 50 employees stagger their breaks, 15–18 people are in the break room at any given time — plan for that number, not 50.

The Best Layout

For a 20'x22' break room (440 sq ft) serving 30–40 employees with peak use of 15–18 people: **three rectangular tables** that can be used independently or pushed together, plus a small café counter zone and a perimeter appliance/storage wall.

Top Pick: Three 48" x 30" Rectangular Tables + Café Counter Zone + Appliance Wall

- **Three 48" x 30" rectangular café tables** — each seats 4 comfortably (2 per long side) or 6 in a pinch; all three can seat 12–18 people total; tables can be pushed together for a 48" x 90" combined surface for team lunches or catered events
- **Café chairs x16**, 18" x 20" seat, 18" seat height, stackable — stackable chairs let you increase or decrease seating quickly; 16 chairs for 12 regular seats + 4 extras stored on side wall stacking rack
- **Appliance wall (refrigerator, microwave, coffee station)**: 24" deep counter space along one full 20' wall — this typically means a built-in or freestanding 24"-deep counter running the length of the wall; allow 36" of clear aisle in front of the counter for appliance access (refrigerator and microwave doors open out 18"–22")
- **Storage above counter**: wall-mount upper cabinets at 54"+ height above counter for dish storage; ADA-accessible lower cabinets for items used by seated employees
- **Café counter zone: 30"–36" high counter section (36" x 24")** — high counter for grabbing coffee, setting down a lunch bag; one or two counter-height stools (24"–26" seat height) for casual use

- **Sink zone (if applicable):** a single-basin stainless steel sink (24"×20") is standard in corporate break rooms; maintain 30" clearance beside the sink on each side for simultaneous use

Element	Size	Placement
Café tables x3	48"×30" each	Center of room; 42" between tables and to walls
Stackable café chairs x16	18"×20" seat	4 per table + 4 stored on wall rack
Appliance counter	240"×24" (full 20' wall)	Long perimeter wall
Café counter + stools	36"×24" counter + 2 stools	Perpendicular to appliance wall or window wall

Don't Forget These Clearances

- **Appliance access aisle — 48" minimum:** The aisle in front of the counter/appliance wall must be 48"+ to allow a person to stand at a microwave or open a refrigerator while another person passes behind them. A standard residential 36" kitchen clearance is insufficient for a multi-user break room — plan 48".
- **Table-to-wall clearance — 42":** With chairs occupied (24" chair depth + 12" rollback = 36") plus 6" passing margin, tables need 42"+ clearance from the back of the chair position to the nearest wall or counter edge. In a 20'×22' room with a 24"-deep appliance counter on one 20' wall, the remaining space is 240" – 24" = 216" (18'). Three 48"×30" tables with 42" between them and 42" to each wall: 3 × 30" + 4 × 42" = 90" + 168" = 258" — needs a 21.5'+ depth. For a 20' room, reduce clearances to 36" on two sides or use 36"×30" tables.
- **ADA 60" turning circle:** Required in break rooms. Typically positioned in the aisle between tables and the appliance wall — the 48"+ appliance aisle provides this clearance if it's at least 60" wide at one point. A 60" clear zone beside the sink (no chairs in the sink approach zone) satisfies this requirement.
- **Stacked chair storage:** A 16-chair stacking rack occupies approximately 24"×36" at the perimeter wall. Ensure this doesn't block an egress path or the appliance counter access. A dedicated recessed wall niche or a corner position keeps the racks out of the main flow.
- **Sink clearance:** If a sink is present, maintain 30" clear on each side of the sink center for simultaneous use. Also ensure the dishwasher (if any) can fully open (typically 24"+ door drop) without blocking the main aisle.

Other Ways to Set It Up

Option 1: Round Tables — Better Flow and Conversation

Three 42"–48" round tables in a break room of similar size create a warmer, more social atmosphere. A 48" round seats 5–6 comfortably; three rounds = 15–18 seats. Round tables have no "head of table" awkwardness and are easier to navigate around in tight spaces. They do require more floor clearance between them (54"+ edge-to-edge vs. 36" for rectangular) because the curved edge pushes chairs further from center. Best for

companies that prioritize team culture over maximum seat density.

Option 2: Counter-Height Tables + Bar Stools

Counter-height tables (36"–42" H) with bar or counter stools (26"–30" seat H) create a modern café aesthetic that works well in open-concept office environments where the break area flows into the work floor. Counter stools take up less floor space than chairs (no back overhang) and create a more casual, quick-use atmosphere. Best for companies with young, active teams who don't need long seated breaks.

Option 3: Flexible Multi-Use — Folding Tables + Nesting Chairs

For a break room that doubles as an all-hands meeting space or event room, specify folding tables (30"×72") with padded folding chairs. All furniture stores flat against the walls, freeing the entire room in minutes. This is the right choice when the break room also serves as the company's town hall, training, or celebration venue. Requires a dedicated storage wall or adjacent closet for stored tables and chairs when the room is in full break-room configuration.

Your Shopping List

- **48"×30" café tables ×3**, laminate top, 28"–30" height, metal legs — \$120–\$350 each
- **Stackable café chairs ×16**, padded seat, 18"–20" seat height — \$50–\$180 each
- **Chair stacking rack ×1**, 16-chair capacity — \$150–\$400
- **Counter-height stools ×2 (24"–26" seat H)**, for café counter zone — \$80–\$220 each
- **Optional: 36"×24"×36" café counter/table** — \$120–\$350
- **Optional: 60"×24" wall-mount storage cabinet** (upper) — \$180–\$500

Estimated complete break room furniture (excluding appliances): \$1,240–\$4,350. Call [888-719-4960](tel:888-719-4960) for matched café table and chair sets.

Mistakes That Cost You

- **Tables too large for the room:** A 60"×36" rectangular table looks great in a showroom but creates a cramped aisle in a 12'×14' break room. In break rooms under 300 sq ft, stick to 48"×30" or smaller tables to maintain the 42"+ clearances that prevent the constant shuffle.
- **Non-stackable chairs eating up storage:** Break room chairs spend part of every day stacked to make room for cleaning, cleaning, or event setup. Non-stacking chairs can't be efficiently stored — they spread across the room and hallway. Always specify stackable chairs for break rooms.
- **Appliance counter too narrow:** A 24"-deep appliance counter is the minimum; 30" is much more usable for a microwave (typical microwave depth: 14"–16"), a coffee maker (12"–16" deep), and room for a tray or lunch bag. Under-spec'd counter depth creates unsafe overhang situations.
- **Seating for 100% of employees:** Designing for maximum headcount means the room feels empty 90% of the day and cramped 10% of the day. Design for 35–40% of team at peak. Right-size the tables accordingly.

- **No surface for phone/laptop:** Employees increasingly eat lunch while catching up on their phones or working. A café table without a shelf or electrical outlet nearby frustrates users. Specify at least one table position with an adjacent power outlet (floor or wall) for device charging.

Quick Checklist

- Room sized for 35–40% peak simultaneous use (not total headcount)
- Appliance wall aisle: 48"+ in front of microwave, refrigerator, coffee station
- Table-to-wall clearance: 42"+ on all sides of table+chair footprint
- ADA 60" turning circle: confirmed in open zone beside or near sink
- Chairs: stackable, commercial grade
- Chair storage: stacking rack against perimeter wall, outside egress path
- Counter depth: 24"–30" for appliances
- Power outlet at or near at least one table position
- Tables: 48"×30" max for rooms under 300 sq ft

Build a Break Room Your Team Actually Wants to Use

FindOfficeFurniture.com has café tables, stackable chairs, counter stools, and more — at the guaranteed lowest price, with free shipping and a free lifetime warranty.

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