





THE IMPORTANT QUALITIES OF LABORATORY SEATING

by Kelsey Baska

Seating is everywhere we go, from our homes and workspaces to the restaurants we dine at, our dentist's office, or the type of transportation we use. All are different examples of environments with varying expectations for comfort, cleanability, and functionality.



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Laboratory environments are sensitive spaces that have specific requirements when it comes to casework and seating. However, sometimes these standards aren't considered. For example, office chairs are often incorrectly placed in these environments because of their favored aesthetics or traditional comfortability. But these chairs are not designed to support the user or to meet the demanding needs of the lab facility.

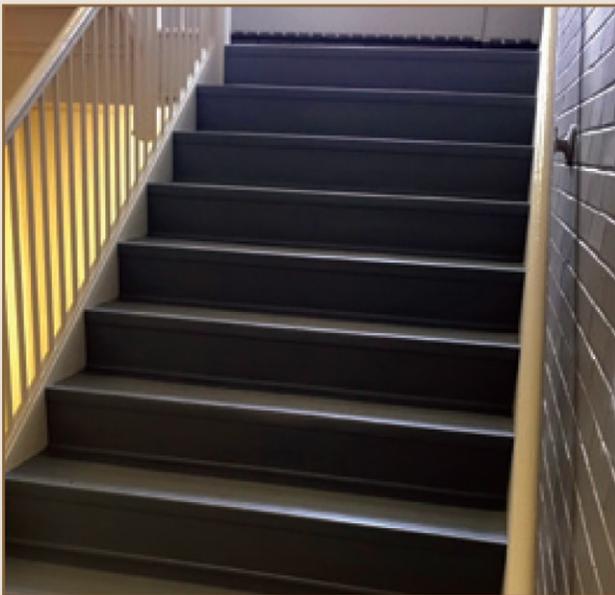
When selecting seating solutions for laboratories, planners must recognize and meet the technical standards of these environments so that people can work safely within the space.

Cleanability

With the continuing spread of Covid-19, cleanability is top of mind for almost everyone around the globe. In a pre-pandemic world, some might not have understood how crucial it is to consider the correct surfaces, textiles, and materials when selecting furniture for shared spaces. But these are requirements that have always been important to sensitive environments like laboratories.

In a workplace with cleanroom requirements, keeping contaminants out is job one. When prioritizing infection control, seating solutions with minimal joints and user adjustments are preferred because these features decrease points of user contact and allow for quick cleaning. Surfaces that are

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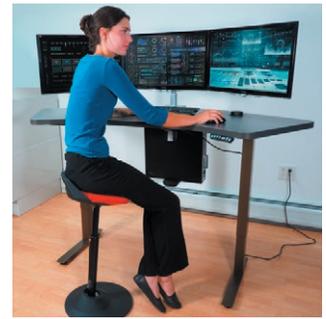
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smooth and seamless can easily be wiped down, and durable materials are necessary to withstand the harsh chemicals used during sanitation.

Adaptable and Intuitive Use

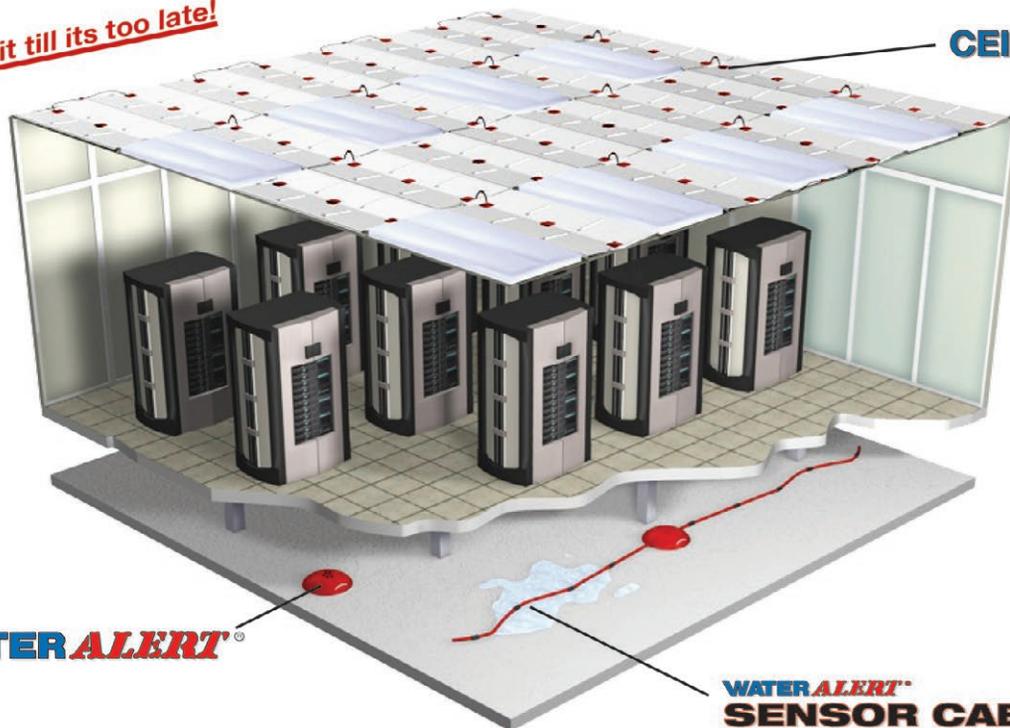
Seating solutions are often used differently in technical spaces than anywhere else. Therefore, decision-makers must consider products designed to accommodate multiple users throughout numerous shifts over twenty-four hours. In these busy environments, several people could be using the same chair throughout the day, in stark contrast to an office setting where someone typically has a chair assigned to their cubicle or desk for individual use. Because of this reality, seating solutions must be adaptable and intuitive to multiple users in the lab setting.

When selecting furniture for lab environments, planners must prioritize ease of use. An array of knobs and levers is not practical for the everyday routine of lab professionals; the last thing they need to focus on is whether or not their chair is adjusted correctly to meet their needs. By incorporating intuitive function into the design of a chair, unnecessary user-made adjustments, such as seat or back tilt, are eliminated. As a result, users can focus on their work without worrying about the comfort and fit of their chairs. In addition, minimal parts mean fewer points of failure and less part replacement.

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Lastly, chairs must accommodate various body types to ensure a similar and comfortable experience for a range of people.

Versatility

The cost of lab space is at a premium, so it's essential to make the most of it. These environments can't afford to be crowded with varying chairs and stools, or else highly trafficked hot spots can become congested. Because of this situation, lab seating needs to be multipurpose and versatile.

Lab environments often consist of different workstations, and some host flexible furniture systems that are height-adjustable and mobile. For seating solutions to be compatible, they must accommodate multiple workstation heights and quickly move between areas. In addition, the seating positions in labs are unique and vary based on activity. For example, users are often perched on the edge of their seats or are forward in posture. Because of this variety of use, chairs in these spaces need to support such active movement. Examples of this flexibility could be that a chair is easy to get in and out of, provides solid lumbar support, or has a non-slip seat that flexes with the user. Lastly, chairs with smaller footprints are beneficial in these environments, as they take up less space.

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Decision-makers must consider the needs of the lab professionals who will be using these chairs every day and who depend on equipment that will safely support them and the significant work that they do.

After all, everyone deserves a great chair.

Built for the Environment

The demanding nature of lab and technical environments means seating surfaces need to meet high standards of performance and function. In some cases, products must test to conform to environmental standards, such as ESD and Cleanroom. In short, this requirement means that not just any chair can be chosen for the space. It is crucial to select seating solutions built specifically for the lab environment and are just as meticulously designed as any other piece of scientific equipment.

Textiles and frame components make up most of the anatomy of a chair and receive the most traction from users and the surrounding environment. Therefore, these materials must be strong enough to hold up during active use or, for example, the wear of higher seat heights. In addition, materials must qualify to withstand the chemical exposure and stringent cleaning regimens of lab spaces. Finally, it is also necessary that materials are durable enough to resist punctures, abrasions, and tears.

Prioritize Technical Standards

When selecting seating for laboratory spaces, planners should prioritize solutions that meet the technical requirements of these sensitive environments and are flexible to work in unison with other furniture. Also, decision-makers must consider the needs of the lab professionals who will be using these chairs every day and who depend on equipment that will safely support them and the significant work that they do. After all, everyone deserves a great chair.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Kelsey Baska is the Marketing Manager for Cramer LLC, located in Kansas City, MO. In 2017, she graduated from the University of Kansas with a degree in Journalism and emphasis in Strategic Communications and began working for Cramer later that year. She is the proud cat mom of two. <https://cramerinc.com>.

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