



# SELECTING A WORKSTATION IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD



COVID-19 has upended the traditional workplace, creating a unique set of challenges for facility managers and designers. One invaluable lesson is to seek out workplace solutions that meet multiple needs. Another is to make sure those solutions empower workers to work how they want in order to be most productive and happy. With this in mind, here are three considerations for selecting and specifying the right workstation for today.

## **ALLOW FOR SAFETY, PERSONAL SPACE AND COLLABORATION**

Designing a workplace today is a balancing act. It must effectively account for social distancing requirements while also recognizing the need for interaction and collaboration. Zoom and videoconferencing can keep teams connected and on-task. That said, nothing can replace the creativity, innovation and organizational culture that springs from in-person interactions. Providing spaces that allow for that activity is inherently important.

For instance, reimagine the traditional conference room. Removing the big executive table and replacing it with

mobile, individual tables easily achieves social distancing and enables teammates to fully connect with one another in an in-person setting.

In environments where workers sit side-by-side, dividers are a great solution to increase worker confidence in an open office. For ultimate flexibility and safety, portable slide dividers can be an excellent option. These products easily slip on or off a desk surface, offering privacy and protection between co-workers when needed. Lightweight and portable, they can be carried to other office spaces, such as conference rooms, break rooms or eating areas. This is a simple solution when people need to come together in a common area, but also adhere to safety measures.

Another consideration: Mobile, single-person workstations. This solution enables workers to “grab and go,” – taking their desks where they need it, when they need it. Workers can easily move to a safe or isolated area, creating separation from their co-workers.

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#### ALLOW FOR STANDARD AND CUSTOMIZATION OPTIONS

Standard workstation products still have their place in today’s modern office. But safety modifications are now essential for providing enhanced confidence for workers. For workers consigned to a fixed workstation and unable to choose their own work location, it’s important to provide them with the power of choice. Workers who have the ability to choose or customize their workstations the way they want are often happier and more productive. An example of a customized option is a height-adjustable

table and an adjustable monitor arm. This dual solution provides better ergonomics. In fact, research shows that standing and changing posture throughout the day brings multiple health benefits, including increased cognitive stimulation.

Many height-adjustable tables have memory-setting features and are available in custom sizes and finish options. These customization features can provide a greater level of personalization and empowerment. Accessory items, such as ambient lighting and personal storage units,

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## SPACE PLANNING

can also be added to further help workers utilize the products that work best for them.

Creating personal workspace “enclaves” or “phone booths” is another option. These semi-private, individual spaces can be an exceptional alternative for workers who need a place to retreat from their assigned stationary workstation for either safety or uninterrupted work.

### ALLOW FOR INDIVIDUAL HOME WORK ENVIRONMENT NEEDS


Employers have had to adapt to their employees working from home during the pandemic. Numerous organizations are now embracing a flexible workforce schedule to manage the number of employees in the office at one time. Additionally, many employees are requesting to work on a hybrid schedule – they want a balance between working at home and having a presence in the office.

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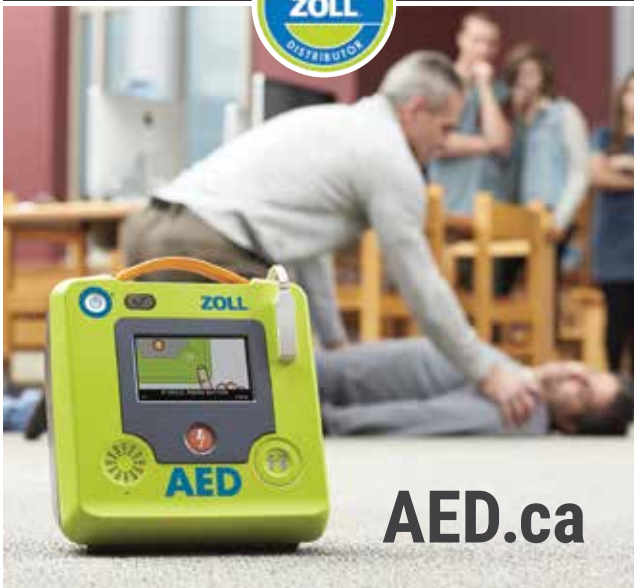

Employers seeking to accommodate this new reality need to equip their staff with the appropriate workplace resources to support and optimize their work. Providing employees with a variety of workstation options that best suit their unique, individual home-based workplace environment is key. For example, a worker in an apartment with limited space might

benefit from a mobile, highly durable table. Alternatively, a worker with a dedicated home office, which may have ample space available, might benefit from a slightly larger height-adjustable desk. Allowing at-home workers to choose what works best for them in their own home is ideal – whether that’s a mobile, adaptable or fixed workplace solution. | CFM&D

Libby Ferin is the vice-president of marketing for Innovative Ergonomic Solutions, a collection of workspace furnishings companies. Committed to growth and excellence, IES is making a lasting impact on the global landscape of ergonomics. More information is available at [SISErgo.com](http://SISErgo.com) and [HATContract.com](http://HATContract.com).



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