

MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

What Colleges and Universities Need to Know when Sourcing Lockers

BY STEVE TROYANO

During the day, college students often need to store their valuables. Individuals in campus health and fitness centers, medical departments, music halls, and athletics centers find their personal lockers in the locker room to be their private sanctuaries. This standard or custom locker serves as the one unique spot on campus—outside of the dormitory—that is designated solely for their use during their college years. A beautifully designed, state-of-the art locker room can increase enrollment and recruitment, improve facility investments, and enhance the aesthetics of a locker room for years to come. Therefore, when selecting new lockers for a facility, planners must be well-informed on the many choices available so that they can identify the best locker for the institution.

A facility manager is empowered to make decisions that will have an impact on lifecycle costs. These critical judgement calls can save the university a great deal of money over a lifetime of their investment. Initially, planners must analyze how many students will use the space and how many individuals will be using the lockers at any given time. This estimation will determine the available lockers needed daily. Identifying how much space is available and calculating lockers can be daunting task. List Industries offers design services to help buyers estimate the number of lockers which will fit in the available spaces.

The next step is to determine the location of the lockers and any physical factors that may affect the decision. Facilities with concrete floors, carpeting, or synthetic material all present differently. The type of flooring may play a key factor in where planners choose to place the lockers to maintain the locker room aesthetics.

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Ventilation is also an important topic in a locker room. Locker doors with ventilation offer aeration for items such as damp clothing, athletic gear, shoes, wet towels, or swimsuits. In a high-traffic, high-moisture area near a campus natatorium or shower area, a moisture-resistant phenolic or HDPE plastic locker is highly recommended and a popular choice.

Phenolic is a material that has been around for over thirty years and is commonly used in science classrooms as black countertops for chemical experiments or as bathroom partitions. The composite resin is a hard and dense material that resists mold, mildew, bacteria, corrosion, and odors. It's available in a wide range of laminate colors and is the go-to material for making lockers that are impact resistant and moisture proof. Phenolic lockers carry a twenty-year warranty, which helps boosts the institution's return on investment.

An alternate category of lockers are plastic lockers, or HDPE (high density polyethylene). These are moisture proof, mold resistant, and come in a range of styles. There are limited colors and locking systems with this form of locker.

Furniture grade wood is another option. This wood is virtually unaffected by typical

locker room conditions resulting in high levels of moisture. It comes in a variety of colors and styles and is designed to stand up to the wear and tear by today's elite athletes. Modern team lockers can be sized and outfitted with numerous options, including school logos, coat rods, upgraded coat hooks, padded seats with team logos, ventilation inserts, power/USB outlets, and shoulder pad holders. These custom upgrades really sell the program to recruits and make the player's locker feel like home.

Designers must also consider lock choices. In the initial design and budget process, a simple padlock, key lock, built-in lock, digital lock, RFID, or use of a cell phone for access are all options that can be considered and tailored for the design.

Most schools have pass-thru lockers attached to the equipment rooms for game-day uniforms and practice uniforms. Built-in locks can be set up so that the player's locker and pass-thru locker have identical combinations. Memorizing only one combination may simplify things for the player.

The extremely durable and secure metal locker is a great investment. These lockers are available in an assortment of colors, lock options, widths, depths, and heights, with door configurations in wardrobe, box, and

Z-style. Metal lockers have an extensive lifespan and, with the improvements in aesthetics and design, they are far from the old industrial look of the past. Metal lockers in a high humidity environment can be coated using a process called Galvanneal prior to being powder-coated with the paint color. This method is similar to the process of painting new cars. Galvanneal functions as a rust inhibitor and can add another five to ten years to metal lockers.

In years past, locker rooms were often afterthoughts. With modern technology, they can be the focus of a new project or a renovation to set off many new designs not previously possible.

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