

# Lectern Buying Guide

This guide will help you choose the type of lectern that is right for your application and needs. First, we will consider the types of construction (i.e. materials). Then we will follow through with size, style, and accessories. The four main types of construction for lecterns are: **Wood, Acrylic, Metal,** and **Molded Polyethylene.**

## Wooden Lecterns

First, wooden lecterns are the most common. These have a myriad of styles and designs, but there are three main groupings: *cheaper particle board lecterns*, *professional particle board lecterns*, and *solid wood with veneered plywood lecterns*. The *cheaper particle board lecterns* use a lower grade particle board and a vinyl cover, typically with a wood look. They usually, but not always, require assembly. The advantage of these is that they are inexpensive and cost less to ship. Manufacturers usually have a few standard models in stock so that they are able to ship them quickly. There is no customizability with these lecterns. They are a good choice for a small office, or a place where they stay in the same room most of the time, and when aesthetics do not matter too much. The *professional particle board lecterns* typically use a high density particle board and a much tougher veneer, like melamine or plastic laminate. The joints are typically glued and screwed for durability. They will typically include at least some hardware, like tilt back wheels, and offer accessories like lights and electronics. There is sometimes limited customizability. They tend to be heavy, but are quite durable, and can look like real wood, or there are often other finishes available. They are a good choice in a professional environment where there are no obstacles to moving them around. *Real wood with veneered plywood lecterns* use solid wood for the styles or frame, and veneered plywood for the panels. This makes them a little lighter than the professional particle board lecterns of the same size. The better the craftsman, the better they look. They can be customizable, at least with the finish, and the whole lectern can be your unique design. These lecterns tend naturally be more expensive, especially if there is any customizing. The joints are typically very strong and are structurally durable, but the finish is fairly easily damaged. They are a good choice for formal locations where they do not get moved around a lot and are not subject to abuse.

## Acrylic Lecterns

Acrylic lecterns are typically clear acrylic. There are several styles to choose from. There are two main groups, *lighter weight bent ones* and *thicker designer type lecterns*. The *designer lecterns* look sharp and remove the perceived barrier between the presenter and the audience. They can be a little heavy, somewhat fragile, and scratch very easily. There can be some customizing, but there is seldom any hardware or electronics. The *cheaper bent acrylic lecterns* are a good choice where they are stationary and will not get any abuse, the *designer acrylic lecterns* are a good choice for a formal location where they can be protected.

## Metal Lecterns

Metal lecterns are diverse in design. Some are of a sleek design and some fold-up to be stored away easily. They come in a wide price range. Lighter fold-up metal lecterns are a good choice for a location where they need to be moved around a lot and stored in a small place, and aesthetics do not

matter much. The designer metal lecterns are a good choice for locations where you are looking for a high-tech look. If these are left outside, however, they do tend to mimic the temperature around them (i.e. get really hot or really cold).

### **Molded Polyethylene**

Polyethylene plastic lecterns either have a plain color or granite finish. The front insert is typically a laminated ABS/aluminum panel with a wood look, but can be anything imaginable. With a 30 foot drop rating, they are by far the most durable, and will take a lot of abuse. The lifetime of these lecterns are very long, and when it wears out, or you don't want it any more, the shells are recyclable! They are also difficult to ding up (unless you're dropping them from 30 feet). These lecterns are easy and inexpensive to customize, and can come with hardware and all kinds of electronics. For the size they are by far the lightest weight. They are a good choice for a location where they're going to be moved from room to room. They can look good in a casual or formal environment. They are also the best choice for an outdoor location, as they are waterproof and tend not to get super hot if left out in the sun. For those considering a budget, these will also help you get the most bang for your buck.

### **Choosing a Podium or Lectern**

There are a lot of criteria to consider when choosing a podium. We offer free consulting and can go over all the criteria that need to be addressed to make sure you end up with the podium that will fulfill your needs. It is a large investment and it is always important to know what kind of a podium will be most effective for your situation. Please do not hesitate to call our product specialists at 1-801-966-7148 or 1-801-201-0157 with any questions concerning the look and features that will best serve you.

### **Introduction**

When giving a professional presentation at work, school, or at an organization, podiums and lecterns help speakers stay organized and reach audiences effectively. Podiums can make the presenter/teacher feel more at ease and confident. They can contain tools to help present the message and keep things organized. If sound reinforcement is needed (i.e. speakers and such), these tools can be incorporated to ensure that every word is easily heard and understood. Conversely, if the wrong construction or the wrong tools are implemented it can have the opposite effect. This is where our consultants can help.

The common terminology for lecterns is Lectern', 'Podium', 'Pulpit' and 'Rostrum', they are used interchangeably, and the word choice depends more on the user application than the actual product.

### **Price**

The price of your podium or lectern will depend on the material, construction, and options that are required to meet your needs. The lecterns with the cheapest material and low quality construction, with no features, start at about \$150.00. If you require quality material, construction, with sound, and video options, podiums range in the thousands of dollars. There are a lot of options in-between. Consider the environment the podium will be used in, the decor of the space, what you want the lectern to portray, what tools are needed, if the podium needs to be portable, and how long you need the lectern to last. These criteria are the primary things you need to consider and will affect the cost of the lectern. Table top

lecterns are often just a little less expensive as the only variable is a little less material, which does not affect the price much.

### **Material / Finish**

No matter what material you use, there are different qualities that provide different results. With wooden lecterns, low grade particle boards with non-durable plastic coverings can result in a lectern that looks okay, but not professional and will not last very long. However, if it is not important to look elegant, and the lectern is not ever going to be moved, these lecterns can be adequate. There are higher grade particle board lecterns that have durable coverings that can look professional and are fairly durable. High quality plywood is lighter weight and more durable, wood veneer is elegant but not the most durable, plastic laminate coverings can be durable but not as easy to repair if damaged.

The same applies with wooden or acrylic lecterns. The lighter gauge metal will be lighter weight, but won't last as long and typically doesn't look professional. Thick acrylic is more durable but very heavy. Thinner acrylic is quite fragile.

### **Sound systems**

When choosing a sound system, there are many things to consider to insure you get a system that will meet your needs. There's more to sound quality than just amplifier wattage or generic manufacturer suggested audience size. There are far too many factors that affect a sound system's ability to do its job, which is to make sure that everyone in the audience can hear and easily understand every word. Things to consider when purchasing a sound system are:

**Amplifier/Wattage** – This refers to the number of watts of output from the speakers. A 40-watt amplifier is adequate for an audience of up to 2,000 people, and a 50-watt amplifier works well for an audience up to 3,000 people.

**Wired or Wireless** – Many lecterns on the market can hook up with both wired and wireless sound systems. Wireless microphones allow the speaker to move freely during their presentation.

**Speakers** – When looking at speakers built into the lectern, be sure to find out how many speakers there are, and the diameter size (in inches).

**Microphones** – Audio lecterns will come with microphones, often with a few different varieties to use, depending on the situation. Common microphone types include handheld and tie-clip (i.e. lapel mics).

**Inputs/outputs** – Inputs may be used for microphones or other audio components, such as cassette, CD, or MP3 players. Outputs may be used for additional speakers or recording devices.

**Controls** – Controls may include volume, tone, bass/treble and also an on/off switch.

**Power supply** – Most lecterns plug directly into an outlet, and many come with optional rechargeable batteries.

### **Misc**

When choosing the right podium or lectern for your needs, there are many other features which you may find helpful. Some of the most common features include lockable wheels or casters, adjustable light, adjustable height, built-in clock, and internal shelving. Be sure to note the dimensions of the podium or lectern to make sure it fits your space requirements.

### **Questions to ask yourself**

It is difficult to get the perfect lectern without discussing your needs. Here is a checklist to consider; you can email in the answers to [danclearsound@gmail.com](mailto:danclearsound@gmail.com) or [oliviaaccentpodiums@gmail.com](mailto:oliviaaccentpodiums@gmail.com) to help us guide you to the perfect lectern.

Is the lectern going to be moved around often?

Is the lectern going to be set up on a stage?

Is the lectern going to be moved up and down stairs?

How large of an audience are you going to be using the lectern for?

Do you need a wireless microphone?

Do you need a hand held, lavalier, neck and or ear set wireless microphone?

Do you need an aisle mic?

Will you always hook up to the house sound system?

Do you need power for the lectern?

Do you need a clock?

Do you need a light?