Think 24/7 Seating is Expensive? Consider the Alternative.

An Overview of 24/7 Seating and Why It's Important To Invest
Introduction

Our president, Steve Will, hadn’t thought much of the word, “Ergonomics” until it affected someone he loved. His father spent his entire career with a major corporation. Over time, his know-how was replaced with technology. His last two years were spent at a board, on a stool, with no back support. Over time, the physical strain sitting in such a chair took a toll on his body.

Seating is personal to us and providing a better quality of life for the user is our focus.

Control rooms are the hub of your operations, and within it, operators monitor systems and make decisions that positively or negatively impact your process, your profits, and human lives.

Operators have a tremendous responsibility. Their ability to recognize and respond to an event is influenced by their environment.

According to some experts, “The most often mentioned feature in the control room is the operator’s chair.” Some operators consider the chair the holy grail of control room design. With the nature of the environment and work conducted you can see why.

• Why is it so difficult to make a seemingly simple purchase?
• What’s all the buzz about ergonomics?
• How do all the chair features work and why are they important?
• Is it possible for a chair to improve the life of operators?

Let’s sort through some of the details and concerns surrounding this multi-layered purchasing decision.
What’s the Intended Use?

There is a significant difference between a chair intended to meet the demands of a control room environment and a chair designed to meet the needs of a typical office environment.

Control room chair – 168 hours each week
Common office chair – 40 hours each week

Sometimes, selecting the right chair can feel overwhelming and confusing with the mountains of information and options available.

Assessing the intended use of the chair is an excellent place to start. It’s an essential step in the decision-making process that is frequently overlooked.

Intended Use Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24/7 Industrial Chair</th>
<th>Common Office Chair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made for 24/7/365 intensive use</td>
<td>Made for 8/5/261 light use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial (FRCs) and office attire</td>
<td>Office attire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often used as storage for tools and equipment when not occupied.</td>
<td>Often used as storage for memos, purses, and lunches when not occupied.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petite, average, larger users</td>
<td>Petite and average users</td>
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These questions can help you develop a clear picture of your needs:

1. What is the intended use of the chair?
   a. Heavy, light office, home, etc.?
2. What kind of environment will the chair be in?
   a. Office or control room?
   b. Industrial or carpeted environment?
3. How many operators will use the chair?
   a. What are their unique body types?
   b. Petite, big and tall, etc.?
   c. What are their body dimensions?
   d. Can operators of similar size be assigned to the same chair?
4. How many shifts per day will the chair be in use?
   a. Three 8-hour shifts?
   b. Two 12-hour shifts?
5. What are the necessary chair features?
   a. Armrests, headrests, adjustable height?
6. How long will your ideal chair last?
   a. One year?
   b. The lifespan of the facility?
7. What does your budget look like?

Understanding your environment and needs can help you make informed purchasing decisions and select a chair to withstand the rigorous and intensive use of many control rooms.
Features & Flexibility

Product flexibility is essential, and utilization of ergonomic seating is a solution that can support the needs of many.

If you share your space with multiple operators, selecting a chair with features to support each unique body size is essential. Solving this issue with a one-size-fits-all solution is difficult to achieve.

Because each body type is different, it’s essential to include the operator’s body dimensions when selecting a chair.

It’s important to assess chair features and ensure options are available to meet your operator’s needs. Iron Horse Seating provides a variety of seating options, and for this purpose, we’ll utilize the Iron Horse 4000 series as our model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>IRON HORSE 4000</th>
<th>Common Office Chair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backrest Recline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Lumbar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustable Seat Height</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tilt</td>
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<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headrest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armrests</td>
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</table>

The operator has a tremendous responsibility, and their chair is an important tool to support their comfort, health, and ability to remain alert.
Why Ergonomics are Important

Ergonomics is defined as the study of work and the relationship of that work to the mental and physical capabilities of people.

Ergonomics can reduce health issues and lost work time, encourage better decision-making, and maximize operator performance. Operators can focus on their job, not pain caused by repetitive stress injuries.

Without proper ergonomics, the most significant risk is work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). MSDs can be prevented by implementing a practice of ergonomics to help lessen muscle fatigue, increase productivity, and reduce the number and severity of work-related MSDs.

Did you know: Common MSD Health Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carpal Tunnel Syndrome</th>
<th>Epicondylitis (affects the elbow)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tendinitis</td>
<td>Trigger Finger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rotator Cuff Injuries (affects the shoulder)</td>
<td>Muscle strains, back spasms, and low back injuries</td>
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</table>
Identifying Ergonomic Problems

Proper operator seating is a proactive solution to help reduce ergonomic-related injury risks. Even when labeled “ergonomic,” a chair is only ergonomic when properly adjusted and fitted to the user, and when used correctly with feet on the ground and back straightened.

Proper ergonomic seating considerations should include the following:

• Seat height should be pneumatically adjusted while seated.
• Seat height should allow a 90 angle at the elbow.
• Seat width of 17-20 inches to accommodate most people.
• Seat depth should permit contact with the lumbar support.
• The back of the knee should not rest on the front edge of the seat.
• Seat front edge should be rounded and padded.
• Seat slant should adjust 0-10.

The operators work demands their attention for extended periods and require them to remain alert while sitting for long periods of time. Therefore, operator comfort should be maximized to improve performance and reduce the risk of operator error.

Looking at your injury and illness data will help identify ergonomic problems. These data can be obtained from reviewing the company’s OSHA 300 Injury and Illness Logs, 301 reports, workers’ compensation records, first aid logs, accident and near-miss investigation reports, insurance company reports and worker reports of problems.

- OSHA - Safety and Health Topics - Ergonomics

According to OSHA, work related MSDs are among the most frequently reported causes of lost or restricted work time.
Factors contributing to operator error include:

- poor acoustics
- poor lighting
- poor console design
- inefficient traffic patterns
- physical discomfort

Ergonomic considerations encourage awareness.

- Situational Awareness
- Fatigue Alertness Management
- Abnormal Situation Management

Operator discomfort can reduce focus and efficiency and create unnecessary risk.

Role of the Chair

Operators spend approximately 90% of a 12-hour shift sitting.

Seating is one component of your console arrangement that provides a solution to improve operator health, safety, performance, and situational awareness.

The comfort level of the operator’s chair directly correlates with adequate performance and can improve performance and prevent human error. An inappropriate operator chair contributes to fatigue, discomfort, and diminished performance.

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- physical discomfort
Justifying the Cost

Justifying the cost for proper operator seating has its challenges, but it’s essential to avoid making these purchasing decisions from a short-term perspective. When purchasing decisions are made from a short-term perspective, they involve “solving an initial problem” mentality, or reactive purchasing. In other words, buy a chair. It’s just a chair after all, right? Not exactly, it’s a short-term solution that often comes with a long-term price tag.

It is common to replace a typical $300 office chair within 9-12 months of intense use. It’s a purchasing pattern we frequently observe. However, making inexpensive purchases don’t always translate to saving money, especially when it comes to an operator’s chair. Remember, their chair will most likely be used 168-hours per week, not 40-hours per week. That’s a lot of use.

Consider the overall cost to replace a typical inexpensive office chair – the time, research, resources, and money required to make these repeat purchases. And, if you maintain these chairs, fixing loose screws, broken wheels, and wobbly armrests, that’s costing you money too.

When you consider all the factors, it’s easy to recognize the role a proper chair plays in overall health, safety, and productivity.

Purchasing the right chair is more cost-effective in the long-term on multiple levels. The initial upfront investment may not seem as significant when you consider reducing injury, illness, lost work time, and purchasing time and resources.
Planning to Purchase New Chairs

Make sure to consider the budget, but also the long-term benefits.

Everyone has a budget. And let’s face it, if you’re strictly looking at initial cost, these chairs aren’t inexpensive. But if you’re looking at it from a long-term perspective, continually purchasing a less expensive chair is probably costing you more.

The money you’ll spend on a control room over the next 20 years.

a. 80% = People: Salaries, Benefits, Insurance, Taxes
b. 10% = Technology/Infrastructure
c. 5% = Design/Construction
d. 2% = All Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment
e. 3% = Operations/Maintenance

The operator’s chair is an essential tool for efficient job performance, and sometimes management or procurement don’t recognize this because they don’t work in the operator’s space. A control room is different from anywhere else. It’s critical to production and might be the least expensive area in the plant.

Developing a proactive procurement plan and budget ensures operator needs are met while delivering results that match forward-looking corporate strategy. Establishing a budget shows where your costs are and creates more efficient management and purchasing processes.

Encourage operators to share their insights and anticipated chair demand to support future planning and encourage proactive procurement measures. Work with your team to invest in chairs that are compatible with the operator’s environment.

It’s not about buying a cool new piece of furniture; it’s about productivity, health, and safety.
Warranty & Support

It’s simple and not a goose chase.

While many typical office chairs come with a warranty, it’s important to understand how the warranty works – who to contact, what it covers and for how long, intended use limitations – and ensure you won’t need to purchase an extended coverage plan.

Stuff happens. After extended use, it is only natural that some things break. However, there is a solution. If you are within the chair’s warranty, you simply need to contact Evosite via email or phone, and we will initiate the process of getting your replacement part. It’s as simple as that!

Evosite Control Rooms
sales@evosite.com
713-365-3900

Additionally, you have access to Live Chat support and customer support tools including product videos and proper set-up videos (for when your chair arrives). Each chair comes with a contact information sticker on the bottom of the seat.
What’s next?

Have questions?

Want a quote?

Contact us now!

Evosite Control Rooms
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Evosite Control Rooms is a proud Master Dealer of IRON HORSE Seating. As a Master Dealer, we are able to pass on great savings on this line of seating.
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